



Newsletter

Summer/Fall 2008
Page 1

A Message from Your Representative

CONGRESSWOMAN DIANE E. WATSON



Dear Friend,

I am very pleased to report to you on my activities on your behalf in the 33rd Congressional District and Washington, DC.

Today, more than ever, we are witnessing unforeseen changes in our economy affecting every aspect of our daily lives. As your representative, I am stalwart in my commitment to use federal resources and programs to enhance your quality of life and ensure that you, my constituents in Los Angeles, Hollywood and Culver City, continue to have a significant voice in Congress.

In the 110th Congress, the House of Representatives addressed key issues of concern to our region and the nation—the foreclosure crisis, the war in Iraq, high gas prices, alternative energy sources, the environment, and health. We have worked hard to keep you informed as well as representing the needs and concerns of all of our constituents.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter and please feel free to share it with others who may have an interest.

Diane E. Watson
Member of Congress

MORE NEWS FROM DIANE E. WATSON

Don't Miss Your Train!

My office works hard to address challenges facing the three rail lines which are in construction or in planning for the 33rd District. Construction on the Expo Line is now under way. The Crenshaw/Prairie light rail line is proposed to connect to the Green Line (heading to LAX) at the southern end. But I was disappointed that MTA indicated that it go no farther north than the Expo Line, and I still hope that ways will be found to extend it to Wilshire Boulevard to connect, eventually, with a subway, possibly in the Miracle Mile. Finally, the renewal of plans to extend the Purple Line subway westward is critical. Former opponents of a subway on Wilshire have, in the face of rising traffic gridlock and gas prices, increasingly recognized the need for a subway that crosses town. Obtaining the funds to pay for these rail projects in a faltering economy is the toughest challenge we face, as competition for local, state, and federal dollars is keen: in fact, a recent effort to divert to another L.A. County rail project \$80 million earmarked for Expo Line completion brought my office, along with officials from Culver City, West Hollywood and Santa Monica, and community transit activists together in strenuous opposition before the MTA Board. My Community Advisory Council meets in August specifically to review these projects and other transportation needs. Contact our office to offer your input.

Are You Ready for the Digital Television Transition (DTV)?

Watson Hosts DTV Forum in the 33rd

The Digital Television Transition (DTV) will occur in less than one year on February 17, 2009. Are you ready? Congress has mandated that on February 17, 2009, all local television stations will stop broadcasting in the traditional analog format and switch to all-digital transmissions. You may lose your television service if you are not prepared for this change. There are still some televisions in use that receive signals over the air using "rabbit

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Congresswoman Diane E. Watson

Summer/Fall 2008
Page 2

ears." These sets will need a digital-to-analog converter box after the digital television transition. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) is making two \$40 coupons available to every household to help defray the cost of converter boxes. On January 1, 2008, households will be able to request up to two coupons for the purchase of a single converter box. Coupons will be mailed via the U.S. Postal Service, and consumers will have approximately three months to redeem them. Please send your request to: DTV Converter Box Coupon Program, P.O. Box 2000, Portland, OR 97208. For additional information, please go to www.dtv2009.gov or call the Consumer Information Hotline at 1-888-388-2009.

The first DTV Forum was held in the district in February. The district office is organizing three additional forums in the coming months. Please contact the district office for dates, times and locations.

33rd District Holds Foreclosure Forum

Owning a home is the American Dream, but thousands of Californians are on the brink of losing their homes and becoming victims of the housing crisis. On Saturday, May 31, Congresswoman Watson held a foreclosure forum at Los Angeles High School. Her goal was to provide constituents with a one-on-one dialogue with experts from various organizations who deal with foreclosure. The number of inquiry calls to the district office before and after the forum indicates her mission was accomplished.

The organizations present included LA Neighborhood Housing Services, NeighborWorks America, Legal Aid Foundation of LA, The LA County Assessors Office, and Operation Hope, Inc.

She issued the following statement to the attendees, "Those present at this foreclosure forum represent organizations fighting to keep people in their homes. I will be vigilant to defend your interests in Washington as we go through this economic downturn."

The topics discussed at the forum included but were not limited to: sub-prime lending, short sales, reverse mortgages, property value assessment and tenant rights.



Rep. Watson and attendees of foreclosure forum listen to Fred Smith of Operation Hope, Inc.

Educational Benefits for Veterans Under the New G.I. Bill

On June 19, 2008, the House of Representatives passed the New G.I. Bill as part of the Iraq and Afghanistan War Supplemental. The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 is the most significant increase to veterans' benefits since World War II. For more information, please log on to <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>.

