



U.S. Representative

# Barbara Lee

Ninth Congressional District, California

Summer/Fall Newsletter 2006

ALBANY, ASHLAND, BERKELEY, CASTRO VALLEY, CHERRYLAND, EMERYVILLE, FAIRVIEW, OAKLAND, PIEDMONT



Dear Friend,

As I write this, events in the Middle East, North Korea, Iran and Iraq pose a renewed threat to peace and global security and the consequences of the administration's failed foreign policy are proving all too real.

The Bush administration invaded Iraq, which had no weapons of mass destruction, while doing nothing in the face of North Korea's aggressive nuclear program. They argued that militarily installing a democracy in Iraq would stabilize the Middle East, while failing to provide leadership in brokering a lasting peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians. They passed up an opportunity to address Iran's nuclear program before the invasion of Iraq, when our position was strong, and now are taking up the issue when our leverage is diminished.

The bottom line is that there is no military solution to these seemingly intractable crises, and the Bush administration's abandonment of diplomacy in favor of a unilateral military approach to foreign policy has made our country and the world less safe.

North Korea's missile test on Independence Day should have been a wake up call to the administration. The administration should pursue all avenues for diplomacy—bilateral and multilateral—to resolve the issue in the Korean peninsula before the next test triggers an all out war in East Asia.

The U.S. must return to a role of engaged leadership in the Middle East peace process. From the beginning of the current conflict in Lebanon, I have called for a ceasefire by all parties. The administration must engage in high-level and sustained diplomacy and negotiations, not just to bring an end to the current crisis but to achieve a two state solution and bring peace and security to the region.

The U.S. must also drop the threat of regime change in Iran and engage directly with that country about their nuclear program. I have led initiatives to make sure that the United States will pursue all diplomatic avenues and not resort to the use of military force or engage in covert action to force regime change in Iran, and I have introduced legislation to renounce the doctrine of preemptive war.

Finally, our continued occupation of Iraq has undermined our standing in the world and our ability to help win the peace in regional conflicts. That's why I have been working to end the occupation in Iraq. We must bring our troops home as soon as possible and make sure there will be no permanent military bases in Iraq.

As always, I look forward to hearing from you and meeting with you in my upcoming town halls (see page 4).

Sincerely,

## Education

**Keeping College Accessible:** On July 1, interest rates on outstanding federal student loans increased to just over 7 percent—the highest rate in six years—and the rate on outstanding federal parent loans are expected to rise to about 7.8 percent. Congresswoman Lee helped alert local students and parents to the increase and provided resources to help them consolidate loans at rates as low as 4.75 percent, which would save the typical undergraduate borrower almost \$3,500 over the life of his or her loan.

She also sponsored East Bay Cash for College with Congressman George Miller, a series of six workshops designed to help students and families with federal financial aid applications. Students and families who attended the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) workshops received free assistance with their taxes and with filling out federal financial aid forms.

**Lowering the ratio of students to counselors:** School counselors play a critical role in creating a positive learning environment and helping students succeed in school. Unfortunately, California ranks 50th in the nation in the ratio of students to counselors, with 966 students for every counselor.

Congresswoman Lee introduced the Student Support Act (H.R. 559), in order to address precisely this issue. It would create a federal grant program to help states meet the recommended ratio of 250 students to every one counselor, as well as meeting the recommendations on school psychologists and social workers.



*Congresswoman Barbara Lee talks with students from Albany High School about federal education issues during a meeting in Washington in November, 2005.*

## Immigration

Congresswoman Barbara Lee convened a meeting of local faith leaders and representatives from the African-American, Asian Pacific Islander, Caribbean, African and Latino communities to discuss the local impact of immigration policy and to demonstrate the breadth and diversity of support within the community for an immigration policy that is comprehensive and fair.

She opposes H.R. 4437, the Sensenbrenner immigration bill, which would criminalize millions of undocumented workers as well as people like doctors, clergy members and social workers who come in contact with them. She supports a comprehensive approach that includes both border security and a clear path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.

Helping constituents with immigration-related issues makes up a significant portion of the caseload of Congresswoman Lee's District Office. In the last year, her office has helped constituents resolve more than 550 immigration cases. She held two immigration town hall meetings that were translated into four languages to help constituents get immigration related resources and assistance. Please see page 4 for information on her upcoming immigration town hall in October.

