

Congresswoman Grace F. Napolitano

Report to the Community

Spring 2007

UPDATES FROM CONGRESS

Busy Start in 2007

The new 110th Congress implemented a work-day calendar changing the number of days working from 3 to 5 per week, greatly expanding the actual time Representatives would have to conduct the people's business in committees, working on legislation, and voting on the floor in Washington, DC. This has diminished the Mondays or Fridays normally spent working in the Members' home district.

Power, which has jurisdiction over the Bureau of Reclamation and covers 17 western states.

Environmental Protection Agency

Meeting with Benjamin Grumbles, Assistant Administrator, EPA Office of Water to discuss Global Warming that is causing very atypical and unusual rainfall patterns across the United States. Our residents must realize the seriousness of our water shortages and help by conserving as much water as possible. Solutions to prepare for unpredictable rainfall patterns were discussed and included cleaning up our local groundwater aquifers and recycling, reusing and storing water from local rainfall.

auto traffic of the I-5 and of the Alameda Corridor East railroad project. She received the latest Gateway Cities and San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments reports from Congresswoman Napolitano.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3
			4	5	6
			7	8	9
			10	11	12
			13	14	15
			16	17	18
			19	20	21
			22	23	24
			25	26	27
			28	29	30
			31		

In spite of this busy schedule our office has continued to conduct important meetings, whether in Washington, DC or in Southern California:

Bureau of Reclamation

Meeting with Commissioner Bob Johnson in the Capitol's Rayburn Room to request assistance to our communities on local water recycling and groundwater cleanup programs, known as Title 16 projects. Congresswoman Napolitano is Chair of the Subcommittee on Water &

Secretary of Transportation
Congresswoman Napolitano joined a helicopter tour of Los Angeles County, the Alameda Corridor, and the 5, 10, and 60 freeways with U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Mary Peters, followed by a Los Angeles and Long Beach port tour. Secretary Peters was shown the major congestion on the I-5 freeway and the serious safety problems created by the railroad grade crossing throughout our district. The Secretary was well versed and acknowledged the traffic congestion, air pollution, and rail safety issues in Southeast Los Angeles County, especially cognizant of the expected increased



Congresswoman Napolitano explains traffic congestion issues to Transportation Secretary Mary Peters

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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

May 2007

Dear Friends:

Our current 110th Congress has not only brought forth historic changes but has given us many new challenges and great opportunities for our district. We continue to work diligently towards providing you with the services and support you deserve, while ensuring our communities continue to strive to become safer and more prosperous.

As the new Chair of the House Water and Power Subcommittee I want to ensure our ability to provide future clean water supplies needed to stimulate economic growth and address population increases, both vital for the future of California.

Being appointed to the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee is a blessing and assists my efforts to address railroad and highway transportation needs faced by our area: the most ignored, congested and underserved transportation system in the country.

We must work on de-stigmatizing mental health and provide care for the many veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I continue to co-chair the bipartisan Congressional Mental Health Caucus along with Congressman Tim Murphy from Pennsylvania. Mental illness devastates individuals, families and whole communities. Congress must be made more aware of its social and economic impact.

I am seriously concerned about the future welfare of thousands of American young men and women serving 2, 3 and 4 deployments in Iraq and for the much needed resources that our men and women will need when they come home, which are currently underfunded, understaffed and underdeveloped. We must be prepared to provide adequate job training, continued medical coverage, and mental health service to help them cope with easing back into normal society.

Citizens' comments, concerns, perspectives and views are important to me. Please complete and return the included survey (see page 7) to help me better understand your point of view. To place yourself on our electronic newsletter mailing list, please provide your email address on the survey or via the 38th District website.

As always, my staff and I remain committed to providing constituent services to you. Thank you for the privilege of serving you.

