



U.S. Representative

Barbara Lee

Ninth Congressional District, California

Fall 2005



Dear Friend,

Public sentiment is turning against the war in Iraq. People don't believe the war has made them safer, they don't believe the situation is improving, and they don't believe there is a plan. Americans deserve answers on Iraq.

Questions continue to arise about the circumstances under which our troops were sent to war. The leak of the Downing Street memo and other classified information from secret meetings between U.S. and British officials prior to the invasion of Iraq has provided further evidence that intelligence was allegedly "fixed" in order to support a decision to invade Iraq.

Americans deserve to know the truth about the circumstances under which our troops were sent to war. In June, I joined with over 100 of my colleagues in delivering a letter to the White House, calling on the Bush administration to answer the questions raised by the Downing Street memo. On July 23rd, the third anniversary of the Downing Street meeting, I held a Town Hall meeting in Oakland, where experts discussed the implications of the memo. I also introduced a Resolution of Inquiry, calling on the White House to release any and all information relating to administration meetings with Britain prior to the Congressional vote to authorize the use force in Iraq. It prompted a serious debate about Congressional oversight in the House International Relations Committee, where it was defeated on a 22-21 vote, despite drawing bipartisan support. I will continue to fight for answers to these grave questions.

Americans also deserve a clear plan to end the war in Iraq and bring our troops home. More than 1,800 U.S. troops have died and some 12,000 more have been wounded. A recent report places the number of Iraqi civilians killed at 25,000. Our troops have become the focus and rallying point of the insurgency they are asked to contain, and Americans deserve more than just rhetoric about staying the course.

That is why I have sponsored several amendments calling for withdrawal from Iraq and why I am an original co-sponsor of the bipartisan Abercrombie-Jones "Homeward Bound" bill, which calls on the President to articulate a clear plan and timeline to bring our troops home. I have also introduced H.Con.Res. 197, a bill to make it U.S. policy not to have permanent military bases in Iraq.

I will continue to fight for answers to the pressing questions of how we were taken into this unnecessary war, and how we will end it and bring our troops home.

Sincerely,

Oakland Leads the Nation in Port Security

Earlier this year, the Port of Oakland became the first port in the nation to fully install Radiation Portal Monitors at every one of its international marine terminals.

Every container entering the Port is now screened for nuclear weapons or materials. As the fourth largest container port in the nation, that's about 700,000 screened containers a year.

Unfortunately, other ports around the nation cannot detect and prevent the entry of nuclear materials into our country. Under the current plan, it would take at least until 2009 before every port is fully equipped with Radiation Portal Monitors.

The Coast Guard estimated in 2002 that \$7 billion is needed for port security, but in the last four years Congress has only provided \$737 million, and this year may barely approve \$150 million more.

As a member of the Congressional Port Security Caucus, Congresswoman Lee is committed to fighting to make sure our nation's ports have the resources they need to be secure against terrorist attack.



Congresswoman Barbara Lee and Ranking Member of the House Homeland Security Committee, Bennie Thompson (MS), talk about port security with a member of Customs and Border Patrol during a review of port security at the Port of Oakland in August.

Improving Education

In an effort to make college more accessible, Congresswoman Lee sponsored a scholarship fair and a series of FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) workshops for high school and college students in the 9th Congressional District.

Over 200 high school students attended the scholarship fair at UC Berkeley, where financial aid counselors and college students explained the college admissions process and how to obtain financial aid. Financial aid directors from local colleges and universities and scholarship organizations were present to distribute vital information and answer questions from students. Students and families who attended the four FAFSA workshops received free assistance with their taxes and with filling out federal financial aid forms.

In Washington, she supports legislation that improves our public education system, increases access to higher education, and improves the quality of life for our educators. She introduced the Student Support Act, HR 559, which will increase the amount of school social workers, psychologists, and therapists in our schools. She has fought to increase funds for No Child Left Behind, which has been rendered ineffective by underfunding. As the Higher Education Act comes up for reauthorization, she will support an increase in the maximum Pell Grant and improved access to higher education for students of color and low-income individuals. She will continue to fight measures like the Drug Clause in the Higher Education Act that drive our children to the streets or to jail, instead of to the classroom.

Affordable Housing

Congresswoman Barbara Lee is committed to building healthy communities by creating affordable housing opportunities locally and changing federal policy to make housing more accessible for all.

This year, Congresswoman Lee helped launch two new homebuyer campaigns to help residents learn the facts and dispel the myths of homeownership and link low-income individuals and families with the resources to help make their dreams of homeownership a reality.