New G.I. Bill Highlights:

- Veterans who served at least 90 days on Active Duty after September 10, 2001, are eligible for benefits.
- Veterans can receive a monthly housing allowance equal to the basic allowance for housing amount payable to E-5 with dependents.
- Veterans may receive a yearly book and supplies stipend of up to \$1000.
- Veterans will be eligible if they meet the service requirements for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, even if they did not contribute to the Montgomery GI Bill.



Rep. Watson honored for her work in Congress with (L) Celes King, IV and (R) Teri King.

Watson Honored For Her Work in Congress By Promenade of Prominence Walk of Fame

Rep. Watson received a star on the Promenade of Prominence Walk of Fame on February 23, 2008. The induction was held at the Ted Watkins Memorial Park in Los Angeles.

She was recognized for her work in U.S. Congress and her past accomplishments as Ambassador to Micronesia, California State Senator and a member of the Los Angeles Unified School District School Board.

She received a statue of a bronze eagle representing her soaring career. "Our mission in life is to guide our young people and show them the right way," stated Rep. Watson.

Local attendees included Assemblyman Mervyn Dymally, Councilman Bernard Parks, Councilwoman Wendy Gruel, President of BAPAC, Percy Pinkney, Sweet Alice Harris and Tommy Jacqueline. Promenade of Prominence founders Mrs. Edna Aliewine and Dr. James Mays worked with coordinators Rory Kaufman and Terri King to organize the event.



2008 Entertainment Industries Update

As chairwoman of the Congressional Entertainment Industries Caucus (CEIC), the Caucus facilitated several briefings on issues pertinent to the entertainment sector: In April 2008, the Congressional Entertainment Industries Caucus hosted an event in conjunction with the Entertainment Industries Council focusing on how mental health issues are depicted in entertainment media. The event, called "Mental Healthcare Media Blueprint," brought together executive producers from Hollywood as well as key mental health experts. The discussion focused on the combination of three multidisciplinary groups — medical, communication and entertainment and sought to create a more thorough, accurate and solid understanding of how to best communicate mental health illness to the public. Panelists included Jim Kearns, Writer/Co-Producer of *John Q*; Marti Noxon, Executive Producer of *Private Practice*; John Kosinski, Political Director of Writers Guild of America, West; Johnathan Greene, Co-Executive Producer/Writer of *Law & Order: SVU*; and Christian Clemenson, Emmy Award-Winning Actor, *Boston Legal*.



"Too Poor for IP" was the focus of the May 2008 Entertainment Caucus event. The discussion explored the role of Intellectual Property Rights and its direct correlation to economic growth in a developing country. The forum emphasized how the right policy framework in a developing country could help innovators, businesses and workers to reap the benefits of their labor in the form of increased revenue, royalties and export income.

In June, the Caucus highlighted Black Music Month by bringing "The Soundtrack of a Generation: Doo-Wop and Early Rhythm and Blues," to an event held in the U.S. Senate. The Rhythm and Blues Foundation and Rep. Watson welcomed key entertainers who were pioneers in the musical tradition of the 1950s and 1960s: The Legendary Orioles, The Jewels, and The Clovers. The groups spoke about their experiences on the road and the other celebrities they had worked with, including Marvin Gaye and Duke Ellington. The historical aspect of the genre was the central focus of the event.

Women in Cable Telecommunication and the Entertainment Industries Caucus focused on pay equity for women in July 2008. The Caucus welcomed WICT who briefed the Caucus on their PAR Initiative: Pay Equity, Advancement and Resources for Work/Life support for women. The PAR Initiative is a yearly survey conducted by WICT that focuses on the advancement of women in cable telecommunications. The powerhouse panel consisted of women who have climbed the corporate ladder and their experiences along the way. They briefed attendees on the importance of equal pay, advancement opportunities and a welcoming work environment for working women that can enhance a company's bottom line. The president of the Food Network and vice presidents from Time Warner Cable, Discovery Communications, Comcast, and others led the briefing moderated by WICT President/CEO, Benita Moseley Fitzgerald.



Rep. Watson speaks on Pay Equity Issues for women at WICT on the Hill briefing

Recent Ruling Requires FDA Classification of Mercury Fillings



Rep. Diane E. Watson issued the following statement after a class action lawsuit resulted in ruling that the FDA must classify mercury fillings within one year:

"I have been a strong advocate for banning the use of dental amalgam in the field of dentistry. In 1992, during my tenure in the California State Senate, I wrote into law legislation that requires dentists in the state of

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Visit us on the web at <http://www.house.gov/watson>



Rep. Watson congratulates 2008 Congressional Art Competition Winner Yena Jang (middle) with art teacher Diana Yamashiro.

