



The 47th Flyer

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



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May 2, 2014

On Tuesday, I commemorated the 39th anniversary of the Fall of Saigon, which is known as Black April in the Vietnamese American community. It has been my honor to join with the Vietnamese American community of Little Saigon in my district to remember this important event.

Thirty-nine years ago, millions of Vietnamese were forced to leave their homeland for fear of persecution. Many of those people found their way to the United States, where today they comprise a strong, vibrant community that has given invaluable contributions to our nation.

This week, we give pause to remember the brave sacrifices of so many in the cause of freedom, who fought tirelessly to enable their children to live a better and brighter life. We must ensure that their sacrifices were not in vain by continuing to fight for democracy and human rights in Vietnam.



Please [click here](#) or the picture above to watch my full speech

In The 47th District

Highlights From My Community Coffee Event

I want to thank everyone who was able to make it to my Community Coffee event last weekend at the Los Alamitos-Rossmoor Library. We had more than 75 members of the community attend! It was so great to hear everyone's thoughts and to discuss ways in which we can make the 47th district better together.

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Should the Veterans Benefits Administration hire more staff to process the overwhelmingly large number of backlogged claims?

Yes - We must do anything we can to help our Veterans

Maybe - The Veterans Benefits Administration should find a way to address the issue without hiring more paid staff

No - It will cost too much money

I do not know

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



President Obama's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

Congratulations to Lian Cheun, the newest member of President Obama's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Lian Cheun is the Executive Director of Khmer Girls in Action (KGA) in Long Beach and a resident of the 47th district. Before joining KGA, Ms. Cheun worked for a number of organizations, including Asian Immigrant Women Advocates and the Asian Migrant Center, which is based in Hong Kong. From 2000 to 2002, Ms. Cheun served as an Early Academic Opportunity Program college counselor at Skyline High School and Castlemont High School in Oakland, CA. Ms. Cheun received the 2013 Panther Award from the California Reinvestment Coalition for her efforts to help students organize for better health services and student outcomes. Ms. Cheun received a B.A. from the University of California at Berkeley and an M.P.A. from California State University, Long Beach.

Learn more about the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and the newest members of the Advisory Commission by visiting <http://1.usa.gov/1hvobA9>

On The Hill

Ending the Veterans Claims Backlog

On Wednesday, I spoke on the House floor in support of an amendment to H.R. 4486, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for FY 2015, which would provide funding for the Department of Veterans' Affairs to hire more staff to help eliminate the national backlog of veterans' disability cases. Our veterans have done their duty, now it is time for the government to do its duty to assist them.



Please [click here](#) or the picture above to watch my full speech

In California there is currently one congressional affairs analyst to assist 33 congressional offices with questions about casework. This is unacceptable!

There are delays in responses to congressional caseworkers, as well as even longer delays in Aid and Attendance claims particularly with regard to elderly, frail veterans with rapidly declining health issues and approval sometimes comes too late.

Providing overtime pay for workers who are already stretched thin is a step in the right direction, but it is not enough of a solution. That is why I cosponsored an amendment that would encourage the Veterans Benefits Administration hire more staff to address the claims backlog and help our nation's veterans get assistance more quickly.

Our military doesn't leave our soldiers behind, and neither should our government.

My Virtual Office Wins an Award

The Congressional Management Foundation (CMF), a nonprofit organization that works directly with Members of Congress and staff to enhance their operations and interactions with constituents, announced today that I received a Gold Mouse Award for my congressional website www.lowenthal.house.gov. Only twelve Members of the House of Representatives received a Gold Mouse Award, and I am honored to be the only freshman Member so honored.

To put it in perspective, there are 441 House Members and my website was one of only 12 websites to receive the top award. I believe that to serve my constituents well, it is important that my office and my website provide constituents with information about what's going on in Congress and how my office can be helpful.

I think of my website as a virtual office. It allows me to hear from my constituents, interact with them, and provide help and information in many cases much quicker than through my physical offices. It is one of the most critical tools at my disposal. I'm proud that CMF has recognized the hard work that my office puts into keeping the website fresh, friendly, and functional.

Please take a moment to explore my website by visiting www.lowenthal.house.gov.

Congress U

“En Bloc” and “Voice Vote”

This week, an amendment I cosponsored was passed successfully on the House floor by a *voice vote* and was added to H.R. 4486, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for FY 2015.

Two things about this might be of interest to regular readers of Congress U.

First, the amendment moved *en bloc*. This means that several amendments to the same bill, in this case H.R.4486, are grouped together and voted on as a package. This grouping is done by unanimous consent of the House, typically by a voice vote.

A voice vote—the same mechanism used to pass my amendment—is just what it sounds like: instead of an electronic vote, where the Members enter a voting card into a machine to tally the votes, a voice vote is done by calling for 'ayes' and 'nays' on the floor. Whoever the Speaker or presiding Chairman of the House determines is in the audible majority—the ayes or the nays—carries the vote.

Many House actions begin with a voice vote. While a voice vote is recorded as an up-down vote with no details on who specifically voted one way or the other on whatever was being decided, a provision in House rules allows for any Member to request a recorded vote, in which case the Members must record their votes by electronic device.

Last Week's Poll

Now that more than three million Californians have enrolled in health care coverage through Covered California or in Medi-Cal by April 15, do you think Congress should keep voting to repeal or dismantle the Affordable Care Act?

36.8% Yes - The law is not working for the majority of Americans, and Congress must continue to try to repeal or dismantle the Affordable Care Act

4.6% Maybe - Congress should repeal only some provisions of the Affordable Care Act

55.2% No - The law is working for the majority of Americans, and Congress must instead work to make the law even better

3.4% I do not know

Thank you,



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