
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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While the House is expected to remain in session through the weekend to pass a financial rescue package, here is the latest update on what the House of Representatives has done this week:

House Passes Stop-Gap Funding Measure to Fund Government Through March

Due to the Democrat controlled Congress' inability to pass a single Appropriations measure for Fiscal Year 2009, the House was forced to pass what is known as a Continuing Resolution to keep the government running into the new fiscal year. The Continuing Resolution will fund most government programs at their current level through March 6, 2009, as well as provide \$22.9 billion for disaster relief activities and a \$32.4 billion expansion in defense related spending. Although Congressman Miller was concerned with the process, he proudly voted for this measure because it funds the necessary priorities for American families struggling at home. Congressman Miller will continue to work with his colleagues to fund the nation's priorities both at home and abroad.

Outdated Offshore and Oil Shale Energy Production Bans Removed

After weeks of pressure and outrage from the American people, the House this week voted to remove the outdated bans on offshore and oil shale energy production. Congressman Miller is pleased with the House's decision to finally lift these bans and as this bill moves to the Senate, he will continue to support this important provision to help bring down fuel costs and provide for America's energy future. Lifting the bans on energy production off our shores and in the Inter-Mountain West's oil shale reserves is a step toward lower gas prices and American energy independence. In the future, Congressman Miller will continue to advocate for a comprehensive plan that provides critical revenue-sharing agreements that would give states an incentive to allow energy production in their energy reserves, encourages more conservation and efficiency, and creates a renewable energy trust fund that would be financed through drilling revenues from several energy-rich locations in Alaska and off our shores.

House Votes to Enhance Rail Safety

The House unanimously passed a bill this week that would reauthorize and improve rail safety programs and standards. Specifically, the bill requires the implementation and use of Positive Train Control technology on commuter and high risk freight routes. Positive Train Control is a technology that is capable of preventing some train-to-train collisions, derailments, and casualties or injuries to roadway workers. The legislation also authorizes \$1.1 billion for rail safety programs. In light of the recent freight and commuter train accident in California, this technology will go a long way toward protecting passengers and the community. As the bill moves to the Senate, Congressman Miller will work to ensure Southern California's train corridors are safe for passenger and freight travel.

Mental Health Parity Legislation Overwhelmingly Approved by House

This week, the House overwhelmingly approved legislation requiring health insurance plans to cover mental illnesses and physical illnesses equally. Currently, many insurance companies have restrictions on their coverage of mental health services, making it difficult for the millions of Americans suffering from mental illness to receive medical treatment. Under this bill, insurance companies will be required to treat copayments, out-of-pocket expenses, and deductibles for mental health services as they would for treatment of physical illnesses. Congressman Miller was proud to support this important legislation and commends his colleagues for coming together to expand access to mental health services.