



CONGRESSMAN GEORGE RADANOVICH

SERVING THE 19TH DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Comprehensive Approach to Immigration Crucial for Border Protection

Our nation's immigration system is in serious need of improvement. In particular, we must take control of illegal immigration and create a better system to address this problem.

We know that some undocumented immigrants drain our social resources. At the same time, many of them do contribute to our economy, whether it is in agriculture, hotels, restaurants, landscaping or other industries. It is frankly unrealistic to think we can deport them all, as some in Congress have suggested, without having a significant impact on the nation.

I have taken an active role in the immigration debate. Specifically, late last year, I consistently met with a group of my colleagues in Congress to discuss thoughts and ideas on immigration reform. We all agreed that immigration is a problem that must be addressed and tougher border security is critical for immigration reform.

The House of Representatives recently passed the *Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act*, H.R.

4321. I support tightening our borders, making American citizenship valuable and protecting the citizens from terrorist threats. While this bill does an excellent job of addressing our border security problems, the bill lacked a guest worker provision to address the millions of undocumented workers who are currently living in the U.S. Without such a provision, the bill certainly did not address the needs of the San Joaquin Valley, let alone the country, and therefore I could not support it.

The establishment of a guest worker program is imperative. This is not amnesty. It is a recognition that undocumented workers are part of the fabric of our economy. A guest worker program will allow us to find out who these people are, where they live, and where they work to ensure they're paying their fair share of taxes like the rest of us. It will also allow us to know if they pose a threat to our nation.

Public opinion polls are also revealing what Americans think about illegal immigration and how it should be

addressed. A January 2006 Time Magazine poll reported that 76 percent of Americans (77 percent of Republicans and 72 percent of Democrats) favor allowing illegal immigrants in the U.S. earn citizenship if they learn English, have a job and pay taxes. This is crucial information as Congress considers how to draft and implement a guest worker program.

I am committed to working toward the creation of sensible and realistic immigration policies that will be a benefit, not a burden, to the citizens of the 19th district.

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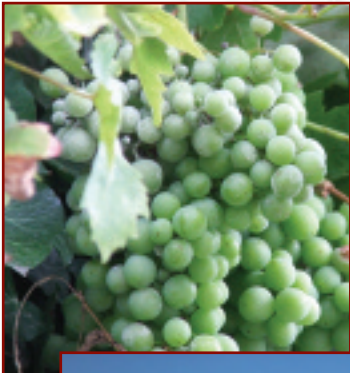
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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

www.radanovich.house.gov



This Month's Hot Topic: The Energy Bill

Last year, Congress approved and the President signed H.R. 6, the *Energy Policy Act of 2005*. I voted in support of this bipartisan legislation, which creates a new national energy strategy by encouraging the use of renewable energy, increasing energy efficiency and improving energy infrastructure.

This bill gives the San Joaquin Valley cleaner and more reliable energy, and jobs to improve our economy. The bill provides incentives for the use of biomass, often a byproduct of agriculture, as a renewable energy source. The legislation also provides incentives for the use of clean energy technologies.

I successfully included two amendments in the legislation. The first amendment was a hydroelectric

licensing provision, which helps to ensure the future reliability of our nation's electricity grid. In addition, the language helps the U.S. to maintain a diverse, competitive, domestic energy supply. This provision protects our nation's environmental resources while preserving the future viability of hydropower, our nation's largest renewable, emissions-free resource.

The second amendment I authored requires the Secretary of Interior to study existing hydro facilities throughout the nation to determine opportunities for increased hydroelectric power. Such action will provide the federal government and our citizens with an understanding of where it is most economically and technically feasible to augment hydroelectric power.



“This bill gives the San Joaquin Valley cleaner and more reliable energy, and jobs to improve our economy.”

—REP. GEORGE RADANOVICH

Gateway Communities Cooperation Act—H.R. 585

Local input must be considered when changes are proposed in the management of our national parks, forests and other lands. My legislation, H.R. 585, will ensure that communities just outside the perimeter of these federal lands have an opportunity to voice their opinions during the federal planning process.

This measure was approved by the House of Representatives on Dec. 6, 2005 and is awaiting Senate action.



PROGRESS ON SETTLING LAWSUIT TO RESTORE THE SAN JOAQUIN RIVER

Senator Dianne Feinstein and I worked to encourage the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and Friant Water Users Authority to engage in settlement talks regarding a lawsuit to restore the San Joaquin River. The NRDC and Friant have been meeting for several months to develop a settlement to the lawsuit that has dragged on for 17 years. It is very controversial because of the impact restoration will have on our valley's water supply.