## Legislative Victories

In addition to Congress passing and the President signing into law Congresswoman Lee's bill to focus U.S. foreign aid programs for orphans and vulnerable children, she has had a number of significant legislative victories in the last year.

She succeeded in passing an amendment to the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill for Iraq and Afghanistan to prevent any funds in the bill from being used to establish permanent military bases in Iraq.

Congress passed her resolution calling for June to be Caribbean American Heritage Month and the President issued a proclamation making it official. She received mail from Caribbean American soldiers serving in Iraq saying how much the celebration meant to them.

The House passed her resolution, calling for September to be declared National Passport Month in order to help promote international travel by increasing the number of Americans who have passports. International travel promotes understanding and peace and the American people are our best ambassadors.

The House also passed her resolutions supporting the goals of National Black AIDS Awareness Day and recognizing the anniversary of the ratification of the 13th Amendment.

### Legislative Highlights

#### Partial list of the bills introduced by Congresswoman Lee this Congress:

- **H.R. 1409** Assistance for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children in Developing Countries Act of 2005 (passed by the House and Senate, signed into law by the President)
- **H.R. 5674** Protection Against Transmission of HIV for Women and Youth Act of 2006
- **H.R. 5235** Environment and Public Health Restoration Act of 2006
- **H.R. 4278** Community Partners Next Door Act of 2005
- **H.R. 2553** The Responsible Education About Life Act, to provide federal funds for comprehensive, medically accurate sex education
- **H.R. 3000** The Josephine Butler United States Health Services Act, to establish universal health care service
- **H.R. 1050** The Living Wage, Jobs for All Act
- **H.Con.Res. 197** To prevent permanent military bases in Iraq
- **H.Res. 82** To disavow the Doctrine of Preemption

## Healthcare

Congresswoman Lee has fought to make major changes to the Medicare Prescription Drug program (Part D), like requiring the government to negotiate lower drug prices, extending enrollment without a late penalty, allowing beneficiaries to make a one-time change in their plan, and providing protection from loss of employment-based retiree health coverage upon enrollment for Medicare prescription drug benefit. She will continue to fight for significant changes to the Part D program to ensure it provides truly affordable prescription drugs for seniors and people with disabilities.

In an effort to help constituents make informed (*cont...*)

## HIV/AIDS

June 5<sup>th</sup> marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of AIDS. Since that time, over 65 million people have been infected and 25 million have died. At the end of 2005 there were 38.6 million people globally living with AIDS, over one million in the U.S.

In Washington, Congresswoman Lee has continued her efforts to stop the spread of the disease and bring treatment to the infected. She has led the fight for the swift re-authorization of the Ryan White CARE Act, and demanded increased funding for the Minority AIDS Initiative.

In December, she introduced legislation aimed at ensuring continuing treatment and care for people living with HIV/AIDS who were displaced by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In June, she introduced legislation to revise our HIV prevention policy to reduce the vulnerability of women and girls in developing countries and to repeal the abstinence-only-until-marriage earmark.

Later this year, she will introduce legislation to allow the distribution of condoms in federal prisons and to develop a strategy to reduce HIV and other STIs in prisons.



*Congresswoman Lee and colleagues Al Green, John Lewis, Eddie Bernice Johnson, Gwen Moore, Eleanor Holmes Norton and Mel Watt discuss a proposal for ending the genocide in Darfur and Lee's bill to prevent federal contracts from going to companies doing business in Sudan at a press conference outside of the Sudanese embassy in Washington, DC on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2006.*

## Environment

West Oakland has among the highest asthma rates in the U.S. and Congresswoman Lee's office has been working with the West Oakland United States Postal Service facility and the Port of Oakland to find creative ways to reduce diesel emissions and lower asthma rates.

She is also working with the local business community, nonprofits and government to promote the implementation of green business practices, increase green business opportunities, and is partnering with alternative fuel organizations like Community Fuels and Bio Fuel Oasis to make biodiesel and other renewables, as well as the jobs they can bring with them, home to the 9th District.