As a member of the Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity, she is working to focus federal dollars toward providing housing opportunities. She is currently working to raise the FHA loan limit, to protect Section 8 housing vouchers, to promote a national housing trust fund to build 1.5 million new housing units, and to advance the affordable housing goals of Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and the Federal Home Loan Banks. All of these efforts, in addition to protecting the Department of Housing and Urban Development's affordable housing programs, remain her priorities.



Congresswoman Lee helps dedicate the new Mandela Gateway Hope VI housing project in West Oakland. Named after Nelson Mandela, who personally sent his best wishes for the opening, the project created 168 new and affordable apartments with over 20,000 square feet of retail space.

Election Reform

Last year's elections were a vivid reminder of the need for election reform, as voters in Ohio and the nation faced long lines, malfunctioning voting machines, lost voter registrations and ballots, and widespread incidents of intimidation and misinformation.

On January 6th 2005, Congresswoman Lee joined many of her colleagues, both to protest the certification of Ohio's Electoral votes and to speak out on the need to make our voting system fair for everyone.

She supports two critical bills aimed at fixing problems with our electoral system: H.R. 533, the *Voting Opportunity and Technology Enhancement Rights Act of 2005*, which makes a range of necessary structural reforms to our election system; and H.R. 550, the *Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act of 2005*, which requires electronic voting machines to produce a paper trail record of each vote.

In August, she spoke at a national rally commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act. She has been a vocal supporter of strengthening and renewing critical provisions of the Voting Rights Act that are set to expire in 2007.

Update on Ashland, Cherryland

Congresswoman Lee has been working hard to highlight the unique needs of the unincorporated areas of Ashland and Cherryland.

Over the last year, she has invited more than 25 foundation executives and government agencies for tours and roundtable discussions on the needs of the unincorporated areas. These visits have already increased attention and willingness from funders and agencies to explore future funding and support. Through such public and private partnerships, the unincorporated areas should receive additional resources for basic needs, such as sidewalks and housing, and improved quality of life.

Protecting the Environment

On Capitol Hill, Congresswoman Lee continues to fight for responsible environmental and energy legislation in spite of the ongoing attacks on long-standing federal environmental protections.

She has voted against the anti-environmental energy bill, helped lead opposition to opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling, opposed cuts for clean water funding, and fought against gutting funds for enforcement at the Environmental Protection Agency.

In the 9th Congressional District, she is working with community groups, local agencies and the EPA to improve air quality and environmental health conditions in West Oakland and to closely monitor cleanup progress at the AMCO Chemical Superfund Site.

Additionally, she is working to promote local efforts to implement cost-saving green business measures and to keep our community and the Bay Area at the forefront of the international movement toward environmental and economic sustainability.

Criminal Justice Reform

Each year, across the nation some 600,000 people return from jail. Approximately 10,000 people come back to serve probation or parole in Alameda County annually. The difficulties faced by returnees in finding work, acquiring stable housing, pursuing education and otherwise stabilizing their lives contribute to recidivism and act as a barrier to the economic and social development of the community.

Following up on recommendations from the Status of the African American Male Conference in Oakland in December, Congresswoman Lee began to work with local community organizations and officials from the courts and probation system to help returnees put their pasts behind them.

Those efforts gave rise to a Criminal Record Remedy summit in April. Since then, community organizations have continued to work with the Courts, the District Attorney and the Public Defender to expedite the dismissal process and to develop criminal records Self-Help Centers, where volunteer lawyers are handling 120 cases per week and have arranged the dismissal of 328 non-violent criminal records.

Grants Assistance

Congresswoman Lee hosted five informative grant seminars and scholarship fairs in the past year designed to help constituents access public and private resources. Federal grant funding is available for projects that fulfill a compelling social need. These may be in the form of housing, community and economic development in impoverished areas or substance abuse assistance or mentoring or recreation centers. One of her highest priorities is to provide assistance accessing various grant sources, including public agencies and private foundations. Services available include:

- Interactive workshops and fairs
- Web-based and printed grant writing guides
- Links to Small Business and other resources
- Federal, State & Local Govt. Funding Resources
- Scholarships - Specific Fields of Study

Sign up to receive grant update emails by contacting Miguel Bustos at (510) 763-0370 or LeeGrants@mail.house.gov

Recent Federal Grants Update

\$1,321,000	.....	Sidewalks in Cherryland and Castro Valley
\$1,000,000	.....	Ed Roberts Campus
\$750,000	.....	Oakland Transportation Management Center
\$320,000	.....	Oakland Unified School District
\$320,000	.....	Mills College's Institute of Civic Leadership
\$100,000	.....	Holy Names University – Science Facility
\$34,600,000	....	Port of Oakland
\$100,000	.....	COPS grant for City of Oakland
\$250,000	.....	Project Avary to help children with imprisoned parents
\$500,000	.....	Chabot Space and Science Center

Healthcare

The United States remains one of the wealthiest nations in the world, yet there are currently 45 million citizens without health insurance. That is why Congresswoman Lee reintroduced H.R. 3000, the *U.S. Universal Health Services Act*. This bill would increase the availability and continuity of healthcare through integrated systems, finance the training and education of health care workers and professionals, and establish a standard for performance.