2008 Congressional Art Contest

Rep. Watson recently attended the award presentation in Washington, D.C. honoring the District's winner of the annual Congressional Art Competition. Yena Jang of Los Angeles High School won this year's contest with a modernistic piece entitled "Sounds of Nature." This composition of watercolor, ink and pencil will hang in the United States Capitol for one year. Yena was thrilled to be flown to D.C. to participate in the event and view our nation's historic monuments and museums.

The second place entry was from Anubhuti Swarup of Culver City High School whose artwork will hang in Rep. Watson's office in Washington, D.C. There was a tie for third place and the award went to Balmore Dominguez of Belmont High School and Jazmyn Carter of View Park High School. Both of these pieces of art will be on display in the District office.

This year over 58 entries from eight different schools were submitted. She thanks all of the students who entered this year's competition, as well as their teachers and school administrators. She strongly encourages all high school students in the 33rd Congressional District to participate in this annual artistic competition.



California to provide their patients with a fact sheet listing the risks of mercury amalgam fillings. In 2006, I presented testimony to a joint panel of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advisers assembled to review the safety of amalgam dental fillings. Since then, the FDA had not taken any steps to classify mercury amalgam.”

A recent class action lawsuit filed by Moms Against Mercury et al v. Von Eschenbach, Commissioner, et al ended with ruling that the FDA must comply with the law and set a date to classify mercury amalgam. Per the ruling, the FDA must finish classifying within one year of the close of public comment period on its amalgam policy by July 28, 2009.

The FDA also agreed to change its website on amalgam. It will now state the following:

“Dental amalgams contain mercury, which may have neurotoxic effects on the nervous systems of developing children and fetus. Pregnant women and persons who may have a health condition that makes them more sensitive to mercury exposure, including individuals with existing high levels of mercury bioburden, should not avoid seeking dental care, but should discuss options with their health practitioner.”

“I am pleased that the combined efforts of advocacy groups and lawmakers have brought this important issue to the forefront,” stated Rep. Watson. “Our next step should be to look at how mercury amalgam and mercury in vaccines have contributed to other serious health conditions including autism in newborns which is on the rise across the country. This ruling is just the first victory in our efforts to educate the public on the serious health risks associated with its use.”

Global Education Program Launched at Dorsey High School

Congresswoman Diane Watson announced the launch of a unique global education program at her alma mater, Dorsey High School, on June 18, 2008 at the “NASA on the Hill” event, which honored NASA’s 50th Anniversary.

With a vision of cultivating youth as emerging leaders in an increasing global space age, the initiative was called “Global NetGeneration of Youth Investigating Careers of NASA International Space Station Leaders (NGY-NASA ISS).” It has been designed as a demonstration project of NASA’s International Space Station National Laboratory. Its core mission is to provide youth with a robust, science and technology learning environment and an inquiry-based curriculum that inspires them to aspire, to academically achieve 21st century global competencies, and to pursue successful career paths in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

An initial goal of the program is establishing a Global Community of Practice that empowers educators from the three pilot schools in the US and Canada to use state-of-the-art interactive technologies to link with each other and with the unique, real-world assets of NASA, its people and facilities, in the design and implementation of innovative 21st Century STEM education.

The first annual NGY-NASA Leadership Academy was held in Chicago, IL, in late July. The Dorsey High School Team, represented by Vice Principal Clara Herran, Science Teacher Trevor Oystriek, and LAUSD Director of Technology Joe Oliver, was joined by teams from a high school located in Stamford, Connecticut and Canada. Core Partners and World Class Subject Matter Advisors/ NASA Leaders Dr. Lynn Bondurant, Dr. Frank Hughes, Dr. Cori Lathan, and Dr. Dave McLaren will provide opportunities for team building, skill training and collaborative action planning.



Immigration and the 33rd District

Immigrants throughout America’s rich history continue to make remarkable contributions to our great nation, including many in the 33rd congressional district of California. I recently had the pleasure of meeting some of these new citizens and legal permanent residents in my district office. Their personal stories were powerful and inspiring. However, they also informed me of the lengthy process some must endure to become an American citizen or permanent resident. Some applications are processed within months while others must wait years before their name clears the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s National Name Check Program.

Recently, the FBI came under fire in an editorial by the Washington Post and was accused of “punishing immigrants” by taking too long to complete some background checks for the Department of Homeland Security. The FBI responded by explaining that after the attacks of September 11, 2001, they were required to resubmit 2.7 million names as requested by the then-Immigration and Naturalization Service. The Bureau also stated that it is required to sometimes track down paper files across the country and overseas as well as interview agents about old and current cases.

