

For more than twenty years, Mark Takano has worked to improve the lives of Riverside County residents, both as an elected official and as a teacher at Rialto High School.

Born and raised in Riverside, Mark's commitment to public service began at an early age. His family roots in Riverside go back to his grandparents who, along with his parents, were removed from their respective homes and sent to Japanese American Internment camps during World War II. After the war, these two families settled in Riverside County to rebuild their lives.

Mark attended La Sierra High School in the Alvord Unified School District, and in 1979 he graduated as the school's valedictorian. Mark attended Harvard College and received his bachelor's degree in Government in 1983. As a student, he bused tables to help make ends meet. During his senior year, he organized and co-founded Ride for Life, a transcontinental bicycle ride to benefit the international development agency Oxfam America.

Upon graduation, Mark returned home to Riverside and began teaching in the Rialto Unified School District in 1988. As a classroom teacher, Mark confronted the challenges in our public education system daily.

In 1990, Mark was elected to the Riverside Community College District's Board of Trustees. At RCC, Mark has worked with Republicans and Democrats to improve higher education for young people and job training opportunities for adults seeking to learn a new skill or start a new career. He was elected Board President in 1991 and helped the Board and the District gain stability and direction amid serious fiscal challenges.

During Mark's long history of public service in Riverside County he has served on the Community Advisory Board of the Children's Spine Foundation and the Board of the Chancellor's Asian Pacific Islander Community Advisory Center at the University of California, Riverside. He has served as chairman of the Riverside Mayor's Task Force on the Digital Divide, as a charter member of the Association of Latino Community College Trustees, as a member of the Association of California Asian American Trustees and as a member of Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education. He is a recipient of the Martin Luther King Visionaries Award.

Today, Mark Takano represents the people of Riverside, Moreno Valley, Jurupa Valley and Perris in the United States Congress. He serves on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and the House Education and Workforce Committee.