In addition to advocating for healthcare for all, she realizes the Medicare system is in need of review and supports a bipartisan Medicare commission to provide recommendations on how Medicare can serve more people and fully compensate healthcare providers.

Congresswoman Lee also remains a leader in the area of reproductive health. She has continued to fight for international family planning programs, including restoring funding for the United Nations Population Fund and repealing the Global Gag Rule, which prohibits US funds from going to organizations overseas that use their own funds to counsel women on abortion.

Recognizing the importance of giving young people the information to make safe, healthy decisions, she reintroduced her signature bill on comprehensive sex education, H.R. 2533, the *Responsible Education About Life Act*, which would create a dedicated federal funding stream for comprehensive sex education programs that teach about both abstinence and contraception.



Congresswoman Barbara Lee congratulates Naomi Drexler, Ninth Congressional District winner of the 21st annual Congressional Art Competition, An Artistic Discovery. Ms. Drexler's work, "Eyes of Sorrow" will be displayed in the U.S. Capitol for the next year.

Stopping Genocide

In January, Congresswoman Lee, along with several members of Congress and Academy Award nominated actor Don Cheadle, traveled to Africa to visit refugee camps housing people displaced by the genocide in Darfur.

She has been active in promoting efforts to strengthen the U.S. role in ending the genocide, including H.R. 1424 the *Darfur Accountability Act*. She has also been an outspoken leader in the growing national effort to divest public pension funds and university endowments from companies whose business in Sudan supports the Khartoum regime.

Barbara Lee Leads Progressives

Congresswoman Lee was re-elected to Co-Chair the Congressional Progressive Caucus. Under her leadership, the Caucus introduced The Progressive Promise, a progressive policy agenda focused on economic justice in the U.S. and global economies, protecting and preserving civil rights and civil liberties and promoting global peace and security.

Social Security

Almost 75,000 residents of the Ninth District receive the guaranteed benefits of Social Security, and Congresswoman Lee is committed to making sure it stays that way. Her staff is experienced in helping constituents with Social Security related case-work. She has been closely examining the proposals to privatize Social Security. Proposed changes would result in benefits (continued...)

Fighting HIV/AIDS

Since 1980, over 6,600 individuals have been diagnosed with AIDS in Alameda County and nearly 4,000 people have died. Nationally, the Center's for Disease Control now estimates that over one million people are living with HIV/AIDS, with African-Americans increasingly bearing the brunt of the epidemic. Globally, the United Nation's Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS estimates that over forty million people are infected, the vast majority in Sub-Saharan Africa.

As a committed advocate in the fight against HIV/AIDS at home, Congresswoman Lee is strongly supportive of Alameda County's continuing AIDS State of Emergency among African Americans. In Congress she has worked to pass a resolution recognizing National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, introduced a resolution on National HIV Testing Day, argued for the swift re-authorization of the Ryan White CARE Act, and demanded increased funding for the Minority AIDS Initiative.

Globally, Congresswoman Lee continues to lead the charge for more funding and for a comprehensive response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The House is expected to pass H.R.1409, legislation she authored that would help address the growing crisis of orphans and vulnerable children that has been exacerbated by HIV/AIDS.

Immigration

Congresswoman Lee's office handles a wide variety of immigration related casework. Her office works with Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS, formerly INS) to expedite petitions at CIS offices, U.S. Embassies, and consulates. Her staff can assist with non-immigrant and immigrant visa requests, deportation and removal proceedings, expediting adoptions, bringing relatives from overseas for special events, and reuniting families.

Over the past year, she has sponsored three immigration town halls, in an effort to increase awareness in changes to immigration laws and procedures, to inform constituents about predatory lawyers, and to provide access to free legal assistance.