The parties are now working with the Bureau of Reclamation to finalize a settlement. Other interested parties, including irrigation districts and the State of California, are being kept up to date on the progress of this effort. I am optimistic a settlement will be reached and federal legislation is likely to follow. The resolution of this 17-year lawsuit will be a significant step in improving the reliability and certainty of our Valley water supply.



RADANOVICH PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM INDECENT MATERIAL

I joined 389 of my colleagues in voting in support of H.R. 310, the Broadcast Decency and Enforcement Act. The growth of indecent material on broadcast television prompted this legislation which amends the Communications Act of 1934 to provide increasing penalties for violators of broadcast standards. These penalties will discourage "wardrobe malfunctions" and improper language from being broadcast on television and radio, particularly during times when children are likely to be in the audience.

Eradicating Methamphetamine: Protecting Our Communities

I continue to push for tougher legislation regarding methamphetamine (meth). I supported H.R. 3889, the *Methamphetamine Epidemic Elimination Act*, when it passed the Energy and Commerce Committee. The measure is awaiting House floor action.

This bill will help communities fight meth by restricting the sales of pseudo-ephedrine and placing tighter controls on the importation of the drug from other countries. In the coming year, I will work with local law enforcement and my colleagues on eradicating the epidemic.

Meth is the most common drug used in the San Joaquin Valley and is

devastating many communities. More than 15,000 people a year receive drug treatment for meth alone in Madera, Fresno, and Merced counties. Because of the remoteness of many areas in these counties, large Mexican drug



gangs have set-up superlabs that can produce up to 120 lbs. of meth in a cycle. While aggressive law enforcement has led to a decline in

these superlabs, they are still a problem, as are numerous small labs.

Few regions of the country have been as adversely affected by meth as the Valley. Many of the local law enforcement resources are now used to fight meth. Not only does meth, a highly addictive drug, destroy the lives of its users and lead to more crime, it destroys those around them.

No drug is associated with more social problems than meth, especially family abuse. This also increases the cost and work for Child Protective Services, who has to stand in for the parents, and puts a greater burden on the larger community.

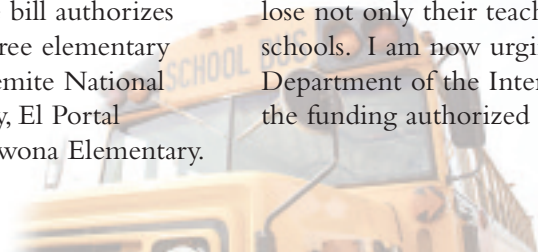
Assistance for Yosemite Schoolchildren

In December, S. 136 was approved by Congress thanks in part to the efforts of Sen. Dianne Feinstein. The bill included a provision I authored to authorize funding for schoolchildren in Yosemite National Park.

The legislation authorizes the Department of the Interior to provide supplemental funding for children

attending the schools within Yosemite National Park. These are the children of Park employees who live a significant distance from any other public schools. The bill authorizes assistance for the three elementary schools serving Yosemite National Park: Yosemite Valley, El Portal Elementary and Wawona Elementary.

Passage of this measure is a huge achievement for the schoolchildren in Yosemite who are in critical need of this assistance. Without it, they may lose not only their teachers, but their schools. I am now urging the Department of the Interior to allocate the funding authorized in S. 136.



Important Message for Seniors: Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

Last year, I voted for and Congress approved the *Medicare Prescription Drug Modernization Act*, H.R. 1, which President Bush signed into law. As a result, Medicare beneficiaries, regardless of income, health status, or prescription drug usage, now have access to prescription drug coverage. Medicare prescription drug coverage is insurance that covers both brand-name and generic prescription drugs at participating pharmacies.

Medicare drug plans don't have to cover every drug that's included in Medicare prescription drug coverage. Seniors should review what drugs are covered by the Medicare drug plans

available in your area and try to join one that covers the same prescriptions you take now.

“Medicare prescription drug coverage provides real protection for people who have very high drug costs.”

—REP. GEORGE RADANOVICH

If the plan doesn't cover your exact prescriptions, a transition period is required where your current drugs may be covered for a certain length of time while you work with your doctor to find an alternative drug that is covered by the plan. If your doctor believes you need to take your current drug and should not switch to a covered drug, you or your doctor can contact your plan and ask for an “exception,” which means the plan agrees to pay for your current drug. If the plan refuses to give you an exception, you can appeal the plan's decision.

However, if you are currently stabilized on certain specific prescription drugs (like drugs for depression, cancer or HIV/AIDS), you don't have to switch to a different prescription drug. Please talk to your doctor or pharmacist to see if your prescription drugs qualify.