Warmest regards,

n

Updated 38th District Website

Our newer methods of communication are listed below:

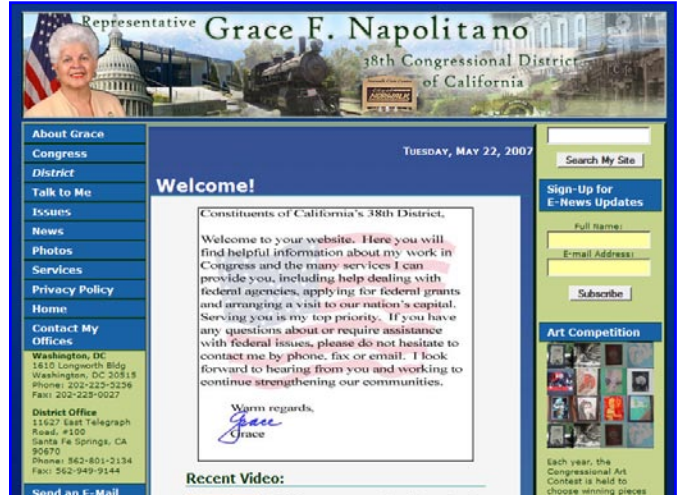
- **E-News updates** to keep you posted on Washington news are sent with links to important resources or updates on upcoming events. Sign up at:

<http://napolitano.house.gov/enews>

- Online resources for the **Congressional Mental Health Caucus** at:

<http://napolitano.house.gov/mhcaucus>

The Caucus, Co-Chaired by Congresswoman Napolitano and Congressman Tim Murphy (R-Pennsylvania), provides an overview of current legislation, a list of membership, and connects you to recent articles / studies on the subject of mental health.



- **Video of Congresswoman Napolitano's House Floor speeches**, Transportation Committee hearings and Water & Power subcommittee hearings can be viewed at:

<http://napolitano.house.gov/news>

Women of the Year

Congresswoman Napolitano recognized 34 women from the 38th Congressional District at her 2007 Women of the Year, "Unsung Heroines" Luncheon. This year's theme "Goddess of Pomona" highlighted the extraordinary contributions women have made



through volunteerism and civic participation in our communities. Each recipient was nominated by their own community based organization for their tireless effort, steadfast dedication, and inspirational leadership.

Josefa Ariaz - Department of Children and Family Services, **Candace Rose Mary Brouger** - Montebello-E. L.A. Breakfast Club, **Margie Buddha's Light Hsi Lai School**, **Ching Chausse** - Hsi Lai **Marcella Colwell** - Montebello Senior Center, **Guadalupe** - Division of Juvenile Justice, **Rachel Duran** - Pico Rivera Improvement Association, **Jannie Gonzales** - Norwalk Club, **Gayanne Hamo** - Holy Cross Armenian Senior Club, **Mariana Herrera** - CHOICES, **Peggy Ibarra** - L.A. County Fire Department, **Kubo** - Soroptimist International - Puente Pomona Police Department, **Nicole Martinez** - San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center, **Annie Plack** Senior Club, **Harriett Robbins** - Norwalk Woman's - Rowland Unified School District, **Maxine Sears** - Park Senior Center, **Socorro Torralba** - Iglesia Jesus

Barry - Young Ladies & Gentlemen of Tomorrow, **Carrasco** - CHOICES, **Yu-Bei "Peggy" Chan Temple**, **Maxine Coleman** - Church of Christ, **Coronado** - Nogales High School, **Panayiota Courelli** Veterans Council, **Barbara Fish**-Hacienda Heights Presbyterian Church, **Sylvia Gutierrez** - Pio Pico Women's Apostolic Cathedral, **Ynelda Hernandez** - Happy Years **Mary Herrera** - Pico Rivera Arts and Culture Committee, **Cynthia A. Jimenez** - Boy Scout Troop and Pack 604, **Irene Hills**, **Rosie Lopez** - Norwalk Lion's Club, **Virginia Madrigal** - Garfield High School Army JROTC, **Sally Milano** - Montebello Police Department, **Faye Portillo** - V.I.P. Club, **Lilia Rodriguez** - L.A. CADA, **Aida Sandoval** Norwalk Public Safety, **Carmen Sepulveda** - Bassett Es Amor, **Marilyn Wotring** -Calvary Baptist Church

Updates From Congress

Continued from Page 1

Union Pacific Railroad and LA County Fire Dept.

