

Northern California News and Events

Supporting the Taxpayer Investment in the Redding Veterans Home

As you may know, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the state of California agreed several years ago to share the costs of constructing a 150 bed veterans home in Redding. Federal taxpayers have since provided over fifty million dollars of the total cost, which is the maximum level of federal support allowed under the law. California committed to pay the remaining cost of the facility and to fund its daily operation, but, unfortunately, its dire fiscal condition has repeatedly forced the state to postpone keeping its end of the cost-sharing deal. I am especially alarmed that California's budget challenges could postpone the facility indefinitely. Accordingly, I have [asked](#) VA Secretary Eric Shinseki to inform me whether the Department has any authority to protect the interest of federal taxpayers and to clarify whether the VA expects California to open the home in a particular time period.

While I strongly support restoring fiscal responsibility in our nation, I also believe that it is important for California to honor its commitment to veterans. As the state reviews its budget proposal, I hope that it will identify funds going toward waste or ineffective programs and redirect those dollars to the Redding veterans home. Please know that I will continue to monitor this situation and do everything I can to ensure that taxpayer interests are protected and that the long-recognized needs of Northern California veterans are met.

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Celebrating a Century of Flood Protection

Recently, I joined the Central Valley Flood Control Agency for their 100th anniversary celebration.



Northern California is one of the most flood-prone areas in the entire country, and the hard work of this agency has helped protect those of us who live and work behind these levees. I have had the pleasure of working with its board over the years on a number of flood control projects, some during very difficult times. It is very important that all levels of government cooperate to strengthen our flood protection system.

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Right Now

Obama Administration Blocks Job-Creating Pipeline Project

In case you missed it, the Obama Administration recently rejected the application for constructing the Keystone Pipeline, a project that would create tens of thousands of jobs through transporting up to 1.1 million barrels of crude oil per day from Canada to refineries in Texas. With my support, the House of Representatives led the effort to compel the Administration to promptly render a decision after it initially indicated that a decision wouldn't be made until after the 2012 elections. Unfortunately, the Administration has made the wrong decision, which is inexplicable considering that the project would help put Americans back to work at a time of unacceptably high unemployment and help bolster our nation's energy supplies.

In rejecting the application, the Administration failed to heed the concern from the President's own Council on Jobs and Competitiveness which stated in its 2011 year-end [report](#) : "[The] regulatory and permitting obstacles that could threaten the development of some energy projects, negatively impact jobs and weaken our energy infrastructure need to be addressed." By denying the Keystone Pipeline application and requiring the company building the project to restart the application process, the Administration has created another time-consuming bureaucratic hurdle—even though the pipeline has already undergone extensive environmental impact studies and expert scientific review.

The Obama Administration should listen to its own job council and allow for the expedited approval of this project. Its denial will keep thousands of unemployed Americans out of work, undermine our nation's energy security as gas prices are escalating, and needlessly force an ally in Canada to send their energy to China and elsewhere. I anticipate the Administration's action will not be the last word, however. The House will almost certainly speak on this issue again in the coming weeks, and I will continue to do everything I can to get this commonsense project approved.

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Repeal of CLASS Act Affirms Flaws of Obama's Health Care Law

Recently, I joined members of both parties to pass H.R. 1173, which repeals the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) Act. The CLASS Act is a new long-term care entitlement program created by President Obama's health care reform, but the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recently concluded that it was fundamentally flawed and too costly to implement. It was designed to collect premiums for five years before it would have to start paying claims, which allowed supporters of the health care law to claim that it would reduce the budget deficit in the near term. However, just as the Obama administration's own nonpartisan actuaries had warned months before the law was passed, it proved impossible to structure the program in a way that would cover its future expenses. While HHS has acknowledged that the program cannot be implemented successfully, a court could still order them to attempt to do so as long as the law remains on the books, so Congress needs to act to end this failed experiment once and for all. More broadly, I believe the false promises of the CLASS Act are another good illustration of why we need to repeal the entire health law and replace it with more substantive reforms that actually reduce the cost of health care.

I spoke on the House floor in support of the legislation. You can watch a video of my speech [here](#).

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Recent Past

President Obama Ignores the Constitution

President Obama recently appointed the director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) and three members of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) without the constitutionally required consent of the Senate. Presidents are allowed to make temporary appointments when the Senate is in recess and unavailable to consider his nominees, but President Obama took an unprecedented step by making temporary appointments even though the Senate is still in session. He might be frustrated that the Senate has objections to some of his nominations, but that does not justify this blatant disregard for the checks and balances of the Constitution.

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