
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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President Bush Commutes Prison Sentences for Border Patrol Agents

On his last full day in office, President Bush commuted the prison sentences for Border Patrol Agents Ignacio Ramos and Jose Compean. Agents Ramos and Compean, who were convicted of shooting and wounding an illegal alien who was attempting to smuggle more than 700 pounds of marijuana across the border, were sentenced in 2007 to 12 and 11 years in federal prison, respectively. Under the commutation, the prison sentences for both Border Patrol agents will end on March 20. Throughout their imprisonment, Congressman Miller repeatedly urged the President and his Administration to restore confidence to the justice system by pardoning or commuting their excessive prison sentences. Congressman Miller is extremely pleased that Agents Ramos and Compean will soon be reunited with their families and will continue to work in Congress to ensure our Border Patrol officers have the resources they need to protect our nation's borders.

House Passes Bill to Redefine the Ever-Changing Troubled Asset Relief Program

The House this week passed a measure that would set new conditions on the use of Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) funds and also expand the Department of Treasury's authority to spend TARP money. Congressman Miller voted against this legislation because he believes it would move America farther away from market economics and increase taxpayer risk by greatly enhancing the federal government's role in the financial services sector. He also opposed the bill because it grants the Treasury Secretary extensive authority across a range of areas without proper accountability mechanisms. Congressman Miller has repeatedly expressed frustration with the way TARP has been implemented and believes firmly that Congress should not release any additional taxpayer resources into a program without specific guidelines on how the money will be invested. As the crisis in the financial markets persists and the federal budget deficit continues to soar, Congressman Miller will tirelessly advocate for policies that are both taxpayer-friendly and fiscally responsible.

President Obama Freezes Plan to Allow Off-Shore Drilling

In the final week of the Bush Administration, the Department of the Interior announced that it would open up twelve previously closed off areas of the Outer Continental Shelf to offshore drilling. The ability to lift these bans came from efforts last summer when Congressional Republicans successfully secured provisions in the continuing resolution appropriations bill to lift restrictions on offshore and oil shale energy production. Lifting this restriction is just one small step in implementing a comprehensive plan to reduce our dependence on foreign energy resources. Unfortunately, as one of his first acts in office, President Obama put a freeze on all pending rules recently made by the Bush Administration, effectively preventing the Department of the Interior from opening up the twelve previously closed areas. Congressman Miller believes that the American people deserve to have an "all of the above" plan that increases the supply of American-made energy in environmentally sound ways, increases alternative forms of energy, and encourages energy and conservation. Congressman Miller hopes to work with his colleagues in convincing the new Administration that domestic energy exploration is in the best interest of America and its citizens.

EPA Honors Orange County for Innovative Groundwater Management

This week, the Environmental Protection Agency honored the Orange County Water District (OCWD), by awarding them the 2008 Clean Water State Revolving Fund "Pisces" Award. The award recognizes projects that advance clean and safe water through exceptional planning, management, and financing. OCWD partners with the Orange County Sanitation District on the Groundwater Replenishment System to provide a safe water supply at a lower cost than imported water. This project uses microfiltration, reverse osmosis, and advanced oxidation processes, to treat clarified secondary wastewater, which would have been discharged into the Pacific Ocean, into water exceeding all federal and state water regulations. The EPA recognized the OCWD for its dedication in providing a locally controlled, drought-resistant, and clean water supply. Congressman Miller congratulates the Orange County Water District and remains committed to provide federal support to this and other projects that take innovative approaches to solving California's water crisis.