



The 47th Flyer

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



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March 23, 2015

From Selma To Montgomery To Today

There are moments in each of our lives that will never leave us--events so powerful that they touch at the very essence of who we are and who we will be for the rest of our lives.

Standing at the foot of the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma on March 7 hearing President Barack Obama deliver what I can only describe as one of the most Lincolnesque speeches I have ever heard was one of those moment for me.

Before and after the President spoke, the entire trip to Selma was a strong reaffirmation to me of what we as a nation have accomplished over the past 50 years, and yet, how far we still have to go.

There was the power of seeing the Birmingham jail cell from which Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote his famous 1963 "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," where Dr. King laid out so eloquently why the struggle for freedom that had been waging for nearly 100 years was so fundamental to every American....[click here to read more](#)

On The Hill

Rebuilding Our Crumbling Freight Infrastructure

Last week, Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx announced that freight traffic in the U.S. is expected to rise 60 percent in the next 30 years. We have to start planning now.

Goods movement is one of the most powerful economic engines in our nation. And yet, the infrastructure this engine depends on is crumbling around us. We have the ability to fix it, make it stronger, and make it better, while also taking action to address the negative impacts of goods movement on our communities,

To address this, I recently introduced legislation aimed at strengthening America's economic competitiveness by providing a dedicated revenue source to invest in our national freight infrastructure.

My bill, [H.R.1308. Economy in Motion: The National Multimodal and Sustainable Freight Infrastructure Act](#), would dedicate roughly \$8 billion a year to address a growing backlog of infrastructure needs to support our economy. According to a new report by the National Association of Manufacturers, "the United States is stuck in a decade-long period of decline in overall infrastructure capital spending that will eventually harm job creation, future productivity and global competitiveness."

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New data from NASA shows that California now has only about one year of water supply left in its reservoirs and the state's strategic backup supply, groundwater, is rapidly disappearing. What should California do?

- Increase water storage
- Increase conservation and water-use efficiency
- Penalize abusers
- Invest in technologies like desalination
- All of the above

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

This bill creates two funding mechanisms, one based on a formula that would allow all states with state freight plans to participate, and a grant program that would be open to all local, regional, and state governments.

In addition, the state freight plans will contain environmental goals and strategies developed by state freight advisory committee members; providing a path for freight projects to address and reduce the environmental and community impacts of goods movement.

Serving As A Ranking Member

Last week, I was honored to preside over my first hearing as Ranking Member on the Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources (EMR). A ranking member is the highest ranking member of the minority party (Democrats in this case) to sit on a particular committee or subcommittee.

There are many pressing issues facing our environment, and I look forward to what I hope will be a very productive two years. As I said during the hearing, "I believe that the issues before the EMR Subcommittee are critical – namely, what will our future energy supply mix be, where will it come from, and how will we balance the competing demands placed on our public lands? We are faced with questions of how to manage and mitigate the impacts of the tremendous growth in oil and gas development over the past decade. Finally, we will all be dealing with the effects of a changing planet, and we will need to responsibly look at the contributions of the fossil fuels we oversee in this subcommittee."

I welcome the opportunity to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to implement solutions that protect our environment for our children and our grandchildren.

[Click here](#), or the image below, to view video of my opening remarks and questions at the hearing.



Long Beach Government Leaders In Town

From freight and infrastructure policy at the Port of Long Beach, to issues facing our transportation sector, including the transport of uncovered coal, it is crucial for us to discuss these critical issues that impact the continued success of this wonderful city.

It was great to meet last week with representatives from the Port of Long Beach, The City of Long Beach, and Long Beach Transit and discuss how we can work together on so many important issues.



Port of Long Beach CEO Jon Slangerup, Long Beach City Councilman Rex Richardson, Long Beach Transit Executive Director Kenneth McDonald, Long Beach City Councilwoman Lena Gonzalez, Long Beach City Councilwoman Stacy Mungo, Port of LB Harbor Commission President Doug Drummond.

Defending Medicare

Medicare is one of our nation's most important safety net programs and I have, and always will be, a strident and vocal defender of it. That is why I recently joined with nearly 75 of my colleagues, from both sides of the aisle, in signing a letter expressing support for the Medicare Advantage (MA) program and opposition to the new MA funding cuts that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has proposed for 2016.

The letter, sent to the acting administrator of CMS, expresses concern that the newly proposed cuts represent a significant threat to the health and financial security of more than 16 million seniors and individuals with disabilities who rely on the MA program to meet their health care needs, many of whom live in California.

Considering that MA enrollees already have shouldered cuts of approximately 10 percent over the past two years, I believe it would be unfair to impose additional cuts that would further destabilize this important program.

The letter strongly urges CMS to "protect Medicare beneficiaries by reversing the proposed payment cuts and providing a stable policy environment for the MA program."

