News from Representative Alan Lowenthal

The 47th Flyer

News for California's 47th Congressional District from Congressman Alan Lowenthal

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Israel's Prime Minister Speaks To Congress

Last week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke before a Joint Session of Congress at the invitation of Speaker of the House John Boehner.

First, let me start by saying that I strongly disagreed with Speaker Boehner inviting Mr. Netanyahu without consulting President Obama, in violation of both protocol and tradition. I believe that Speaker Boehner's invitation injected an unwarranted degree of partisanship into the issue of U.S.-Israeli relations. I urged the Speaker to postpone the address until after the Israeli elections in two weeks to avoid the possibility of influencing the outcome.

It was a difficult decision regarding whether I would attend the speech and I would like to acknowledge all of the constituents who contacted me. Your many arguments for going or not going reflected a tremendous passion on both sides, which I deeply respect.

Ultimately I decided to attend the Prime Minister's speech because I believe it is my responsibility to listen to all sides of a debate regardless of my personal opinion. I also went out of respect for the nation of Israel, one of our strongest allies and a democratic voice in a troubled region.

I agreed with Mr. Netanyahu's opening remarks on the friendship and support between the U.S. and Israel, from President Truman to President Obama. The U.S. and Israel will continue to stand together as they always have. On that I think we can all agree.

I also agree that Iran cannot be allowed to develop nuclear weapons.

However, I strongly disagreed with Mr. Netanyahu's dismissal of the current U.S.-led P5+1 negotiations seeking to keep Iran from developing such deadly weapons. He called it a "bad deal," yet offered no realistic alternative.

Negotiation should always be the forefront of seeking a resolution, and violence or force should always be the last resort.

It is our responsibility as the leading force for democracy and freedom in the world to seek all avenues of dialogue and negotiation to make the world a safer place.

On The Hill

Defending The Voice Of The Voters

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This week marked the 50th Anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery marches that led to the Voting Rights Act of 1965--a cornerstone of American civil rights. How much progress on civil rights do you think we have made since 1965?

Tremendous progress

Some progress

Little progress

No progress

If you have a problem, click here to open survey in a new window

In January, with bipartisan support from my colleagues in the House, I filed an amicus brief with the Supreme Court supporting the right of citizens to determine how federal elections are conducted in their individual states.

As you may know, an amicus brief, or friend of the court brief, is filed by someone not a party to a case but who offers relevant information about the case to assist a court in making its decision.

Last week, I went to the Supreme Court to hear the oral arguments in the Arizona State Legislature v. Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission case. The case involves a referendum passed by Arizona voters in 2000 which set up a state independent redistricting commission to take redrawing of congressional districts out of the hands the Arizona legislature, in an effort to make the redistricting process non-partisan and to combat gerrymandering.

In 2012, after the independent commission carried out its duty for the second time following the 2010 Census, the Arizona state legislature sued, arguing that the U.S. Constitution's Elections Clause explicitly and exclusively provides the power of setting election laws to the individual state legislatures, unless Congress weighs in.

As I explained to media outside the Supreme Court building, if the court views the Constitution's Elections Clause to prohibit the use of referenda, even after Congress has affirmed the use of referenda to redistrict, all voter-initiated election reform laws may be invalidated. For us in California, that would mean, among other things, the end of our own hard-fought Citizens Redistricting Commission and putting the map-drawing back into the hands of self-interested politicians.

I am committed to making sure we continue to defend states' rights to prevent further gerrymandering in our communities.

Remembering The Selma Marches

It has been 50 years since tens of thousands of Americans--outraged at over a hundred years of feigned justice and promised equality--made their case for freedom on a stretch of asphalt between Selma and Montgomery. From the Bloody Sunday brutality endured on the Edmund Pettus Bridge to the Alabama Capitol speeches asking "How long will it take?", the Selma marches paved the way for the Voting Rights Act, one of the cornerstones of American civil rights.

This weekend, in Selma, I proudly joined President Obama, Rep. John Lewis (who led the first march in 1965), more than 90 of my bipartisan Congressional colleagues, and tens of thousands more Americans for the 50th anniversary of the monumental Selma marches. As Martin Luther King Jr. said on the steps of the Alabama Capitol 50 years ago, "How long will it take? Not long, because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

Next week in the 47th Flyer, I will offer a few details of—and my thoughts on—the

anniversary.

On the steps of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, with other members of Congress.

My wife, Debbie and I at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, waiting for the President to speak.

Supreme Court Arguments on Affordable Care

Nearly 11.4 million Americans who previously did not have health insurance now have healthcare coverage thanks to the Affordable Care Act. Last week, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in a case that could strip federal subsidies from eight to nine million Americans in the 34 states that rely on the federal exchange to run their healthcare marketplace.

Although this would not directly impact Californians who receive subsidies through our state's health exchange, Covered California, I sincerely hope the court does not take away these invaluable subsidies and make healthcare unaffordable for millions of Americans.

I am confident that the Supreme Court will issue the only ruling consistent with the structure, text and history of the law – that federal subsidies should be available to every eligible individual in the nation.

I hope the court will rule on the side of the millions of Americans across our nation who now have access to quality, reliable health coverage because of the subsidies secured through the Affordable Care Act.

In The 47th District

Poly Students Score Victories In C-SPAN Contest

Last week, C-SPAN announced the winners of their annual video competition.

I want to recognize the Long Beach Poly High School students who were honored for their great work in C-SPAN's national 2015 StudentCam competition, which asks students to create short, documentary-style videos addressing various public policy issues in their communities. This year's theme was "The Three Branches & You." Participants were asked to answer the question of how the three branches of government affected their lives.

This year, students in middle schools and high schools nationwide competed to share in $100,000 in cash prizes, with 150 total student prizes awarded.

Poly students took home one second place, three third place, and two honorable mention awards. Pretty impressive results for a national competition with nearly 2,300 entries from 45 states.

You can see a list of all the winners and view their videos here:
http://www.studentcam.org/winners15.htm

It is wonderful to see students in Long Beach Unified highly engaged in our national public policy debate.

Congress U

When A Bill Meets The President

In the last 47th Flyer we followed the progress of a proposed law through its passage in the Congress. Once passed by both chambers of Congress in an identical form, the bill is sent to the President, who has three options at his disposal.

The President can:

• Sign the bill—the bill becomes a law.
• Veto the bill. The bill is then sent back to Congress, typically with the President's explanation behind the veto. If the House and the Senate still believe the bill should become a law, they must repass the bill by a two-thirds margin in each chamber. If the votes succeed, the veto is over-ridden and the bill becomes a law.
• Do nothing, which either allows the bill to become law, or in special circumstances, becomes what is called a 'pocket veto.' If the President does not sign the bill for 10 days when Congress is in session, the bill automatically becomes law. . However, if Congress is not in session, the bill does not become a law.

So to recap the final steps of how a bill becomes a law: If both the House and Senate pass the bill and the President signs it; or if Congress overrides a presidential veto; or if 10 days pass while Congress is in session after Congress has sent the President a bill, the proposed bill becomes law.

Last Week's Poll

Regarding the United States' diplomatic negotiations with Iran which could lead to an agreement limiting Iran's progress toward developing a nuclear weapon, do you think the agreement should rely solely upon President Obama's approval, or should Congress have a role as well? (*There is pending legislation to give Congress the ability to approve or disapprove aspects of the*

agreement.)

48.3% Pres. Obama's approval only
34.6% Approval of BOTH President and Congress
17.1% We should not negotiate with Iran

Thank you,

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Member of Congress

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