



The 47th Flyer

News for California's 47th Congressional District
from Congressman Alan Lowenthal



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March 2, 2015

Tying Trade To Human Rights

I believe, like many of my colleagues, that we are at a pivotal point in U.S. foreign policy in Asia. Tremendous opportunities lie ahead, but so do many challenges.

The United States continues to seek deeper engagement with Asia-Pacific nations, most notably in the form of the proposed trade agreement between more than a dozen Pacific Rim countries known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement. I proudly represent the Port of Long Beach, and know how critical our economic engagement with these countries is today and will be in the future.

While the U.S. grapples with issues related to the environment, labor, currency manipulation, and state-owned enterprises in the TPP, the same negotiations also give us unprecedented leverage to promote universal values of human rights. I believe that nations who want to gain favorable trading status with the United States and their other neighbors must meet at least a minimum standard for respecting the basic human rights of their own citizens.

Vietnam, in particular, has failed time and again to meet anything close to a minimum standard. The one-party, authoritarian government represses—at times violently—anyone who speaks out against the regime. The government jails bloggers, labor activists, and even religious leaders seemingly on a whim. And while Vietnam has been increasingly pressured by the international community to improve its human rights record in recent years, it seems every small step forward is accompanied by two steps back.

I believe that United States foreign policy not only can, but should, advocate for values that are not just important to us as Americans but are universal to what we understand as basic human rights. At this critical point for United States engagement with Asia, there is no greater opportunity for American foreign policy to promote human rights for all people.

On The Hill

A Discussion About Our Maritime Economy & Supply Chains

Just days after news that the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) had reached a tentative contract agreement, I was pleased to meet with Ambassador Vilma Martinez, President of the Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners, and Gene Seroka, Executive Director of the Port of Los Angeles, to talk about port and supply chain issues.

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Regarding the United States' diplomatic negotiations with Iran which could lead to an agreement limiting Iran's progress toward developing a nuclear weapon, do you think the agreement should rely solely upon President Obama's approval, or should Congress have a role as well? (There is pending legislation to give Congress the ability to approve or disapprove aspects of the agreement.)

Pres. Obama's

I was glad to hear that they are hopeful that the congestion at the LA/LB ports will be alleviated quickly now that a labor agreement has been reached.



I believe it is critical to maintain open discussions with stakeholders on the critical issues facing our ports, so that we can develop solutions that support our workers and strengthen our economic competitiveness at not only local and national levels, but at the international level as well.

Fighting For Basic Rights For All

I am honored to recently be named as a vice-chair of the U.S. House of Representatives LGBT Equality Caucus, a group I joined in 2013 after being elected to Congress.

For my entire adult life, I have fought to defend the basic human rights of equality and equal treatment for all people. While we still have a long journey ahead, in a short space of time, we have made tremendous strides towards full equality and acceptance of the LGBT community.

At the same time, however, many places in the world remain a dangerous and even deadly place for LGBT people. The only way to combat this global issue is for the U.S. to shine as a beacon of equality to the world, while at the same time defending and advancing the progress we have made at home.

The LGBT Equality Caucus was created in 2008 by Co-Chairs Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Barney Frank (D-MA), along with more than 90 members of Congress who were strongly committed to achieving the full enjoyment of human rights for LGBT people in the United States and around the world. The Caucus serves as a resource for Members of Congress and their staff and works toward the extension of equal rights, the repeal of discriminatory laws, the elimination of hate-motivated violence, and the improved health and well-being for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

Talking Higher Education

California State University Long Beach (CSULB) President Dr. Jane Close Conoley stopped by my office this week to talk about the state of higher education in California and the 47th District.

Joining Dr. Close Conoley were CSULB Advisor Terri Carbaugh and CSULB student Nayiri Baghdassarian.

approval only
Approval of
BOTH
President and
Congress
We should not
negotiate with
Iran

[If you have trouble, click here to open poll in a new window](#)



As a former CSULB professor, I know the importance of higher education to our region, state, and nation. Our state college system is constantly paving the way for a new generation of leaders in our nation. It is imperative that we continue to discuss ways to further improve our Cal State system as we build upon the strong foundation and strengthen the framework that has already been laid.

New LGBT Envoy In State Department

I was very pleased with the announcement this week from the U.S. State Department that it had created a new Special Envoy position to advocate for global LGBT human rights. Secretary of State John Kerry also said he has appointed long-time diplomat Randy Berry to the position. Senator Ed. Markey and I, along with 48 of our colleagues, introduced legislation several weeks ago calling for the creation of just such a post.

It was a pleasure to get to meet with Mr. Berry this week and talk to him about his new role.



Mr. Berry brings not only his professional experience as a highly successful diplomat to the table, but also a profound understanding of the issues of universal human rights. His appointment is a great step toward assuring that we as a nation serve as a beacon to the rest of the world by promoting our fundamental values of equality, equity, and diversity, especially at a time when the basic human rights of so many people across the globe are being threatened.