In Washington, she has continued the fight against the legislative assault on the environment, speaking out against opening ANWR and U.S. coastal waters to oil and gas drilling, as well as efforts to weaken the endangered species act and to roll back rules protecting wilderness spaces.

In April she introduced H.R. 5235, The Environment and Public Health Restoration Act, legislation that would require an extensive scientific review of the impact of changes the Bush administration has made and proposes making to regulatory infrastructure for environmental protection.

### Healthcare (*cont...*)

decisions about the complex and flawed new program, she held town hall meetings in December, 2005 and April, 2006 where experts provided assistance for local seniors.

Participants in the April town hall were also able to take advantage of two mobile laboratories providing free screenings for cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes and HIV/AIDS.

People with questions about the prescription drug benefit can call: (510) 839-0393 or 1-800-MEDICARE.





*Congresswoman Barbara Lee hosted Ashley Smith, the Ninth Congressional District winner of the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Congressional Art Competition, An Artistic Discovery, for the opening of the exhibit at the US Capitol building. Ms. Smith lives in Oakland, where she attends the Paul Robeson School for the Arts.*

## Poverty

Hurricane Katrina pulled back the curtain and exposed the ongoing crisis of poverty in the United States. While poverty rates declined steadily throughout the 1990's, since 2000 they have been increasing dramatically. Today, there are more than 37 million people living in poverty in the United States, five million more than there were five years ago.

The impact of this growing poverty is disproportionately falling on minorities. Since 2000, median income has declined by 2.1 percent among non-Hispanic whites, 7.4 percent among African Americans, and by 5.9 percent among Latinos. Almost one quarter of African Americans and 21.9 percent of Latinos live in poverty, compared to 8.6 percent of non-Hispanic whites and 9.8 percent of Asians.

Congresswoman Lee introduced a comprehensive package of poverty legislation designed to make the issue of eradicating poverty a national priority and to focus the debate. These three bills are designed to create leadership, accountability and a national reevaluation of our economic priorities in developing policies to eliminate poverty in our nation.

H.Con.Res. 234 calls on the President Bush to submit to Congress a plan to eradicate poverty by 2010. H.Con.Res. 282 calls for repealing the tax cuts to the wealthiest five percent of Americans and investing the funds in poverty alleviation programs. H.R. 4600, the Poverty Impact Trigger Act of 2005, requires Congress to report on the poverty impact of its legislative activities.

## Criminal Justice Reform

Congresswoman Lee has worked to reduce crime and break the cycle of recidivism by developing local initiatives that help ex-offenders put their past behind them, and by securing funds for programs that help them successfully make the transition back to being productive members of the community.

Starting in 2004, she began to work with local community organizations and officials from the courts and probation system to hold a record remedies summit, to create an expedited dismissal process and to develop criminal records Self-Help Centers. Since the summit, more than 2,000 applications have been received, and more than 950 petitions have been granted. Her office will be following up on these efforts with another record remedies summit in October.

Over the last year, Congresswoman Lee secured more than \$1 million in federal funds for programs that reduces recidivism rates and crime by assisting ex-offenders to become productive citizens and reintegrate successfully into society, programs that develop skills in conflict resolution, gang prevention, and alternatives to violence for youth, and programs that help break the cycle of crime and violence by supporting children whose parents are imprisoned.

She is one of the primary supporters of the Second Chance Act, H.R. 1704, which would reauthorize and increase funds for re-entry programs with an enhanced focus on jobs, housing, substance abuse treatment/mental health, and children and families.

## Katrina Update

August 29<sup>th</sup> will mark the first anniversary of hurricane Katrina's landfall, and over the last year Congresswoman Lee has led efforts to aid survivors and advocate for a robust reconstruction effort that prioritizes the needs of Gulf Coast residents. She traveled to the region twice, most recently for Financial Services Committee field hearings on reconstruction and housing for survivors. Her office also helped coordinate assistance for survivors who came to the East Bay. She led the fight in the House to prevent FEMA from evicting survivors, and worked to develop and promote the comprehensive reconstruction and recovery bill, H.R. 4197.