Many have waited patiently and have abided by our national immigration laws to come one step closer to making the American dream a reality. As the FBI approached its 100th Anniversary this month, they have acknowledged that while many were not served well by this process, I have been informed that the Bureau is committed to processing 98 percent of all name checks within thirty days by June 2009. Currently, they are meeting the backlog and processing goals set forth by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services. If you live in the 33rd congressional district and need assistance with an immigration issue, please feel free to contact my local district office.



Access, Compassion, Care, and Ethics for Seriously Ill Patients Act

Congresswoman Diane Watson and U.S. Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS) introduced the ACCESS Act in May 2008. The ACCESS Act seeks to increase terminally ill patients' access to promising treatments in the investigational phase of Food and Drug Administration.



The ACCESS ACT expands the process of expedited use of promising new drugs and medical devices by patients who are seriously or terminally ill before general marketing begins. The bill creates a conditional approval system for drugs, biological products, and medical devices that is responsive to the needs of seriously ill patients whose diseases are life threatening or may cause irreversible disabilities.

The legislation ensures that terminally-ill patients have access to promising new drugs and devices at the earliest time, as early as the completed Phase I trials for a new product. It also improves upon the existing accelerated approval process for promising new products by allowing the compassionate use of drugs not yet approved by the FDA that have demonstrated in Phase II trials clinical benefits to seriously ill patients.

The Access Act has built-in safeguards that allow for the continued monitoring of the efficacy of developmental drugs as they are used by seriously or terminally ill patients. The legislation does not put the FDA behind the curve, or ahead of the curve. Instead the ACCESS ACT puts the FDA right on the curve where it should be.

West Los Angeles College Receives Funding for Job Training

As Chair of the Congressional Entertainment Industries Caucus, Rep. Watson was honored by West Los Angeles College (WLAC) for her role in securing two grants totaling \$2.5 million.

The federal funds will be used for an entertainment industry job training program at WLAC in partnership with Hollywood Cinema Production Resources (HCPR). Many entertainment trade professionals will serve as teachers, educators and counselors providing hands-on training for students in every aspect of motion picture studio production.

"I am so inspired by this program. The young people who participate will be trained for the kinds of jobs that will make them economically independent throughout their lives." Rep. Watson is a product of California Community Colleges and a long-time advocate. "I owe everything I am today to community colleges. They gave me the platform that I needed to go on to universities. They were my rock, my higher education foundation."

Culver City-based West Los Angeles College is no stranger to the film business. The 80-acre campus was once MGM Studio's backlot and some accounts say scenes of *Gone with the Wind* were filmed on part of what is now college property. For more information visit www.wlac.edu.



*Rep. Watson honored for her work in Congress to secure funding for WLAC's entertainment industry job training program.
FROM LEFT: WLAC President Dr. Mark W. Rocha; Congresswoman Diane E. Watson; Keith Weaver, Vice President of Government Affairs at Sony Pictures Entertainment; Gary Gray, film and music video producer/director*

The Screen Actors Guild and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers Negotiations

The Screen Actors Guild and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers have been in negotiations to reach a new contract agreement but have not yet come to a resolution.

The entertainment industry is an important contributor not only to the economy of Los Angeles but also to the economies of the state of California and our entire nation. The recent Writers Guild of America strike has had a lasting impact, costing an estimated two billion dollars in lost income through the end of 2008.

The losses from the strike affected actors, writers, and production staff, as well as the businesses that service the industry, such as caterers and equipment and home rentals. These losses also trickled down to other sectors, including retail, professional services, healthcare and education, where the salaries of those in the entertainment industry would have been spent.

The effects of this potential conflict would be far-reaching. As Chair of the Congressional Entertainment Industries Caucus, Rep. Watson strongly urges these organizations to work together in order to reach an agreement soon. She hopes that they will take the effects of the previous strike into consideration and avoid further disputes that may result in even more harm to this vitally important industry, as well as our nation's economy.



Congresswoman Diane E. Watson

Summer/Fall 2008
Page 6

8th Annual U.S. Republic of Korea Inter-Parliamentary Exchange

Rep. Watson chaired the 8th Annual United States – Republic of Korea's Inter-Parliamentary Exchange in Los Angeles and Washington D.C.

This unique program is a congressionally approved official exchange between the two Congresses and is supported by the House Foreign Affairs. From July 26 through 30, a delegation from South Korea's National Assembly, led by Chairman Park Jin, traveled to Los Angeles and Washington D.C., to discuss issues central to the United States – South Korean relationship. Congresswoman Watson, Congresswoman Mazie Hirono of Hawaii and Congressman Eni Faleomavaega of the American Samoa participated. Congressman Ed Royce, who serves as Vice-Chair, was represented by Young Kim.