Mr. Berry will no doubt play a major part in guaranteeing our nation's role in defending the innate rights of all human beings—including the LGBT community—across the globe to live, love, and prosper.

In The 47th District

West Coast Dockers Reach Tentative Labor Deal

Our ports are one of the major economic engines of our nation. It is critically important for us to continue to support the hardworking men, women, and businesses that make our ports run both effectively and efficiently.

I was encouraged by the news of the recent tentative agreement between the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU).

I applaud both the ILWU and the PMA for coming so far and accomplishing so much. There has been compromise on both sides--just as negotiations are supposed to work. I am equally hopeful that the PMA members and the longshore rank-and-file will agree to the deal.

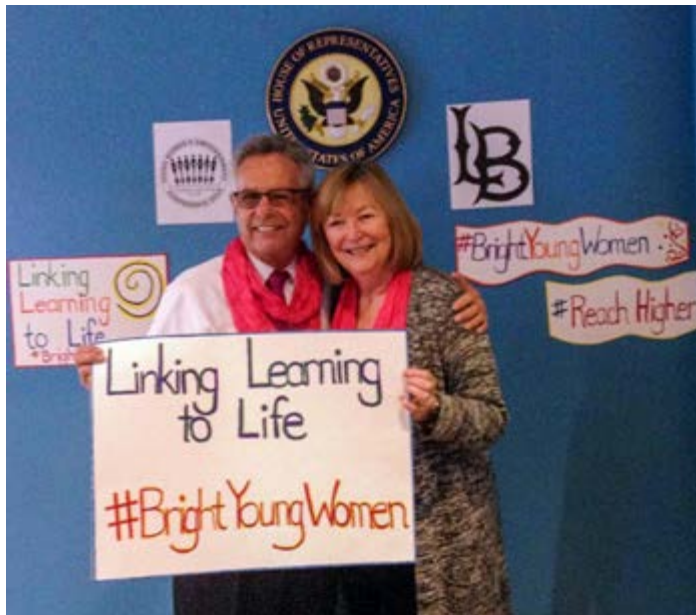
This has been a long and painful negotiation process, but now I am grateful that both sides are moving forward and getting back to full operating capacity at our West Coast ports. These ports are one of the most powerful economic engines in our nation. This is great news not just for our economy, but for millions of workers, their families, and businesses across the nation.

Young Women's Empowerment Conference

Last weekend, I was proud to welcome nearly 200 female high school students from the 47th Congressional District gathered at California State University Long Beach's (CSULB) University Student Union for the 2015 Young Women's

Empowerment Conference.

The keynote speaker was CSULB President Jane Close Conoley, whose address focused on the theme of the entire event, "Linking Learning to Life."



The event featured workshops and panel discussions for young women, including sessions on preparing for college, exploring non-traditional careers, running for office and developing healthy relationships. There were also opportunities to speak with successful women who are role models in various professions.

The conference was a great opportunity for students who have never felt that they had a chance to really make the decisions and take control of their destiny. I think you will see that out of this conference will come a number of young women who will now believe in their own capabilities and begin charting a course for their future.

Congress U

When Bills Go To Conference

In the last installment of Congress U, we looked at what happens to a bill once it reaches the House floor.

This week, we will follow a bill after it passes the House. Bills can start in either chamber (except tax bills, which must start in the House according to the Constitution). If passed by either the House or the Senate, a bill is then sent to the other chamber (although that chamber may already have its own similar measure under consideration).

If either chamber does not pass the bill then it dies. Most bills end their life this way.

If the House and Senate pass the exact same bill, then it is sent to the President (whose role we will look at next week).

If the House and Senate pass different versions of the bill, then the legislation goes to what is called a "conference committee," if both chambers move to go to conference.

Members from the House and Senate each nominate members from their chamber to form a conference committee and meet to essentially come up with one version

that both chambers can agree on.

Conference committees are usually made up of senior members who are appointed by the leadership of the committee that originally dealt with the bill.

If the House and Senate members of the conference committee reach a compromise version of the bill, the committee prepares a written conference report and joint explanatory statement, which is then sent back to each chamber for another vote. The report details any changes from the originally passed version of the bill.

If the House and the Senate both approve the conference report, the bill then heads to the President.

Next week, we will look at the last step on a bill's journey to become a law.

Last Week's Poll

Should companies that mine hardrock minerals on public lands be required to pay royalties to the American people for the minerals they mine?

77.5% Yes - Hardrock mining companies should pay for extracting publicly-owned resources.

8.2% Maybe - But only new mining claims; old mines should continue to extract minerals without paying the American public.

14.3% No - Mining companies already expend funds to extract the resources.

Thank you,



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