



The 47th Flyer

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



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August 29, 2014

One of the key government reforms I have been pursuing during the 113th Congress, and will continue to pursue, is to take the drawing of congressional districts out of the hands of state legislatures and give the responsibilities of drawing congressional districts to independent redistricting commissions..

Congressional districts are required under the United States Constitution to be reapportioned every ten years following the decennial census. This redistricting is supposed to ensure compliance with the one-person-one-vote criteria and the federal Voting Rights Act, while also adhering to more traditional redistricting concepts such as an effort to ensure compact and contiguous districts.

However, redistricting in most states allows the manipulation of elections by allowing incumbent politicians to choose their voters before the voters actually choose them.

It allows political parties—and yes it happens with equal abandon by whoever is the majority party in the state—to stack the electoral deck in favor of partisan allies or to punish political enemies.

Some individual states, like California, have implemented fairer processes, but most states continue to use redistricting to solidify the majority party's grasp on power. In addition, even the few states that have introduced reforms vary greatly in the way they go about it – causing even greater inconsistency in the way congressional districts are drawn.

And while an independent commission to draw the districts will not eliminate all political considerations from the process, removing control from those who benefit directly is an important first step.

This is why I appeared before the National Conference of State Legislatures last week in Minneapolis to detail my “Let The People Draw The Lines Act” which I introduced last year. I felt it was important for legislators from across the nation to hear about the importance of Congress requiring states to create independent redistricting commissions.

My bill builds upon legislation that I proposed in the state Senate of California, as well as language from California's Prop 11 and Prop 20, to build national standards for states to create and utilize independent redistricting commissions.

I worked very hard on this issue while in the California state legislature and I am proud that my work resulted in a citizens' initiative that gave California an independent redistricting commission. My new bill will give citizens in every

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Should the federal government provide financial assistance to those impacted by the recent 6.0 earthquake in the Bay Area?

Yes - Helping to rebuild the Bay Area helps the national economy

Maybe - But only short-term emergency loans to those who can prove damage

No - The federal government should not be involved

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state the same ability California now has to choose their Congressional district without the influence and gamesmanship of politics.

It is time for politicians to give up their control of the redistricting process and to let the people draw the lines.

On The Hill

The Affordable Medicines Caucus

Medical expenses can be one of the most burdensome, and at times, overwhelming costs borne by Americans. However, we as a nation can take further steps to reduce patient medical costs by increasing the use of high-quality, affordable medications. I believe that improving care coordination, promoting medication adherence, and reviewing options to make generics more accessible are all important components in achieving this objective.

This is why I have joined the Congressional Affordable Medicines Caucus, a bipartisan group of like-minded Members who believe in the mission to promote the increased use of high-quality, affordable medicines as a way to lower health care costs.

The Caucus will collaborate on legislation and hold briefings throughout the year to educate Members and staff on ways to achieve these goals.

Moratorium on Postal Facility Closures

In a round of 140 closures last year, the United States Postal Service (USPS) decided to shutter, over my strong objections, the large Long Beach mail processing center on Redondo Avenue near Long Beach Airport. The USPS has announced another round of closures for this year, with 87 mail processing facilities in 37 states targeted, including the City of Industry facility in Southern California.

Work formerly handled in Long Beach and now handled at the City of Industry facility will be split out between the existing Santa Ana and Anaheim processing centers creating an additional burden on these facilities and likely impacting delivery for the entire region including our district.

This is why I have signed a letter urging the House Appropriations Committee to insert language into the FY 2015 Continuing Resolution (funding bill) putting a freeze on closures of mail processing facilities until the end of FY 2015.

The closure of mail processing facilities will slow delivery in our district and across the country, and will cause a loss in jobs estimated at 15,000 across the nation. A one-year moratorium would give Congress a chance to consider reform measures that will not be as harmful to service, to customers, or to workers.

In The 47th District

Legislative Update at East Anaheim Street Business Alliance

The East Anaheim Street business district of Long Beach (centered on Anaheim St. between Junipero Avenue and PCH, and stretching north from 11th St. to 14th St.) is one of the most vibrant in the city.

More than 500 businesses in the district are members of the East Anaheim

Street Business Alliance (EASBA), which works to exchange information and encourage cooperation among district businesses. It was my pleasure to join the EASBA this week for their August meeting and give them a legislative update, listen to their concerns, and answer their questions.



If you would like me to provide a legislative update to your group in the 47th Congressional District, let me know through my website at:

<https://lowenthal.house.gov/contact/meeting.htm>

Social Security Visit

In order to assist constituents, my district office interacts with many federal offices, agencies, and departments on a regular basis.

This week, I took some time to visit the Social Security Administration office in Long Beach to thank the hard-working employees there for the work they do, not just in helping my office, but for the service they provide for everyone in the 47th District who needs them.



Congress U

Congress and the U.S. Postal Service

In 1775, the United States Congress established the U.S. Post Office and named Benjamin Franklin as our nation's first postmaster general. The power to operate the postal service of the U.S. was formally granted to the government a few years later in Article I, section 8, Clause 7 of the United States Constitution. For nearly the next 200 years, the Post Office was subject to the policy and legislative oversight of Congress, much like any other government department.

In 1971, Congress passed the Postal Reorganization Act, which abolished the U.S. Post Office Department and created the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) as an independent agency of the U.S. government's executive branch. The

USPS also must operate revenue-neutral, meaning it is supposed to break even—not be run for profit.

Under the act, operational authority was removed from Congress and transferred to a Board of Governors (whose nine members are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate) and USPS executive management.

Because the postal service is mandated by the Constitution, Congress still maintains legislative jurisdiction of the USPS. In the House this is through the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

Last Week's Poll

The U.S. is currently providing military advisors and air strikes to help the Iraqi government defeat ISIS militants. Should the U.S.:

- 19.4%** - Provide full military backing with ground troops
- 49.7%** - Continue providing just advisors and air support
- 18.1%** - Withdraw all forces and only provide military equipment and humanitarian supplies
- 12.8%** - Withdraw and provide no support

Thank you,



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