Legislative Highlights

Partial list of the bills introduced by Congresswoman Lee this year:

- **H.R. 790** The Public Housing Drug Elimination Program Reauthorization Act of 2005
- **H.R. 945** The New Partnership with Haiti Act of 2005, to provide assistance combating infectious disease and establish a comprehensive health infrastructure in Haiti
- **H.R. 1050** The Living Wage, Jobs for All Act
- **H.R. 1309** The One Strike and You're Out Act, to protect elderly and disabled public housing residents from eviction
- **H.R. 1410** The Menopausal Hormone Replacement Therapies and Alternative Treatments and Fairness Act
- **H.R. 3000** The Josephine Butler United States Health Services Act, to establish universal health care service
- **H.R. 3064** To lift restrictions on educational travel to Cuba
- **H.Con.Res. 71** To establish Caribbean American Heritage Month (passed by the House)
- **H.Con.Res. 197** To prevent permanent military bases in Iraq
- **H.Res. 82** To disavow the Doctrine of Preemption
- **H.Res. 327** To create a national passport month

Social Security (continued...)

cuts, huge payouts for Wall Street executives and an increase in federal debt. She will continue to fight against any effort to alter Social Security that results in cuts in guaranteed benefits.

Helping Hurricane Victims

Our deepest condolences go to the victims of hurricane Katrina, who lost their lives, their homes and their livelihoods. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and their families.

Residents of the Ninth Congressional District have showed enormous generosity in responding to this tragedy. Many have made generous donations of money and supplies. Others have volunteered their time and services, both in the Gulf region and here in the District.

For information about the relief efforts, you can contact the **American Red Cross** at **(866) 438-4636** or visit my website for a more complete list of organizations: www.house.gov/lee.

Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Update

In late 2003, Congress enacted a deeply flawed Medicare prescription drug program. The private drug coverage that will be subsidized by Medicare that was created by this bill will go into effect on January 1, 2006. Medicare beneficiaries will begin to hear from private plans offering drug coverage in the fall and enrollment will begin on **November 15, 2005**. Given the complexities of the program, it is vital to be well-educated about this new law. Most beneficiaries face two decisions: whether to enroll and, if so, in which plan. The decision to enroll should be informed by what kind of coverage, if any, you have today. If you think you might qualify for low-income assistance, you should be sure to apply. Before making any decisions, contact local HICAP counselors who can explain the Part D Drug benefit. They can be reached locally at 510-839-0393 or online at: www.calmedicare.org. For additional information, visit www.medicare.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.



Congresswoman Barbara Lee responds to constituent questions during an online townhall meeting.

9th District Gets \$13 Million in Transportation Funds

Working with her colleagues on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Congresswoman Lee secured over \$13 million in funding for nearly a dozen projects in the East Bay in the recently passed federal transportation bill. These projects will provide real and immediate positive impacts for our region by strengthening public transportation, expanding recreational opportunities, improving public safety, and reducing traffic congestion.

- **\$2.5 million** - Ed Roberts Campus: Intermodal transit center above Ashby BART station providing multiple services for disabled people.
- **\$2 million** - City of Oakland: I-880 Federal highway safety improvements, High Street to I-980 in Oakland.
- **\$836,000** - City of Oakland: Intermodal Bus/Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements near 4 BART/Transit Village developments (MacArthur, Coliseum, Fruitvale, & West Oakland)
- **\$1.2 million** - City of Berkeley: I-80 Gilman Street interchange improvements in Berkeley.
- **\$1.672 million** - AC Transit: Bus Rapid Transit, bus shelters & intelligent systems, Telegraph Ave/International Blvd./E. 14th St.
- **\$960,000** - ACTIA: I-580 Interchange Improvements in Castro Valley
- **\$800,000** - ACTIA: I-238 Widening between I-580 and I-880 in Ashland/Cherryland/San Leandro/San Lorenzo
- **\$752,400** - Association of Bay Area Governments: San Francisco Bay Trail, Oakland Coliseum – Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline
- **\$720,000** - Port of Oakland: Construction of North Airport Cargo Access Road between Doolittle Dr. and Earhart Rd.
- **\$836,000** - AC Public Works: Ashland/Cherryland Sidewalk construction near Stanton, Fairview, Lake Chabot, Castro Valley, and Marshall Elementary schools
- **\$800,000** - City of Emeryville: Intermodal Transit Center at Emeryville Amtrak station & bus stop

Community Office Hours

Oakland

Monday - Friday: 9am – 5pm

District Office
1301 Clay St., Suite 1000 N, Oakland

Fruitvale

Tuesday: 2:30pm – 5pm

Spanish Speaking Citizens Foundation
1475 Fruitvale Avenue, Oakland

Castro Valley

Thursday: 10am – 1pm

Castro Valley Library
20055 Redwood Rd., Castro Valley

We are here to help you with any federally related issue, such as: social security, immigration, veteran's benefits, IRS, Medicare, school loans, etc.

Para recibir esta información en Español, favor de llamar a (510) 763-0370

I have a new website:

www.house.gov/lee

Please visit and sign up for regular LeeMail updates

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U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0509

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