## Housing

Congresswoman Lee continued her fight to address the affordable housing crisis in the East Bay and throughout the country. On December 12, 2005 she hosted a meeting with more than 30 developers on affordable housing opportunities in Alameda County's unincorporated areas, particularly in Ashland and Cherryland. Participants included some of the district's leading affordable housing and workforce housing developers.

She spoke on her work on the Housing Subcommittee, her goals in increasing the supply of affordable housing in the District and provided developers with a tour of six sites available for affordable housing development and one site, Kent Gardens Senior Housing, already in the works.

In Washington, she led the fight to increase federal funding for programs to prevent housing discrimination and introduced the Community Partners Next Door Act, legislation designed to make places like Oakland more friendly to police officers, firefighters and teachers by subsidizing the cost of purchasing a home for them. She also introduced the Safe Access in Fire Emergencies (S.A.F.E.) Act, legislation that would help reduce fire deaths by requiring the Consumer Product Safety Commission to develop a national standard for residential window bars.

## Grants Assistance

Congresswoman Lee hosted six 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, 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](mailto:LeeGrants@mail.house.gov)

### Recent Federal Grants Highlights

\$300,000	.....	Ed Roberts Campus
\$500,000	.....	Native American Health Center
\$660,000	.....	Allen Temple transitional housing program
\$100,000	.....	City of Emeryville, community redevelopment
\$53,585,000	....	Port of Oakland
\$600,000	.....	Chabot Space and Science Center
\$246,661	.....	Project Avary to help children with imprisoned parents
\$650,000	.....	Sidewalks for Ashland and Cherryland
\$149,115	.....	Unity Council, renovation of Fruitvale Masonic Temple
\$320,000	.....	Oakland Community Project, transitional housing
\$100,000	.....	MLK Freedom Center, violence prevention

## Community Office Hours

### Oakland

Mon - Fri: 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.*

## Service Academy Nominations

Every year, Congresswoman Lee nominates young women and men interested in an appointment to the United States Military Academy (West Point), Naval Academy (Annapolis), Air Force Academy and Merchant Marine Academy. Applicants should mail their letter of interest to Jeanette Lazar, Office Manager in the Oakland District Office, or call (510) 763-0370 for more information. The deadline for applications is December 31.



*Congresswoman Lee speaks out against the nuclear proliferation risks of the U.S.-India nuclear deal at a press conference with colleagues Diane Watson, Ed Markey and Dennis Kucinich.*

# A NEW DIRECTION FOR AMERICA

Californians are facing difficult times, with record gas prices, soaring health care costs, stagnating wages, and rising inflation. Bright and eager high school graduates can hardly afford to go to college. Record budget deficits are literally stealing money from Social Security. American soldiers are bogged down in a deadly and expensive war in Iraq. And serious threats loom from North Korea and Iran. It is time for a new direction. Congresswoman Lee is pushing in Congress for an end to the war in Iraq and a new direction for America — putting the common good of all Americans first, for a change. She supports legislation to:

- MAKE HEALTH CARE MORE AFFORDABLE •
- LOWER GAS PRICES AND ACHIEVE ENERGY INDEPENDENCE •
- HELP WORKING FAMILIES •
- CUT COLLEGE COSTS •
- ENSURE DIGNIFIED RETIREMENT •
- REQUIRE FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY •

**Please join us for a Town Hall meeting on the New Direction for America:**

**August 19<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Veterans Memorial Bldg., 200 Grand Ave., Oakland



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**<http://lee.house.gov>**

## Upcoming Congressional Events

**August 19<sup>th</sup>**

**New Direction for America Town Hall**

**10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Veterans Memorial Bldg.

200 Grand Ave., Oakland

**September 16<sup>th</sup>**

**Getting Real: A Forum on HIV/AIDS**

**10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Merritt College, Gymnasium (Building F)

12500 Campus Drive, Oakland

**September 16<sup>th</sup>**

**Environmental Justice Town Hall**

**1:00 - 3:00 PM**

West Oakland Public Library

1801 Adeline St, Oakland

**October 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Immigration Town Hall**

**9:00 AM - 4:00 PM**

St. Louis Bertrand Church

1400 100th Avenue, Oakland

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Congress of the United States  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0509

*Official Business*

*Barbara Lee*

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