



# The 47th Flyer

News for California's 47<sup>th</sup> Congressional District  
from Congressman Alan Lowenthal



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*Issue 1 -- April 1, 2013*

I want to welcome you to the first edition of The 47th Flyer. It's been a very busy first three months in Washington, D.C., and I wanted to take the opportunity in this first edition to let you know about some of the important issues that I have been working on. Keeping in touch with the residents of the 47th district is important to me and in addition to this newsletter, there is a great deal of information on [my website](#). I would also encourage you to join me on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), where I try to post every day during the week.

*Alan Lowenthal*

## What was the sequester and the continuing resolution?

Over the past several months, terms like 'sequester' and 'continuing resolution' have received a lot of attention in the news during talk of the federal budget and the national debt and deficit. But what do these terms really mean? And what do they have to do with the budget?

Back in 2011, Congress passed and President Obama signed the Budget Control Act into law. This law allowed for increased spending, but also mandated cuts to federal programs, departments, and agencies. The act allowed Congress to determine where the required budget cuts would come from. To make sure they acted, Congress even included a trigger of mandatory across-the-board cuts if they were unable to reach agreement on where to make the cuts.

Regrettably, Congress could not agree and on March 1, 2013, the required cuts went into effect. These mandatory cuts were known as the sequester. I oppose to the sequester, because of the indiscriminate way it hits virtually every level of government. I still hope to work with my colleagues in Congress to give departments and agencies some flexibility in how to achieve meaningful cuts in spending, but do it in a smarter, more effective way.

On the budget front, because Democrats and Republicans in Congress cannot seem to agree on how to address the budget deficit, an actual federal budget passed by both house of Congress has been elusive. I supported a Democratic version in the House that balanced revenue increases and responsible cuts to deal with the long-term deficit and debt.

In a near party-line vote, the House eventually passed a Republican budget, which had no revenue increases and called for massive cuts

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## Survey of the Week

How do you think we should address budget deficits and decrease the national debt?

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to government programs like Medicare and education. Just as the Republican House budget had no chance to pass in the Democratic-majority Senate, the Senate Democratic budget plan also had no chance to pass the Republican-controlled House.

But, the government has to keep working. To do this, Congress has been passing something called 'continuing resolutions,' or CRs. These basically allow the previous budget for a department or agency to remain in place at the same level for the next year. In other words, some government departments are literally running on the same budget that was approved many years before, but has been continued at the same level through the passing of multiple, successive CRs.

I'd like to know your thoughts. Please take a moment and take the survey to the right. What do you think we should do to solve these complex problems?

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### **The Violence Against Women Act**

The original Violence Against Women Act was a landmark piece of legislation passed into law in 1994. For nearly two decades, VAWA has been helping to protect victims of domestic violence and strengthen prosecution and punishment of violent criminals.

I am proud to be a supporter and cosponsor of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act. Unfortunately, the House Republican leadership promoted a weaker substitute to this legislation, which excluded protections for LGBT, Native American, and undocumented women. I joined my colleagues, both Republicans and Democrats, in opposition to this substitute and supported the fully protective Senate version, known as S. 47.

I believe that the protections of VAWA should extend to all groups. I am happy to report that this legislation, the all-inclusive S. 47 VAWA bill, passed Congress and was signed into law by the President on March 7, 2013.

You might be interested to know that I spoke on the floor of the House of Representatives regarding VAWA. See me speak out on the floor of the house in favor of the Senate version of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act on [my YouTube site](#).

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### **Gun Violence**

Following the tragedy at Newtown—only the latest in a recent string of gun-related tragedies—numerous pieces of legislation have been introduced to try to address gun violence.

While I firmly believe, and the courts have upheld, that the United States Constitution guarantees each American the right to own a firearm, I, like a majority of Americans, don't believe this should include military-style assault weapons.

As a member of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, I believe that Congress must pass bipartisan, comprehensive, and evidence-based legislation to deal with the recent tragedies of gun violence in our country. These tragedies have underscored the need to address the issue at the federal level.

I am a proud cosponsor of The Assault Weapons Ban Act, the bill to regulate military-style assault weapons and to ensure that the right to keep and bear arms is not without sensible limits. As the companion bill to Senator Dianne Feinstein's proposal in the Senate, the House version would reinstate the federal ban on the sale, transfer, importation, and manufacture of 157 dangerous military-style assault weapons.

I also agree that President Obama's set of 23 gun violence prevention policy recommendations should serve as an outline for action and common sense reform. I applaud the President's leadership on the issue and hope that Congress will follow suit and lead the way in reducing gun violence in our country.

The safety and well-being of my constituents, and especially our children, is my top priority. In California, we already have bans on assault weapons and high-capacity clips along with restrictions on handgun purchases. I believe that what we have accomplished in California is an important model for the nation and will make us all safer.

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### Marriage Equality

It was an amazing week on the civil rights front, specifically on the issue of marriage equality. First a major poll revealed that nearly 60 percent of Americans support same-sex marriage, including just over 80 percent of those under the age of 30.

On Tuesday, the Supreme Court began hearing arguments on the constitutionality of California's Proposition 8, which prohibits same-sex marriage. In solidarity with my LGBT constituents and LGBT Americans everywhere, I had the Pride flag flown—alongside the U.S. and California flags—at my D.C. and Long Beach offices. According to the offices of the Architect of the Capitol and the House Historian, it is likely I was the first Congressman to formally fly the Pride flag outside his or her office.

The following day, the Supreme Court heard arguments regarding the constitutionality of the Defense of Marriage Act, or DOMA. Early this year, I joined with 172 Members of the US House and 40 U.S. Senators in filing an amicus "friend of the court" brief with the U.S. Supreme Court in opposition to the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

On March 28, the Supreme Court heard U.S. v. Windsor, a case challenging Section 3 of DOMA, which defines marriage for purposes of federal law as "only a legal union between one man and one woman." This definition currently excludes married gay and lesbian couples from all marriage-based federal responsibilities and rights.

Marriage equality is a matter of dignity and basic human rights. Same-sex couples are no different in their passion, dedication, and commitment to their spouses than other couples. Equal love deserves equal respect, and equal respect demands equal rights.

The amicus brief reads in part, "we all agree that Section 3 of DOMA...lacks a rational connection to any legitimate federal purpose, and is therefore unconstitutional." The unconstitutionality of Section 3 of DOMA was upheld by the U.S. District Court and further affirmed by the United States Court of Appeals before reaching the U.S. Supreme

Court. President Barack Obama also filed an amicus brief with the U.S. Supreme Court asking the Justices to find DOMA unconstitutional.

In addition, I am a proud cosponsor of the Respect for Marriage Act in the 113th Congress which would repeal DOMA in its entirety. I wholeheartedly support the repeal of DOMA and believe that this is a critical step on the road to full LGBT Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender equality in the United States. Be assured that as a member of the House LGBT Equality Caucus, I will not rest until we end these shameful injustices.

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