
CAPITOL CONNECTION

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

Congressman Gary G. Miller
42nd District, California



January 18, 2008

House Approves Defense Authorization Bill

The House of Representatives on Wednesday approved a revised Fiscal Year 2008 Defense Authorization Bill. President Bush recently vetoed a similar measure over a provision that could have inadvertently frozen billions of dollars in Iraqi assets held in U.S. financial institutions, thereby devastating Iraqi reconstruction efforts. The bill passed this week sets the priorities for the Pentagon for the coming year and includes a 3.5 percent pay raise for our military personnel and \$2.5 billion for the production of C-17 aircraft, parts of which are produced in the 42nd District. Going forward, Congressman Miller will continue to support provisions that provide our Armed Forces with the tools they need to defend our freedom.

ICE Steps Up Efforts to Deport Criminal Aliens

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) this week announced that it expects to deport more than 200,000 criminal aliens during the coming year. As part of this initiative, ICE will work with state authorities to identify inmates who are here illegally or who have lost their legal status by committing a crime. While offenders are normally required to serve out their entire sentence in the United States before being deported to their home country, ICE has announced that it will partner with states to develop programs under which nonviolent offenders will be allowed reduce their prison time in exchange for accepting deportation immediately. The goal of the initiative is to relieve stress on overcrowded state and federal prisons. Congressman Miller applauds the efforts of ICE to partner with local law enforcement to apprehend and deport illegal aliens in our communities.

Commission Recommends Transportation Overhaul

This week, a blue ribbon commission of transportation experts recommended sweeping changes to federal transportation programs. The National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission reported that the U.S. needs to invest at least \$225 billion annually for the next 50 years to bring our existing system to a state of good repair and to create a more advanced transportation system. We are currently investing less than 40 percent of this amount each year. In order to reach this goal, the Commission recommended a tripling of federal gas taxes over the next eight years. In California, drivers already pay 18.3 cents in federal gas taxes and 32 cents in California taxes per gallon of fuel. Before jumping to the easy solution of tripling taxes, Congressman Miller believes Congress should look at solutions that will use and leverage our limited funds more efficiently to speed the construction and planning of projects. As Congress reviews these proposals, Congressman Miller will continue to use his seat on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to address Southern California's needs for congestion relief, efficient movement of goods, and lower gas prices.

Congressman Miller Invites Entries for Artistic Discovery Competition

Congressman Miller is pleased to announce that he will be holding the *Artistic Discovery 2008* Congressional Art Competition for all the high schools in the 42nd District. Originally started in 1982 by Congress, the *Artistic Discovery* competition provides aspiring high school artists with the opportunity to have a winning entry displayed at the U.S. Capitol for a full year. Additionally, Southwest Airlines will provide the first place winner with three roundtrip tickets to Washington, D.C. to see their artwork unveiled. For more information on *Artistic Discovery 2008*, including guidelines and the due date, please contact Mina Choi in Congressman Miller's Brea office at (714) 257-1142.