



Congressman Xavier Becerra


EMAIL XAVIER CASEWORK

REPRESENTING CALIFORNIA'S 31ST DISTRICT
AND SERVING AS ASSISTANT TO THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE



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▶▶ ARE YOU CONNECTED TO YOUR CONGRESSMAN?

In January, for the second year in a row, my Web site was recognized by the Congressional Management Foundation as one of the very BEST in the House of Representatives, winning the prestigious Gold Mouse Award. Log on to <http://Becerra.House.Gov> to find out why!

SIGN-UP

Stay connected by signing on to my email list. You will receive the monthly "Becerra Bulletin" e-newsletter, along with notices of upcoming town halls, events and media appearances.



BLOG

The BECERRA BLOG



I believe it is important that you have an open line of communication to me. That is why I launched the "The Becerra Blog," which allows you to stay up-to-date on my legislative efforts and local activities, while giving you a chance to voice your opinions on the issues of the day. Please visit, subscribe, and use the comments section to let me know what's on your mind.



In a matter of months, our nation will undergo one of the most significant technological changes in recent history: the transition to digital television. On February 17, 2009, television broadcasters will begin airing exclusively digital signals and analog television sets that are not connected to a converter box, cable, or satellite will stop working. If you receive your TV signal using a traditional rooftop antenna or "rabbit ears," you will have to acquire a new "digital to analog" converter box to ensure that your television sets can display the new digital signals. The Department of Commerce has set up a program to help consumers defray the cost of converter boxes, which are expected to cost between \$50 and \$75. Every household is eligible for two \$40 coupons, each of which can be used toward the purchase of a converter box. It is exceptionally easy to apply for and receive your coupons online. Simply visit <http://www.dtv2009.gov> and click "Apply for a coupon" link. Don't wait until the last minute to apply, as supplies may be limited. Consumers can also call 1-888-DTV-2009. And as always, feel free to contact my office at 213-483-1425 with any questions or concerns.

CONFRONTING HISTORICALLY HIGH GAS PRICES

Dear Friends:

Across America working families are experiencing a distressing wave of economic hardship and insecurity caused in large part by historically high gas and energy prices.

Seven and a half years ago the average price of a gallon of gasoline was \$1.47. Today, that number has nearly tripled, hovering above \$4.00 per gallon. That means a lot more to working families than pain at the pump.

Skyrocketing fuel prices don't just hurt commuters; they impact the cost of nearly everything from groceries, to utilities, to bus fare. The increased cost of transporting goods and doing business negatively affects nearly every sector of the economy, except for Big Oil's bottom line.

The pain felt today by working Americans is a result of the policies and priorities of the current administration. In contrast, the current New Direction Congress is working tenaciously to confront our energy crisis and set a path toward sustainable energy independence.

Last year this Congress saw to it that the first new vehicle fuel efficiency upgrade in 32 years was signed into law, and this year Congress took action to lower gas prices by suspending oil purchases for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR).

In the House, we went on to pass legislation to crack down on oil speculation, prohibit price gouging, and provide federal dollars for transit agencies to reduce fares and expand public transportation services – with many more substantive solutions to come. Sadly, the president has threatened to veto most of these common sense efforts.

We cannot drill our way to energy independence. We need to invest in alternative fuels, better technology, infrastructure and efficiency to truly free ourselves from foreign oil.

Despite the president's opposition, Democrats in Congress will continue to work tirelessly to bring down gas and energy prices as we invest in a cleaner, safer and energy-independent future.

Sincerely,

XAVIER BECERRA
Member of Congress

Si desea esta información en español, por favor llame al (213) 483-1425.

<http://Becerra.House.gov>

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

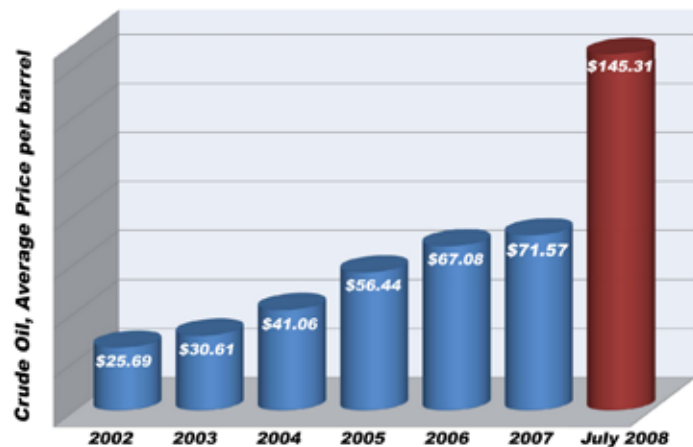


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CAPITOL IMPROVEMENTS IN AND AROUND WASHINGTON, D.C.



Oil Prices Increase Under White House Energy Plan



CONGRESS ACTS TO LOWER GAS PRICES, STABILIZE ECONOMY

Americans are now suffering the consequences of an energy policy that favors the oil industry over the needs and interests of working families. Over the course of the last seven and a half years the price of oil has increased five-fold, from \$26 per barrel in 2002 to a recent record high of \$145.31 this July. The Republican answer to this crisis: hand more federal land – much of it pristine national parkland – over to Big Oil. The facts: these companies already control through leases more than 88 million acres of federal land on and off shore containing 81 percent of America's oil and gas reserves eligible for exploration. The U.S. possesses 3% of the world's known oil reserves. Yet, America – with 4% of the world's population – consumes 25% of all oil produced. Democrats in the House believe it is time for a new energy policy. In the chart below you can see some of the most critical energy bills recently passed by the House:

- NOW LAW** ▶ **Energy Independence and Security Act** ▶ Establishes average fuel efficiency rate of 35 miles per gallon by 2010, removes tax breaks for Big Oil and reinvests in clean and renewable energy sources such as biofuels.
- NOW LAW** ▶ **Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) Fill Suspension and Consumer Protection Act** ▶ Keeps oil on the market by suspending purchases for the SPR.
- HOUSE PASSED** ▶ **Energy Markets Emergency Act** ▶ Cracks down on speculation and price manipulation in energy futures markets.
- HOUSE PASSED** ▶ **Saving Energy Through Public Transportation Act** ▶ Provides \$1.7 billion to reduce fares and increase public transit services.
- HOUSE PASSED** ▶ **Gas Price Relief for Consumers Act** ▶ Authorize legal action against OPEC state-controlled entities that conspire to fix the price of oil.

