



The 47th Flyer

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



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December 13, 2013

Last week, the world witnessed the passing of South African civil rights leader, Nelson Mandela. He has been called a hero, a revolutionary, and an icon. But these words are too small to encompass a spirit and life that were larger than words. He changed the course of an entire nation and an entire people. For a man who gave so much, who survived and triumphed over crushing adversity and in the processes helped free his nation from the shackles of apartheid, now it is his turn to rest. The South African people have lost a great leader and the world has lost a great man.

One of Nelson Mandela's most famous quotes is: "After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb." This could not be any more fitting for the hill we are faced with as we end the first session of this Congress. Today is the last day of first session of the 113th Congress, and, thankfully, critical deals were finally agreed upon.

THE BUDGET DEAL, THE AUTHORIZATION OF DEFENSE FUNDING

Yesterday, the House finally voted on and passed a long-awaited budget package.

Labeled the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013, the deal sets overall discretionary spending for the current fiscal year at \$1.012 trillion—about halfway between the Senate budget level of \$1.058 trillion and the House budget level of \$967 billion. The agreement also provides \$63 billion in sequester relief over two years, split evenly between defense and non-defense programs.

The budget agreement is a good first step toward bringing our budget process back to some state of normalcy. It is a positive sign that the agreement was crafted in a bipartisan manner. Is it the perfect solution? Of course not. But that is the nature of compromise – both sides giving and getting. Collaboration and compromise is the way Congress is supposed to work, and I'm glad to see that it is still possible.

The authorization to fund the Department of Defense, referred to as the FY2014 National Defense Authorization Act, is a bipartisan, bicameral agreement that specifies the budget and expenditures of the United States Department of Defense and establishes funding levels and sets the policies under which money will be spent. On Thursday, this bill was also voted on and passed. I voted "yes."

Despite the partisan and political battles, I believe the passage of these two votes marks an historic accomplishment for the 113th Congress. Yes - we finally have a budget compromise, but there still remains so much more to accomplish.

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The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is considering allowing cell phone calls in airplanes. Should cell phone calls be allowed during flights?

Yes - you should be able to make cell phone calls

Yes - you should be able to use your cell phone for navigating the internet, but not for making calls

Maybe

No - this a security risk and could be a nuisance to other passengers

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

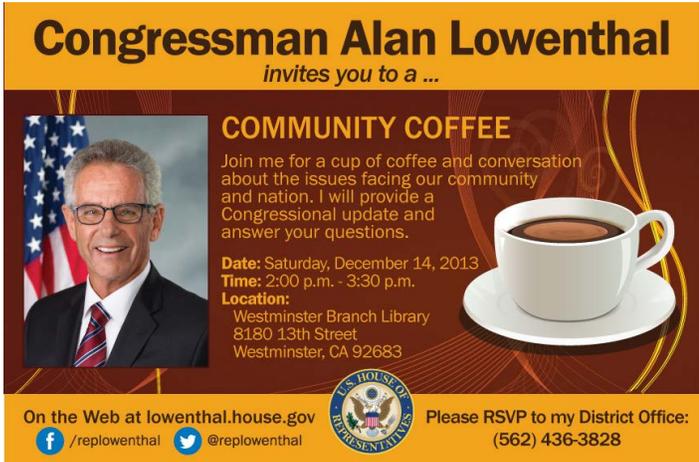
HUMAN RIGHTS ARE BASIC RIGHTS

The rights enshrined in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) uphold the same basic principles of liberty and freedom enshrined within the United State Constitution and Bill of Rights. [A Resolution that I introduced](#) on Tuesday, supported by dozens of my colleagues, honors the 65th Anniversary of Human Rights Day and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). My hope is that it will shed much needed light on the importance and protection of human rights in our global society.

Whether it is negotiating trade agreements between countries, promoting democracy at home and abroad, or combating discrimination based on race, gender, or sexual orientation and gender identity, human rights play a critical role in our everyday lives and the lives of people around the world. The Congress, and the world, must recognize that those who are denied basic human rights, such as the freedoms of speech and religious or political expression, are therefore denied an opportunity to be treated with respect and with dignity.

COMMUNITY COFFEE THIS SATURDAY IN WESTMINSTER

Please join me this Saturday in Westminster for another Community Coffee!



Congressman Alan Lowenthal
invites you to a ...

COMMUNITY COFFEE

Join me for a cup of coffee and conversation about the issues facing our community and nation. I will provide a Congressional update and answer your questions.

Date: Saturday, December 14, 2013
Time: 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Location:
Westminster Branch Library
8180 13th Street
Westminster, CA 92683

On the Web at lowenthal.house.gov
f /replowenthal @replowenthal

Please RSVP to my District Office:
(562) 436-3828

The graphic features a portrait of Congressman Alan Lowenthal on the left, a white coffee cup on a saucer on the right, and the U.S. House of Representatives seal at the bottom center. The background is a dark brown with a subtle American flag pattern.

This is an opportunity for you to join me for a cup of coffee and conversation about the issues facing our community and nation. I will be providing a Congressional update to attendees and, as always, will answer your questions.

I hope to see you there.

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DISCRETIONARY vs. NON-DISCRETIONARY SPENDING

As mentioned earlier, the House passed the Bipartisan Budget Act, which sets overall discretionary spending for the current fiscal year at \$1.012 trillion.

Discretionary spending refers to the portion of federal government spending that is decided upon by Congress each fiscal year through appropriations bills and they are usually divided into two categories: defense and non-defense. Discretionary spending is used to fund departments, agencies, and programs such as the Department of Education, the Environmental Protection Agency, and our nation's nutritional assistance programs. A good way to remember this fact is to know that "discretionary" spending requires Congress' "discretion" or action.

Discretionary spending is different from mandatory spending, which is also called "non-discretionary spending." Non-discretionary spending goes toward programs such as Medicare, Social Security, and Medicaid (in California, Medicaid is called "Medi-Cal"). The funding for these programs is, unlike discretionary programs, required by law.

LAST WEEK'S POLL RESULTS

With four days left in the first session of the 113th Congress, what should be Congress' top priority? (*More than one answer was selectable*)

- 18.4%** Comprehensive Immigration Reform
- 19.7%** Raising the minimum wage
- 55.3%** Completing a balanced budget
- 17.1%** Other

Thank you,



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