Because the program is new, I understand there may be concerns about it. Therefore, I am helping to facilitate meetings between local seniors who are unsure of the specifics of the program and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) officials in California to answer any questions seniors may have. Please call my local office for the specific date and location of these meetings.



For more information on this new program, please visit www.medicare.gov or call

1-800-MEDICARE

Saving Medicaid from Bankruptcy

Reforming Medicaid, the state-run healthcare system for the poor, proved to be the greatest healthcare challenge facing Congress over the past year. Without changes, Medicaid was scheduled to be bankrupt soon and many governors were worried they would have to trim many people of their benefits.

Instead, Congress passed the *Deficit Reduction Act*, S. 1932 to give states greater flexibility for programs, eliminate wasteful spending on pharmaceuticals, encourage personal responsibility, and eliminate Medicaid benefits for those who try to shelter their assets. These changes will help some of the flaws in the Medicaid program.

Merchant Marine Benefits

I am proud to honor the Merchant Marines who helped us win World War II and those who may be called upon to serve their country in the future. This year I introduced the *Combat Merchant Mariners Veterans Benefits Act of 2005*, which will provide veterans' benefits to Merchant Marines who serve during wartime. This bill is not

limited to WW II veterans, but would benefit all who have served in conflict for 12 months or longer. Those who are permanently disabled during conflict do not have to meet this length-of-service requirement. It is important that we help all of those who answer our nation's highest call, even if they are not part of the official Armed Forces.

Reducing Our Nation's Deficit

After setting an \$843 billion cap on discretionary spending for FY 2006, Congress took aim at reducing mandatory spending through budget reconciliation. The final *Deficit Reduction Act* results in \$39.7 billion in savings over the next 5 years.

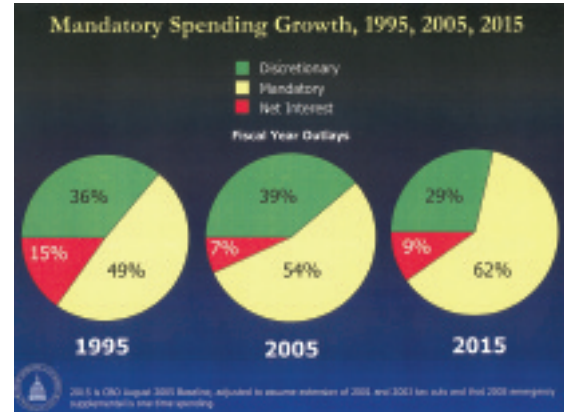
These savings are critical to the future sustainability of our federal budget. Congress cannot allow mandatory spending to continue to grow at a rate almost twice that of our economy, which is setting record highs.

These savings come from slowing the rate of growth in federal mandatory spending. Mandatory spending is increasing at 6 percent a year and consumes 54 percent of our total budget. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates if mandatory spending is not slowed, it would consume over 62 percent of the total budget by 2015.

I strongly supported a provision in the initial draft of the budget reconciliation, which would have allowed for Ocean Continental Shelf (OCS) and Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) drilling. These provisions would have provided a combined \$2.7 billion in savings. Unfortunately, both provisions were stripped from the bill.

The *Deficit Reduction Act* also provides an additional \$1 billion for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to help those in need with their winter heating bills due to Hurricane Katrina, as well as others in need.

This bill was recently signed into federal law by the President. Americans should feel confident that Congress is working to ensure their tax dollars are spent wisely.



Projected mandatory spending growth without the *Deficit Reduction Act*. Source: House Budget Committee

“The United States has the resources to be energy self-sufficient, and the technological ability to provide for our needs in an environmentally sound manner.”

—REP. GEORGE RADANOVICH



UNEMPLOYMENT RATE LOWEST IN YEARS

Nationally, despite the fallout from Hurricane Katrina and Rita, the number of people on unemployment benefits has dropped to 291,000, the smallest number since September 23, 2000. Currently, the national unemployment rate is holding steady at 5 percent. As of November 2005, Fresno's unemployment rate was 8.5 percent; Madera 7.1 percent; and Modesto 7.4 percent. This is great news for our region and is a vast improvement over the previous double-digit unemployment numbers that plagued our region in recent years.

I cosponsored H.R. 27, the Job Training Improvement Act, which passed in the House last year and is now awaiting Senate action. The people of our Valley would benefit from H.R. 27 because it enhances the workforce investment system in our nation by strengthening one-stop career centers, providing for more effective governance arrangements, promoting access to a more comprehensive array of employment, training, and related services, establishing a targeted approach to serving youth, and improving performance accountability.