
CAPITOL CONNECTION

A Weekly Update of News and Views
For Opinion Shapers and Policy Makers

Congressman Gary G. Miller
42nd District, California



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House Votes to Increase Transparency in Spending Bills

At the urging of a group of fiscal conservatives including Congressman Miller, the House this week voted to bring transparency to the congressional appropriations process. In recent weeks, Democratic leaders had announced that earmarks would not be inserted into spending bills until the very last minute. Under this fiscally irresponsible policy, billions of dollars in spending would have been subject to little scrutiny and Members of Congress would have virtually no chance to challenge earmarks on the House floor. Republicans responded by forcing a critical change in the rules of the House of Representatives that dramatically increases transparency. Now, any Member of Congress will be able to challenge any earmark before it is approved by the House and any taxpayer money is spent. Congressman Miller was pleased to contribute to this victory for fiscal responsibility. He remains committed to reining in federal spending and will continue to use his voice and vote in Congress to prevent taxpayer dollars from being wasted.

Congressman Miller Pushes to Make Tax Cuts Permanent

This week, Congressman Miller joined over 80 of his colleagues in introducing the Tax Increase Prevention Act to permanently extend the tax relief measures passed by Congress in 2001 and 2003. Without this important legislation, American families and small businesses will soon see a \$400 billion tax increase as popular tax relief measures for married couples, families, and students are scheduled to expire in 2010. Congressman Miller strongly disagrees with Democrats who believe that tax cuts should be temporary and tax increases should be forever. As the Tax Increase Prevention Act is considered by the House, he will continue working with his colleagues to permanently reduce the tax burden on American families and allow them to keep more of their hard-earned money.

Democrats Reject Border Fence as a Priority

The House this week fell drastically short of providing the funding necessary to build the hundreds of miles of border fencing needed along our Southern border. Last year, Congress mandated the construction of over 700 miles of double-layered border fencing and provided \$1.2 billion in initial funding. This year, the Homeland Security appropriations bill cut border fence funding and created bureaucratic obstacles that may prevent the fence from ever being built. During debate, Congressman Miller supported repeated attempts to increase funding and make construction of the fence a top priority. Unfortunately, Democrats defeated each of these attempts. As a result, Congressman Miller strongly opposed the bill and will continue to fight any effort to reduce funding for immigration enforcement and border security.

House Approves Record Funding Levels for Veterans

On Friday, the House passed the Fiscal Year 2008 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill to provide needed funding to our nation's retired military heroes and their families. This bill appropriates \$37 billion for our veterans, amounting to the largest increase in veterans' funding in the 77 year history of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This amount includes \$600 million for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury care; \$4.1 billion to improve VA facilities, hospitals, and clinics; and \$2.9 billion for mental health and substance abuse treatment. Congressman Miller supported passage of this bill. He believes that we must continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our nation's veterans, servicemembers, and their families to ensure those who put themselves in harm's way to protect our freedom are cared for when they return home.

Program Launched to Help Veterans Obtain Small Business Loans

This week, the U.S. Small Business Administration announced the new Patriot Express Pilot Loan Initiative to provide financial, procurement, and technical assistance to servicemembers and veterans. The Patriot Express Loan can be used for most business purposes, including start-up, expansion, equipment purchases, working capital, inventory or business-occupied real-estate purchases. For more information about eligibility and details on Patriot Express Loans, please visit www.sba.gov/patriotexpress.