Union Pacific Railroad Chairman Jim Young visited our office to discuss safety issues of UP railroads and their affect on our neighborhoods, expressing citizens concerns over the infrastructure and safety of railroad tracks and grade crossings, especially after the 5 local train derailments of the past few years. Mr. Young reported their recent investment of more than \$60 million in its two main Los Angeles train lines, upgrading to new track and new concrete ties. The Congresswoman thanked Mr. Young for putting in this new infrastructure, but also expressed her concern on how their work required the closing of multiple grade crossings, necessitating the creation of Fire Department emergency service crews on both sides of tracks for handling any emergencies, which then cost our Los Angeles County Fire Department additional expenditures and extra manpower. The Congresswoman requested that the railroad reimburse the LACFD for these services, resulting in a \$55,466.40 payment to them.

Assistance to Small Business

SBA Assistance available to Small Businesses! Your business may be eligible for low interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration. These disaster loans will assist small businesses who have been financially impacted by the low temperatures and freezing conditions that occurred from January 6 to January 19, 2007, and do not have the financial ability to offset this impact without hardship.

Small businesses may qualify for **Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs)** of up to \$1.5 million to help meet financial obligations and operating expenses. Loans have an interest rate of 4% and a maximum term of 30 years. To date, SBA has approved more than \$5.4 million in loans.

For more information and application forms, call toll-free **(800)659-2955** or visit SBA's website at www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance. The hearing impaired may call **(800)877-8339**. **Deadline to apply is October 24, 2007.**

Army Corps of Engineers

Meeting in our office with John Paul Woodley, Secretary of Army Civil Works, and with Maj Gen Don Riley, Director of Civil Works for the Army Corps on the preparation of a study that evaluates the restoration of natural environment, prevention of flooding, improvement to water quality, and an increase in recreational opportunities along the San Gabriel River in partnership with the city of Pico Rivera and LA County Supervisor Gloria Molina. The Corps affirmed their commitment to this project and will continue to provide support in concert with community needs.

Legislation Passed in '07

Congress is committed to fulfilling its promise to reflect the values and priorities of the American people.

“There is a new tone for the 110th Congress, more cooperative, with increased consensus and compromise extending beyond party lines,” Congresswoman Napolitano noted.

“This has been a strong beginning of the 110th Congress and for our communities, a very important step in the right direction. Yet while we have been on a 5-day work schedule in Washington, we must not ignore that our presence is still needed in our local communities,” concluded Rep. Napolitano.

The following bills, all with the Congresswoman's full support, have been passed in the House of Representatives since the start of the 110th Congress in January:

- **Ethics Reform**
- **Restoring Fiscal Responsibility**
- **Implementing the 9/11 Commission Recommendations**
- **Increasing the Minimum Wage**
- **Expanding Stem Cell Research**
- **Requiring Negotiation for Lower Prescription Drug Costs**
- **Cutting Interest Rates on Student Loans**
- **Ending Subsidies for Big Oil and Investing in Renewable Energy**

Immigration Update

The Security Through Regularized Immigration and a Vibrant Economy (STRIVE) Act of 2007, introduced on March 22 as H.R. 1645, is co-sponsored by Congresswoman Napolitano. This bipartisan, long-overdue comprehensive immigration reform addresses many, if not most, of the problems plaguing our current immigration system:

- Strengthens **border security**, adding more border personnel, funding for cutting-edge **technology**, and develops multilateral **partnerships** with our neighbors.
- Creates a **new worker program**: issues three-year worker visas to 400,000 immigrants to occupy jobs that American workers cannot fill. The workers are guaranteed fair wages, safe working conditions, and can change jobs without losing their visas, which will be renewable once. Immigrants in the fifth year of their stay may self petition for citizenship.
- Overhauls family-based and employment-based visa systems to reduce the decade of application backlog.
- Allows them to pay a \$1,000 fine, pass a background check to obtain conditional status with

work and travel authorization for a six-year period. If during that period an immigrant holds down a job, obeys the law, learns English/US civics, and pays taxes, they may be eligible to adjust their immigration status pending a second \$1,000 fine and must leave the US, then re-enter legally.

- Increases penalties for crimes committed by immigrants and combats the use of fake documents.
- Improves employment verification by setting up a biometric employee identification system and penalizing employers who do not comply with the system.
- Increases resources for immigration courts to process more cases, helps soldiers naturalize, and provides relief to families of immigrant 9/11 victims.