Westminster Mayor Tra Ti Visit

It was great to meet with Westminster Mayor Tri Ta when he stopped by my DC office to give me an update on all of the exciting things happening in the City of Westminster. It's starting to warm up here in DC and I think Mayor Ta brought some of that sunny California weather with him!





In The 47th District

Using Success In The 47th To Help Others

An estimated five million Americans between the ages of 16 and 24 are not in school and unemployed, facing an uncertain future. They are statistically more likely to not finish their formal education and face long-term unemployment, welfare dependence, criminal involvement, and incarceration.

In the early 1990s, the National Guard Youth Challenge Program (NGYCP) was developed to help improve the employment and life prospects of 16- to 18-year-olds who have dropped out of high school and are not part of the labor force. More than 27 states—including California—and Puerto Rico, have established Youth Challenge programs. More than 120,000 young people have gone through the program over its history.

Remarkably, over 60 percent of Youth Challenge program graduates — all high school dropouts — have earned their GED or high school diploma while in the program. This percentage is nearly double the average reported pass rate of the same target age group.

We are fortunate in the 47th District to have a Youth Challenge program—at the Joint Forces Training Base (JFTB) in Los Alamitos—and I am a strong supporter of the program.

This is why I signed a letter this week urging the Defense Department to immediately authorize the California National Guard to acquire a building at the Sharpe Army Depot in northern California so the facility can be prepared to accommodate students and house a new Challenge program for the region.

The positive impact of the program on young people that I have seen with my own eyes, not only could, but should be replicated to help at-risk youth in Northern California.

Meeting With Dreamers at CSULB

It was my pleasure to meet with a group of Dreamers from CSULB, who are part of the California-Mexico Higher Education Field Study class, and their Professor Armando Vazquez Ramos, this past week. I enjoyed learning more about how this travel-study course provides students with academic and field study exposure to the cultural lifestyle, educational system, and social institutions of Mexico; while at the same time enhancing language skills through a 12-day full-immersion travel-

study experience.



The primary goal of the course is to develop a comprehensive understanding of educational policies, new California-Mexico collaboration agreements and the economic factors shaping the California-Mexico relationship. It was remarkable to see firsthand the experiences of Dreamers at our very own CSU Long Beach; their dream is truly the American Dream.

Visiting Garden Grove Masjid

Did you know that California has the largest Muslim population of any state in the nation, with the largest concentration in Southern California?

It was a distinct honor to be asked to visit the Islamic Society of Orange County (ISOC) last week, where I spoke with the center leadership and staff before being introduced to the worshippers prior to Friday prayers.



The center is not only the largest Muslim community center in Southern California, but one of the largest in the nation. The 5.2-acre campus, which includes the full-time accredited K-8 Orange Crescent School and a beautiful masjid (mosque), serves more than 10,000 Muslims throughout the area.

ISOC has served the area for nearly 40 years and was one of the first Muslim centers to be established in Southern California.

It was wonderful to be able to meet and speak with so many members of our district's Muslim community.

Congress U

Using Congress.gov To Find A Bill

Each week in the 47th Flyer, you will often see references to House bills or resolutions, such as my latest bill, H.R. 1308 (the H.R. stands for House of Representatives and prefaces all introduced House bills—House resolutions are prefaced by H.Res.).

Did you know that you can find out a great deal about bills through the congress.gov website?

Run by the Library of Congress (LOC), congress.gov is the official website for U.S. federal legislative information and the successor to the THOMAS website that performed a similar, though more limited function.

Congress.gov utilizes data, typically updated on a daily basis, from the Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Office of the Secretary of the Senate, the Government Publishing Office, Congressional Budget Office, and the LOC's Congressional Research Service.

Congress.gov offers a wealth of information about the legislative process that stretches from data on all aspects of bills to Congressional committee reports to searchable lists of legislation that Members of Congress have authored or signed on to ([click here to see mine](#)).

So what information on a bill can be found on congress.gov?

The basic information of who authored the bill, when it was introduced, its full title, and the last action taken on the bill are all visible right up front.

In addition, by utilizing tabs in the window, you can find a succinct summary of the legislation written by the non-partisan Congressional Research Service; the full text of the bill as introduced; a list of all actions taken; any amendments made to the bill; what other Members of Congress have attached their name to the bill (cosponsors); what committees, if any, the bill has been referred to; and, any related bills.

[Click here to go to the congress.gov page on my bill H.R. 1308.](#)

Last Week's Poll

This week marked the 50th Anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery marches that led to the Voting Rights Act of 1965—a cornerstone of American civil rights. How much progress on civil rights do you think we have made since 1965?

- 59.1%** Tremendous progress
- 35.8%** Some progress
- 4.2%** Little progress
- 0.9%** No progress

Thank you,



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