The Los Angeles Republic of Korea Consul-General, Jae Soo Kim, was very supportive of the Exchange and attended the events throughout the weekend as well.

During their stay in Los Angeles and the 33rd Congressional District, both U.S. and South Korean delegations had the opportunity to meet with Korean-American community business leaders. Rep. Watson presided over the meeting with issues that define U.S.-ROK relations, including the United States – Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA), the Visa Waiver Program, and beef.

This meeting allowed the members to consider the community's views and address them further as the House Foreign Affairs Committee members and the South Korean delegation met on Capitol Hill.

Along with private tours of the city's most treasured sites, including the Griffith Observatory and the Port of Los Angeles, she led the Exchange members on a City Hall tour with City Councilman Herb Wesson and a briefing on trade and tourism by chaired by Deputy Mayor of Trade, Dario Gomez.

The briefing by Deputy Mayor Gomez showed the unique relationship between South Korea and Los Angeles when it comes to trade and tourism. South Korea still remains one of Los Angeles' major overseas visitor markets, and the numbers keep increasing each year.

As Chairwoman at this year's Inter-Parliamentary Exchange, she highlighted what Koreatown signifies in the globalization of Los Angeles. "I am proud to represent the epicenter of dynamic growth and change in the Los Angeles region. This year's Exchange was a major success, and I look forward to meeting the Korean National Assemblymen again next year."

Defending Veterans' Voting Rights

On June 18, 2008, Congresswoman Watson sent a letter to the Honorable James Peake, Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) requesting more information on why the VA has banned non-partisan voting rights groups from holding voter registration drives at long-term care facilities operated by the VA. In the letter, she stated, "It is appalling to see that the defenders of democracy and freedom are being denied the right to participate in the democratic process."

The letter which was authored by Watson and signed along with 41 of her colleagues claims that VHA Directive 2008-23 was a step in the right direction in providing the opportunity for veterans in long-term facilities to participate in voting in state and federal elections. The



Rep Watson and other participants in the 8th Annual US-Korean Inter-Parliamentary Exchange.



Rep. Watson met with Koreatown business owners to discuss community issues.

Koreatown Meeting Focuses on Community Issues

On May 27, she had the opportunity to tour Koreatown in her district with local Korean-American community and business leaders. She was able to witness and appreciate the cultural and social amenities Koreatown has to offer. It was also a great way to personally interact with her Korean-American constituents firsthand on important community issues.

Meeting with Chung Hoon Youk, President & CEO of Hanmi Bank and his staff was also a great opportunity to discuss the community's financial presence. Driving through Olympic Blvd. and recognizing its transformation was remarkable. She also visited the Koreatown Pavilion Garden now under current construction, which will offer a senior center facility, a new LAUSD school, and a gateway monument that will be a cultural landmark in Koreatown.

More Korean-Americans live and work in the 33rd congressional district than in any other congressional district in the nation. More people of Korean heritage live and work in Los Angeles than any place outside Korea.

(continued)



Congresswoman Diane E. Watson

Summer/Fall 2008
Page 7

directive allowed non-partisan groups to hold voting registration drives on VA grounds to ensure that those individuals who served our nation are able to participate in the democratic process. However, when the directive was replaced by VHA Directive 2008-25, it clearly showed that the VA had no interest in extending those privileges to veterans in long-term care facilities.

The VA makes up only 5% of all federal government property and they are the only entity in the federal government that has banned non-partisan voting registration drives. The VA uses the Hatch Act as the reason why they have decided to ban voting rights groups from access to VA grounds. The act only bans federal employees from engaging in partisan political activity.

Amendment Introduced To Strengthen Diversity In Military

On May 19, 2008, the House passed the Watson/Cummings Amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act. The amendment would strengthen Section 595 of the "Senior Military Leadership Diversity Commission" to include the Coast Guard in the composition of the Commission and the overall scope of the study. Establishing the Commission will provide minority officers with a guideline to give them the best opportunity to advance to the senior levels of the Armed Forces, which is essential to our nation's long-term national and strategic interests.

CONTACT INFORMATION

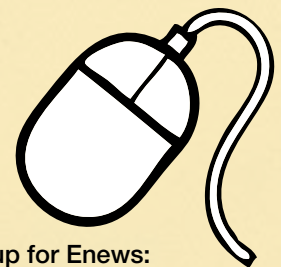
Washington Office:

125 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Tel (202) 225-7084
Fax (202) 225-2422

District Office:

4322 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 302
Los Angeles, CA 90010
Tel (323) 965-1422
Fax (323) 965-1113

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