
CAPITOL CONNECTION

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

Congressman Gary G. Miller
42nd District, California



January 16, 2009

111th Congress Officially Sworn In

Legislative business for the 111th Congress officially began as Members convened to take the oath of office. As our nation currently faces historic and unprecedented challenges, Congress must work to provide solutions for our country's needs. As always, Congressman Miller will work with his colleagues in this next session to fight for the issues that matter most to Southern California and our nation. As a member of the House Financial Services Committee, he will advocate for taxpayer-friendly and fiscally responsible solutions to unfreeze credit so Americans with good credit are able to access home, auto, and student loans and businesses are able to remain open and keep their employees paid. Further, as a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee he will continue to work diligently to ensure California receives its fair share of federal transportation dollars to improve safety and alleviate congestion on freeways as well as enhance Southern California's water supply and provide necessary infrastructure improvements to the region. To reduce our nation's costly dependence on foreign energy resources, Congressman Miller will continue to advocate for a comprehensive approach that increases the supply of American-made energy, improves conservation and efficiency, and promotes renewable and alternative energy technologies. In addition, one of his top priorities includes reforming our nation's flawed immigration policies and securing our borders. Congressman Miller considers it an honor and a privilege to serve the people of California's 42nd District and will continue to prioritize the needs and interests of the region in crafting policy and legislation.

Congressman Miller Named Ranking Member of International Monetary Policy Subcommittee

Congressman Miller has been tapped to serve as the Ranking Member of the House Financial Services Committee's newly created Subcommittee on International Monetary Policy and Trade. He now becomes the senior-most Republican on the panel, which has jurisdiction over international monetary policy; international finance and banking; international financial and monetary organizations, including the International Monetary Fund and World Bank; and promotion of international trade in financial services. Congressman Miller will also continue to serve on the Housing and Community Opportunity Subcommittee. As the U.S. and the global economy are currently facing historic and unprecedented challenges, it is imperative that the United States lead the way to stabilize, reform, and strengthen the financial markets. With responsible reform and oversight, Congressman Miller believes our financial systems can adapt to the realities of the 21st century marketplace and eventually generate even greater prosperity for Americans. He looks forward to working with the Financial Services Committee in this next Congress to address the issues facing our economy.

Democrat Rules Package Restricts Participation and Repeals Reforms

Despite promising a more transparent and bipartisan Congress, House Democrats voted for a rules package for the 111th Congress which significantly restricts the rights of minority Members to offer alternatives on spending and revenue bills. Specifically, the rules package rolls back the guarantee of the Minority to offer an alternative through the motion to recommit, a parliamentary technique to alter or delay legislation before final passage. By restricting the form in which the Minority can offer their alternatives, the Democratic Leadership has made it nearly impossible to strike a tax increase from a bill. Moreover, the rules package repeals a key reform put in place in 1995—six-year term limits for standing committee chairmen. The term limits rule was designed to ensure that no one has a monopoly on important policy questions facing our nation and that fresh ideas and new perspectives are considered. Congressman Miller is outraged that the rules package restricts participation, stifles debate, and repeals critical reforms.

House Passes Expansion of Government-Run Health Care

The House of Representatives on Wednesday voted to dramatically expand the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), which is set to expire at the end of April 2009. However, rather than refocus SCHIP as a targeted safety net for low-income uninsured children, the House passed a bill to extend coverage to children in families with significantly higher incomes and opened the program to fraudulent use by illegal immigrants. Under this bill, states are allowed to expand coverage for children up to 350 percent above the poverty level, 95 percent of whom already have some form of private insurance. Additionally, a provision was included allowing individuals to receive SCHIP benefits without having to show proof of citizenship, potentially allowing illegal immigrants to take advantage of taxpayer-funded health care. Congressman Miller was forced to oppose this bill because it will institute government-run health care in middle class America and allow illegal immigrants to further flood our nation's hospitals. As an alternative, Congressman Miller believes that the legislation should focus on our nation's poorest children first and he will work with his colleagues to ensure that everyone has access to quality affordable health insurance.

Federal Budget Deficit to Top Record \$1.2 Trillion in 2009

The Congressional Budget Office recently released a report estimating the deficit for the Fiscal Year 2009 budget will top a record \$1.2 trillion, making it the largest recorded since World War II. The major slowdown in economic activity and the policy responses to the turmoil in the housing and financial markets have significantly affected the federal budget. As Congress and the new Administration work together to revitalize our economy, the deficit estimate makes it clear that we cannot borrow and spend our way back to prosperity. Congressman Miller firmly believes that the best way to strengthen our economy is to lower taxes, pay off the debt, and make government smaller and more effective. He is confident that the federal government can eliminate wasteful spending while preserving funding for essential programs that keep America secure, maintain our vital infrastructure, and ensure our neediest citizens are cared for.

House Passes Bill to Reduce Wasteful Government Spending

This week, the House unanimously passed legislation to help Congress root out fraud and waste in the federal government. The bill requires each House standing committee and subcommittee to hold at least one hearing during each 120-day period on the topic of waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement in government programs within their jurisdiction. This important legislation also requires committees to hold hearings on reports issued by a federal Inspector General that contain information on federal programs that are at high risk for waste and mismanagement. Congressman Miller was proud to support this bill and will continue working in the 111th Congress to eliminate the government's abuse of taxpayer dollars.