



# The 47th Flyer

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



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December 15, 2015

## Keeping The Government Open

The short-term funding legislation that the entire U.S. government had been operating under for most of this year was set to expire Thursday, potentially shutting down the government again.

On Thursday, the House voted on and passed H.R. 83, the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015. This bill combined 11 of 12 appropriations bills for the various federal departments and agencies, and also included a short-term two-month continuing resolution for the Department of Homeland Security (see *Congress U – CRomnibus*, below).

Also within the bill were two items not only helpful to the 47<sup>th</sup> District, but items I have worked on very closely.

The first was an additional \$7.74 million for much-needed dredging of the Queensway Bay channel, which sits at the mouth of the Los Angeles River in Long Beach and is a key waterway used by hundreds of thousands people traveling to Catalina Island ferries as well as tens of thousands of recreational boaters. This new funding is in addition to more than \$5 million that I helped secure earlier for initial dredging work, which is set to begin soon. All told, the combined funding will allow the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to completely clear a full navigable channel by removing years of sediment build-up from the frequent silting that occurs as debris and sediment flows down and out of the L.A. River.

The second item in the funding bill that I worked on was a collective \$56 million in funding for the STARBASE and Sunburst Youth Challenge education programs, both of which operate programs at the Joint Forces Training Base in Los Alamitos.

I am proud that I was able to get \$25 million included for the STARBASE program, which engages local fifth-grade elementary students by exposing them to STEM subjects through an inquiry based curriculum. The goal of the program is to motivate these students to explore Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) as they continue their education. The academies serve students that are historically under-represented in STEM: students who live in inner cities or rural locations, are socio-economically disadvantaged, low in academic performance, or have a disability are in the target group.

I also worked very hard to get a \$31 million increase in funding for the Sunburst program. You can read more about the Sunburst program in the graduation article below.

Ultimately, I decided to vote 'no' on the bill despite my hard work and support on many items contained within it, including the dredging and STARBASE funds. Last

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Should the environment and climate change be a priority for the Congress in 2015?

Yes, it should be a top priority

Maybe, but there are many other more important issues

No, it should not be a priority

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minute additions to the bill such as attacks on the Dodd-Frank consumer financial protections and a dangerous expansion of campaign contribution limits to unheard of levels made it impossible for me to vote 'yes' with a clear conscience. I believe these additions to the bill will hurt people in the 47th District more than the rest of the bill will help them.

## On The Hill

### Senate Report On Torture

This week, the U.S. Senate Select Intelligence Committee (SSCI) released a report detailing the Central Intelligence Agency's detention and interrogation program after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

The 480-page report, which details horrific treatment by CIA interrogators of some detainees, can be seen in its entirety [here](#).

Our nation was founded on the concepts of freedom, democracy, and personal rights. For a large portion of our history, we have taken actions based on the moral high ground of the sanctity of individual freedoms.

Unfortunately, the release of the SSCI report indicates that the CIA tortured detainees and routinely misled the White House and Congress about the use of torture with these detainees.

While President Obama discontinued these interrogation techniques after taking office in 2009, it will require a great deal of national reflection and action to begin to undo the damage.

In the end, the SSCI report must serve to remind us how easily good intentions in the name of patriotism and national defense can go awry.

As Senator Diane Feinstein stated in her Dec. 9 Los Angeles Times opinion piece, *'In the wake of 9/11, we were desperate to bring those responsible for the brutal attacks to justice. But even that urgency did not justify torture. The United States must be held to a higher standard than our enemies, yet some of our actions did not clear that bar. It is time to publicly examine how that happened.'*

This report must also serve as a warning that we can never let this happen again. I believe that Congress must now act to ensure that it cannot and will not.

### Human Rights Resolution

On Wednesday, I introduced a House Resolution honoring the 66<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the celebration of Human Rights Day on December 10.

The UDHR, championed by Eleanor Roosevelt, represents the world's first comprehensive international agreement about the specific rights and freedoms of all human beings. To date, the UDHR holds the Guinness World Record for the most translated document, with over 416 different translations, representing the universal sharing of respect for human rights.

During my tenure in Congress, I have worked tirelessly to promote human rights around the globe and to ensure we put pressure on the world's worst violators of basic human 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. This Resolution, supported by dozens of my

colleagues, will shed a much needed light on the importance and protection of human rights in our global society.



To see my floor speech on the resolution, click on the image above, or [click here](#).

## In The 47th District

### Sunburst Students Graduate

The annual graduation ceremony for the Sunburst Youth Challenge Academy (SYCA) took place this Friday.

Supporting the SYCA program is one of the most fulfilling parts of my service in the US House of Representatives (and as detailed above, I was proud to be able to help get additional funding for the program).

The Sunburst Youth Academy is one of California's National Guard Youth Challenge Programs (NGYCP) and is located on the Joint Forces Training Base in Los Alamitos. The mission of the NGYCP is to intervene in and reclaim the lives of 16-18 year old high school dropouts and at-risk youth, producing graduates with the values, life skills, education, and self-discipline necessary to succeed as productive citizens. The academy offers a 22 week residential program with military-style training that emphasizes the development of academic, cooperation, and leadership skills together with improvements in confidence, pride, and self-esteem. Students who take part in the program obtain 55 high school curriculum credits.

The students in this graduating class were featured in a series on the CBS Evening News which you can watch by [clicking here](#).

## Congress U

### CRomnibus

The major funding bill passed this week was being referred to in the halls of Congress, and among a few of the wonkier news outlets, by the title 'CRomnibus,' pronounced: KROM-nee-bus.

It is one part abbreviation, one part Capitol Hill-speak, mixed together to give you one of the wonkier terms you will hear related to Washington, D.C.

The 'CR' abbreviation part of the name comes from the Capitol Hill term for a stopgap spending bill known as a "continuing resolution." Because the Senate and

House have been unable to resolve and pass a full budget collectively, the government was already operating under a CR that was set to lapse as of Thursday at midnight. CRs maintain funding for various departments and agencies at a flat, across-the-board level, and do not provide for any changes to address inflation or increases in demand for a particular service in a department or agency.

House Speaker John Boehner decided to collect eleven of the proposed spending bills for the various federal departments and agencies into a single bill called an omnibus. In addition, a two-month CR for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was included.

Because the omnibus and the DHS CR were included in the same bill, the term CRomnibus was coined.

### Last Week's Poll

*Last week's poll, which asked what Congress should focus on in 2015, did not include an answer related to either the environment or climate change. I want you to know that defending the environment and addressing our impact on climate change are overriding concerns for me and I will focus on both just as I always have.*

#### **What should the new session of Congress focus on in 2015? (Choose one or more answers)**

- 52.0% Passing a full budget instead of short term fixes
- 49.9% Protecting Social Security and Medicare
- 46.1% Comprehensive immigration reform
- 46.1% Improving the economy and creating more jobs
- 44.8% Balancing the budget/Reduce the deficit
- 43.0% Tax reform
- 42.2% Getting rid of congressional district gerrymandering
- 40.8% Continuing to improve the Veterans Administration
- 39.2% Improving education/school systems
- 35.9% Improving healthcare
- 34.8% Investing in transportation infrastructure
- 33.0% Addressing the threat posed by ISIS and terrorism
- 32.1% Raising the minimum wage
- 31.3% Reducing gun violence
- 28.8% Addressing racial profiling and policing practices
- 23.9% Passing equal pay legislation
- 18.9% Other
- 11.9% Fighting the spread of Ebola

Thank you,



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Member of Congress

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