



# The 47th Flyer

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



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There were two major votes this week in the House and both bills, which passed by narrow margins, and I do not believe either moves America forward. The first bill, H.R. 3102, would exacerbate hunger in America by cutting \$40 billion in nutritional assistance to millions of Americans over the next decade.

The Continuing Resolution, H.J. Res. 59, is the second bill, and it would keep health care from millions of uninsured Americans, ties an unrelated debt ceiling debate into the government funding process, and includes the sequestration cuts as the new baseline.

We need to be working on legislation that helps Americans, pure and simple. That's what I came to Washington to do and that's what I will continue to fight for.

## Protecting Nutritional Assistance

On Thursday, I voted against the "Nutrition Reform and Work Opportunity Act." This legislation seeks to cut basic food aid from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by nearly \$40 billion, denying basic food for nearly 4 million Americans next year. Unfortunately, the measure passed by a vote of 217-210. It now heads to the Senate for further analysis and debate.

The reason this is so important is that SNAP provides low income and unemployed Americans the temporary nutritional assistance they need. More than 90 percent of people on SNAP are children, elderly, disabled, or already working and yet struggle to put food on the table as SNAP benefits amount to a national average of \$1.40 per meal.

Poor and unemployed Americans do not want to remain unemployed in order to receive a meager \$1.40 per meal. That argument is specious: it paints a false picture of masses of people who would rather have less than 6 quarters per meal than a paying job. This is not a rational choice; no one chooses the 6 quarters. These are people who need America's support and investment in order to survive.

SNAP is an investment in America's workers, both current and prospective. Gutting that investment and letting Americans go hungry denies them an opportunity to become contributing members of our society. This is not how America takes care of those of us most in need. "

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO), SNAP benefits would be denied to approximately 3.8 million low-income people in 2014 and nearly 3 million people each year over the coming decade – and another 850,000

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**The House passed a bill cutting \$40 billion from SNAP. Do you think the amount of money the federal government spends on federal nutrition assistance should be:**

- Increased
- Should be kept the same
- Decreased
- Eliminated

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households will see an average reduction of about \$90 per month in benefits – if efforts to make devastating cuts to SNAP are successful.

You can view my Thursday floor speech on SNAP by [clicking here](#).

### Funding The Government and The Continuing Resolution

I was disappointed by the House vote on the CR. I wanted to see a clean extension of the 2013 pre-sequestration appropriations levels, not another deeper and even more painful round of sequester cuts. That's why I supported Rep. Chris Van Hollen's amendment, which includes a more balanced approach to addressing our budget. By including irrelevant issues into the CR, such as defunding health care reform and inserting the debt ceiling into the CR, the overall debate becomes hyper-partisan and moves us away from consensus.

These are serious issues we are being asked to consider--issues that impact the lives of millions of Americans. We need to start working on realistic solutions to these budget problems. Simply put: today's version of a CR is not realistic and does not achieve the goals of strengthening the economic security of American families and the middle class.



### Congress U - What Is The Continuing Resolution?

The federal government's annual budget calendar runs from October 1 through September 30. Under a normal budget process, Each year, the Congress authorizes each department, agency, or program to spend a specific amount of money, and the President signs the bill into law. This money may not be spent, however, until it has been appropriated for a given purpose. The Department of Justice, for example, is authorized to spend \$22.2 billion each year, but may not do so until Congress passes a law that says so.

Under this system, Congress must pass separate spending bills every year to keep the government going. If Congress doesn't, or if the President refuses to sign a budget, non-essential functions of the government can no longer spend money and must stop. To prevent this from happening, Congress will often pass a continuing resolution. This authorizes government agencies to fund their agencies at the current level until either the resolution expires, or an appropriations bill is passed. A continuing resolution must be passed by both houses of Congress and signed into law by the President.

### Last Week's Survey

The Secretary of the Treasury says that the government will not have enough money to pay all of its debts and keep all existing government programs running unless Congress raises the debt ceiling by October. What do you think will happen if the debt ceiling is not raised?

- 21.7%** A financial crisis
- 50.1%** Major problems, including downgrading of US credit
- 18.4%** Minor problems, including decreased government services
- 14.9%** No problems at all
- 6.7%** Unsure
- 1.7%** (NO RESPONSE)

Thank you,

*Alan Lowenthal*

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