The STRIVE Act will bring immigrants out of the shadows, protect immigrants' rights, reunite families, and help increase taxes paid to the government, improving our economy and securing our homeland. The United States has been a land of immigrants and will continue our legacy far into the twenty-first century.

Mental Health Impacts our Communities, Economy

The Congresswoman joined her colleagues Rep. Patrick Kennedy (D-RI) and Rep. Jim Ramstad (R-MN) on Saturday, February 10th, for a field hearing held at Cerritos College on mental health and addiction treatment by insurance companies, hearing testimony from state, county, and community members whose lives have been impacted by mental illness and chemical addiction.

Most health insurance plans impose short limits on mental health and addiction coverage, leaving their members to pay for obtaining care as they face the burdens of these illnesses on their own.

In 2006 untreated addiction cost our economy \$400 billion and untreated mental illness over \$150 billion. These illnesses are diagnosable and treatable. Congress must act not only to erase the stigma, but also to ensure that health insurance companies provide adequate coverage and proper long term treatment for healthy lives, since the risk of relapse ultimately will cost our communities and economy so much more.

Congresswoman Napolitano delivered a keynote address at the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) February 17 on the impact of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder on veterans and their families, especially after 2, 3 or 4 deployments.

The Congresswoman joined her colleagues on March 7 in cosponsoring the **Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act**, H.R. 1424, calling for equal coverage for mental health and addiction treatment, eliminating discriminatory provisions that prevent Americans with mental health and addiction disorders from obtaining critically needed services. She is a cosponsor of H.R. 1622, **Mental Health Security for America's Families in Education**, an act that assists universities in communicating with parents if a student is at an increased risk for suicide, homicide, or assault. To recognize **May as Mental Health Month** she introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives, H.Con.Res 130, on April 25.

Veterans & Families: Know Your Rights

Requesting medical care outside the VA:

Usually when veterans need specialty care or are not in close proximity to receive services from VA medical facilities, the VA can authorize medical care services in their community for veterans that meet the eligibility requirements. The VA authorization will be specific and will indicate the medical services that the VA approves, the length of period for treatment, and the amount that VA will pay. These services **must** be approved before the veteran receives treatment.

The website below directs you to the information about this process along with Frequently Asked Questions:

<http://www.va.gov/hac/nonva/nonva.asp>

The Reserve Education Assistance Program (REAP)

REAP was established as a part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005. It is a new Department of Defense education benefit program designed to provide educational assistance to members of the Reserve components called or ordered to active duty in response to a war or national emergency (contingency operation) as declared by the President or Congress. This new program makes certain reservists who were activated for at least 90 days after September 11, 2001 either eligible for education benefits or eligible for increased benefits. The following programs are available:

College or University Degree Programs

Flight Training

Vocational Programs

On-the-Job Training and Apprenticeship Programs

Independent Study or Distance Learning Programs

Entrepreneurship Courses

Correspondence Courses

How Can You Apply?

Contact your school's VA Certifying Official for more information, or contact the VA:

1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551).

Online through their web site at:

<http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp>

Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (DEA)

The Veterans Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006 made eligible for benefits the spouse or child of a person



who the VA determines has a service-connected permanent and total disability, and at the time of VA's determination is a member of the Armed Forces who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient medical care, services, or treatment, and is likely to be discharged or released from service

for this service-connected disability.

Dependents' Educational Assistance is a **new** program that provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of certain veterans. The program offers up to 45 months of education benefits. These benefits may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training.

More information can be found here:

http://www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/CH35/CH35_Pamphlet_General.htm

More questions? Contact our District Office Veterans Liaison, Carlos Lopez at: 562-801-2134

ISSUES SURVEY

To represent you better, I need to hear from you!

Your response on critical issues facing our nation is vitally important. Please take a few minutes to respond to the following questions to provide a better understanding of your needs.

1. Which of the following issues is the most important to you? Please rank from 1-12 with "1" being the most important to you.

