
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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Brownfields Bill Sponsored by Congressman Miller Heads to the Senate

On Tuesday, the House approved Congressman Miller's bill to help make it easier for cities to redevelop potentially polluted sites, commonly known as brownfields. Typically, these properties are large plots of land that at one time were factories, gas stations or other businesses that made heavy use of chemicals or other materials that may have polluted the property. Most of these sites now sit abandoned. The Brownfields Redevelopment Enhancement Act cuts through the red tape that inhibits redevelopment by allowing cities to acquire federal brownfield funding without having to use their community development grants as collateral. The measure passed the House unanimously.

House Passes Bill to Strengthen Oversight of Foreign Investment

On Wednesday, the House passed legislation to strengthen the review of foreign companies wishing to invest in the United States. The review process, which is designed to ensure such foreign ownership is not harmful to our economic interests or national security, came under scrutiny last year when Dubai Ports World attempted to secure operations of several of our nation's largest ports. In response, H.R. 556 was introduced to restore accountability to the review process and improve congressional notification and intelligence analysis for any foreign transactions that could have national security implications. The bill, which Congressman Miller cosponsored, passed the House by a margin of 423 to 0.

House Passes Union "Card Check" Bill

Despite Congressman Miller's strong objections, the House on Thursday passed a bill stripping American workers of their right to a secret-ballot election when deciding whether or not to organize. Under current law, employers may voluntarily negotiate with unions based on authorization cards that are not confidential. However, they are allowed to insist upon an election by secret ballot administered by the National Labor Relations Board. The so-called Employee Free Choice Act mandates that an employer recognize a union based on a "card check," leaving workers open to harassment and intimidation. During floor consideration, Congressman Miller strongly supported an amendment that would have prevented illegal immigrants, who should not be working in the United States in the first place, from voting in union-organizing elections. While the amendment failed and the bill ultimately passed, Congressman Miller will continue working to ensure that neither unions nor employers have the right to resort to intimidation to accomplish their goals.

Congressman Miller Fights to Keep Illegal Aliens From Accessing Credit

Congressman Miller, a member of the House Financial Services Committee, helped secure a commitment from the committee to review the practice of banks offering financial products, such as credit cards and mortgages, to illegal aliens. At a committee meeting on Thursday, Congressman Miller argued that allowing illegal aliens to obtain credit cards or purchase homes only further incentivizes illegal immigration. In addition to benefits such as health care and education, access to our nation's financial products and institutions provides yet another way that we are making illegal immigrants feel at home in our country. The committee unanimously agreed to hold hearings and consider legislation to ensure this practice is stopped. Eliminating illegal aliens' access to mortgages and credit is one of Congressman Miller's top immigration priorities and he will continue to fight to end this practice.

Good News for Commuters

Carpool Lanes. The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is seeking to change how carpool lanes are used in the county. First, the OCTA is testing a program on State Route 22 that would allow drivers to enter and exit the carpool lanes at any time. Also, the OCTA is evaluating allowing cars with only one occupant to use carpool lanes during off-peak hours. For more information please visit: www.octa.net. **SR-57/SR-60.** Drivers who travel through the State Route 57/State Route 60 interchange are seeing a big improvement in their commute. After nearly four years of construction the new carpool lane connectors are now open. **Traffic Alerts.** The California Department of Transportation is offering an email alert service for drivers in San Bernardino and Riverside counties. This service will notify drivers of news or construction updates on routes selected by you. For more information or to sign up, please visit: www.dot.ca.gov/dist8/.

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