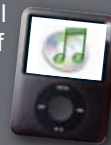
We will continue to press ahead with legislation to increase responsible domestic drilling and make investments for an energy independent future. Visit my Web site: <http://Becerra.House.Gov> to learn more about our energy agenda.

LATINO MUSEUM COMMISSION BILL BECOMES LAW

During Hispanic Heritage Month in 2003, I introduced legislation to take the first step toward realizing an idea that has long fueled the aspirations of millions of Americans who believe that our nation's museums should fully reflect America. This May, the Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of the American Latino Act was signed into law. Now, a 23 member commission will soon be formed to study the feasibility of and plan for a new national museum in the nation's capital that is dedicated to portraying the art, history, and culture of the Latino population of the United States. I am thrilled that this small, crucial first step has finally been made toward realizing the dream of completing the mosaic portrayed in our nation's museums. Learn more about the progress of creating the National Museum of the American Latino on the Issues page of my Web site: <http://Becerra.House.Gov>.

A GI BILL OF RIGHTS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

In May I had the honor of delivering the weekly national Democratic radio address in which I discussed the need for a GI Bill for the 21st Century – landmark legislation that was signed into law June 30. Here is an excerpt from my address: "In 1944 President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, gave our bravest citizens new hope when he signed into law the GI Bill of Rights, a watershed law that brought with it a solemn promise to our soldiers: now that you've come home, we will not let you down. Sixty-four years later, we find ourselves in the midst of another war where, once again, our brave soldiers have crossed an ocean to face hostile fire. Last year, in an effort to prepare America to receive our soldiers when they come home, the New Direction Congress made the largest investment in our veterans in history – and this May, the New Direction Congress went on to pass the GI Bill for the 21st Century. The GI Bill for the 21st Century will strengthen the middle class, and it will make our heroes from Iraq and Afghanistan the front line of our American economic recovery. That's not only smart economic policy, but it lives up to President Roosevelt's moral ideal of giving 'emphatic notice to the men and women in our armed forces that the American people do not intend to let them down.'" You can listen to the entire address in the Becerra Podcast section of my Web site: <http://Becerra.House.Gov>.



THE DISTRICT DIGEST DISPATCHES FROM THE 31ST

CASEWORK Corner

My casework staff has over 30 years combined experience in helping you secure the services and benefits for which your tax dollars pay. Since January of this year, we have helped more than 250 constituents resolve issues with federal agencies such as the Social Security Administration (SSA), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), among others.

To learn more about the Casework process in my office, please visit the "CONSTITUENT SERVICES" section of my Web site.

'FACES OF LOS ANGELES' TAKES TOP PRIZE AT CONGRESSIONAL ART COMPETITION



Exceptional talent was on display at the 31st Congressional District Art Competition annual awards ceremony, which drew 139 contestants from high schools throughout the district. The first place winner of this year's competition, Christopher Paguio of Eagle Rock High School, will have his drawing "Faces of Los Angeles" (shown here) hang in the United States Capitol for one year.



LOCAL & NATIONAL LEADERS BACK GUN MICROSTAMPING BILL

This has been a troubling year in the struggle against gun violence in Los Angeles, and it is time that we equip our law enforcement officials with everything they need to bring gun-wielding criminals to justice. In February, I introduced the National Crime Gun Identification Act (H.R. 5266) which would require that all semiautomatic pistols include microstamped identifiers. At my March 18 press conference at the Newton Community Police Station in South Los Angeles (shown here), my bill received the official endorsement of the City of Los Angeles, and the backing of top local and national leaders including (see photo) Sheriff Lee Baca, Police Chief William J. Bratton, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, City Council President Eric Garcetti and Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley. To learn more about this commonsense legislation, visit the Issues page of my Web site: <http://Becerra.House.Gov>, where you can view video of the March 18 press conference.



OUR FUTURE LEADERS: CONSTITUENT CADETS SHIP OFF TO ACADEMIES

One of the greatest honors of being a Member of Congress is the ability to nominate promising candidates from my district to the prestigious United States service academies. This year I had the honor of nominating another round of outstanding young men and women who will begin their studies this fall. It was a pleasure getting to know these future leaders, and I wanted to share a little of what I learned about them, and where they are headed:



Eric Hwan

The United States Air Force Academy Class of 2012

Eric Hwan, a Highland Park resident became interested in applying to the academy after a transformative experience at the Naval Academy Summer Seminar last year, where he had the time of his life during the intensive one week session.



Melissa Kil

The United States Naval Academy Class of 2012

Westridge High School graduate Melissa Kill always knew that she wanted to use her knowledge and abilities to serve her country and do her part to help the global community. She believes that by attending the Naval Academy she will gain the skills, character and strong moral foundation necessary to become a true leader.



Nancy de Avila

The United States Naval Academy Class of 2013

This fall Downtown Magnet graduate Nancy de Avila will enter the U.S. Naval Academy. Soon-to-be Cadet de Avila fell in love with the Naval Academy during a weekend visit to Annapolis where she realized she could become a great leader through the rigorous training and education provided there.