- Improving Education
- Environmental Protection
- Reproductive Freedom
- Social Security Reform
- Affordable Health Care
- Immigration Reform
- Iraq War
- Economic Policy/Jobs
- Stem Cell Research
- Ethics in Government
- National Energy Policy
- Other: _____

2. What do you believe the time frame should be for a withdrawal of U.S. troops from **Iraq**?

- By the end of 2007
- By the end of 2008
- There should be no time frame for withdrawal.
- Don't know / Don't have enough information.

3. When decisions about the future of **Social Security** are being made, what do you think is most important?

- Keeping Social Security's guaranteed monthly benefit.
- Allowing younger workers to decide for themselves how their Social Security contributions are invested.
- Both guaranteed benefits and investments are important.

4. In your view what is the best way to ensure **health care** coverage for all Americans?

- Tax credits to help employers provide coverage.
- Medical savings accounts that let families set aside money for health care costs.
- A system where everyone is guaranteed health care coverage.

5. What is the single best approach to reducing our dependence on **foreign oil**?

- Providing incentives to encourage energy conservation.
- Increasing domestic production from coal and nuclear power.
- Investing in renewable (solar, wind, ethanol) energy sources.
- Requiring automakers to produce more fuel-efficient vehicles.

6. Should Congress put a high priority on stopping American manufacturing jobs from being "**outsourced**" overseas?

- Yes, the jobs being lost are essential to our economy.
- No, consumers benefit from cheaper goods made overseas.

7. Do you believe Medicare should be allowed to re-import less expensive drugs from Canada to make **prescription medicines** more affordable for senior citizens?

- Yes, to help seniors who struggle to pay for prescriptions.
- No, as the safety of these drugs can't be guaranteed.

8. On the issue of **education**, which is your number one priority?

- Funding for early education programs like Head Start.
- Funding for elementary and middle school education to reduce class sizes.
- Funding to make college more affordable.

9. What is your opinion about America's **environmental laws**?

- Stronger laws are needed to protect our air and water and combat global warming.
- Our environmental policies are about right
- Environmental laws burden businesses and hurt our economy.

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Get in touch with our office

If you would like to be contacted by our office to further discuss any of these issues, please provide the following:

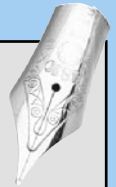
Name _____

Tel. (____) _____ - _____

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2007 Artistic Discovery

1st Place

Nadine Allan, 12th Grade
Diamond Ranch High School
"Hands in Love"



Members of the U.S. House of Representatives pay tribute to talent-rich high school students through the yearly Congressional Art Competition. The event is a wonderful opportunity for budding young artists to display their artistic talent on local, and potentially national levels, and is open to all high school students. First place winners are selected from each of the 435 Congressional Districts and as is tradition, their artwork is put on display for one year at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

2nd Place

Eliseo Morales, 11th Grade
El Rancho High School
"Greater than, Less than or Equal to"



Judge's Choice

Maritza Lizarraras, Montebello, "Those Sleepless Nights"
Sara Lopez, Montebello, "Charcoal Portrait"
Maricelena Benitz, Nogales, "A Happy Feeling"

Honorable Mention:

Simonique Amirian, Montebello, "Costello"
Larry Carrera, El Rancho, "Elefant"
Nadia Dominguez, El Rancho, "Hunger"
Jennifer Garcia, El Rancho, "Paloma"
Elizabeth Torrentos, El Rancho, "Self Portrait"



3rd Place

Maritza Padilla, 11th Grade
El Rancho High School
"Fly"



Record Demand for Passports

American citizens applying for passports have increased dramatically. Updates from the State Department may prove helpful if you are seeking a passport. (See website address below)

1. Currently, a passport is **not** needed for land or sea travel to the **Caribbean, Bermuda, Canada or Mexico.**
2. If you need to reach a representative of the State Department by phone, call **1-877-487-2778**. Due to high call volume, please call only if you are traveling within the next two weeks.

3. **Routine processing time** for a passport is now about **ten weeks**. **Expedited processing** is about **four weeks**.
4. **Be aware:** there is an optional question on the passport application asking for departure date and destination - please remember to fill that out, as it helps process your passport application in time for your trip.

For information on what you need to bring when you apply for a passport, how to check the status of your application after it is submitted and how to contact Passport Services with additional questions, visit:

www.travel.state.gov

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