



U.S. Representative

# Barbara Lee

Ninth Congressional District, California

Summer Newsletter 2007

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



Dear Friend,

The American people sent a clear message in November that they are looking to Congress to change the failed policy in Iraq, to end the occupation and to bring our troops home. Unfortunately, President Bush vetoed Congress' efforts to establish a timeline to bring our troops home, and the public and the media bought into a false debate between "protecting our troops" or "cutting off funding."

Congress doesn't have to cut off any funds. The Constitution gives us the power to simply provide all the funds necessary for a safe and timely withdrawal of U.S. troops. In what came to be known as the Lee amendment, I joined several of my progressive colleagues in proposing a measure for fully funding withdrawal.

While our efforts to pass the original Lee amendment to fully fund withdrawal were unsuccessful, Congress had the opportunity last month to vote on legislation that incorporated the Lee amendment proposal, HR 2237 introduced by my colleague Jim McGovern from Massachusetts. Unfortunately, it only received 171 votes. While this historic vote is a step forward, we must keep the pressure on. Indeed, we have the opportunity and the responsibility to ensure that when Congress takes up the question of funding for the occupation in September in the annual defense spending bill that the options are understood to be another blank check, or fully funding withdrawal.

In fact, as the occupation of Iraq stretches into its fifth year, I often think about the day that Congress voted to authorize the invasion. That day, I offered an amendment that would have allowed the U.N. inspectors to finish their job. Had it passed, the inspectors would have confirmed what we then believed and the world now knows – that there were no weapons of mass destruction and the case for going to war was false.

Nearly 3,500 U.S. troops have died and more than 24,000 have been wounded. Untold Iraqis have been killed. We have now spent \$435 billion on the invasion and occupation. That is money that will never be spent on critical programs that are part of creating the economic security that shapes our national security.

In addition to the human and financial cost, perhaps the greatest cost of the invasion and occupation of Iraq is to our security and the security of the world. Our own intelligence services have reported that the presence of U.S. troops in Iraq has boosted recruitment and fundraising for terrorist organizations like al Qaeda. Military authorities warn that the overextension of our forces in Iraq threatens to "break" our military. With much of our military tied down in Iraq, countries like Iran and North Korea have been emboldened while Osama bin Laden remains at large.

The situation is untenable. Already, too much blood and treasure has been spilled for a war that never should have happened. We must end the occupation of Iraq and bring our troops home.

Sincerely,

## Lee Joins Powerful Appropriations Committee

After serving on the International Relations and Financial Services Committees, in December, Congresswoman Lee was named to the House Appropriations Committee, which controls the federal purse strings and is widely viewed as one of the most powerful committees in Congress. She serves on the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Subcommittee, the State, Foreign Operations Subcommittee and is Vice Chair of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee.



*Congresswoman Lee is joined by Congressman James Oberstar, Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher on a tour the MacArthur Maze site. Lee helped secure eligibility for federal emergency funds for the repairs, which were completed in less than one month.*

## Subcommittee Spotlight

### LABOR HHS

The Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Subcommittee is in charge of funding for programs in agencies including the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor and related agencies including the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Social Security Administration and the National Labor Relations Board. The Labor HHS appropriations bill is the second largest, after Defense, and includes over \$140 billion in discretionary funds for issues ranging from Pell Grants to expanding access to higher education to money for the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program to fight and treat AIDS domestically.

### STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS

The State, Foreign Operations Subcommittee oversees funding for programs in agencies including the State Department, Department of Defense, USAID, Department of Treasury, Export-Import Bank and the Peace Corps. The \$20 billion FY07 bill passed by the House included funds for combating terrorism, humanitarian assistance, food aid and for fighting global HIV/AIDS.

### LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Legislative Branch Subcommittee determines funding for the legislative branch of government, ranging from the operations of the House itself to the Capitol Police, the Library of Congress and the Congressional Budget Office and the Government Accountability Office.

## Getting Real About Climate Change

Over the last year, a number of important events have dramatically raised the national consciousness on the critical issue of climate change.

Two ground breaking reports left no doubt that humanity is responsible for global warming. California passed landmark legislation to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. And a group of major businesses and leading environmental groups joined forces for the first time to lobby for federal regulation of greenhouse gases.

Together, these and other events have helped to raise the level of awareness among the American public about climate change, and in the new Democratic Congress there is the promise of real action to address it.

Under the leadership of Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the House of Representatives has laid out a bold agenda to combat global warming and move America towards energy independence. The House created a Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming. As part of our 100 hour agenda the House also passed H.R. 6, the CLEAN Energy Act of 2007, repealing \$14 billion in taxpayer subsidies to oil companies. We also passed a budget that makes substantial investments in research and development of cutting-edge renewable energy technologies.

These initiatives are just the first step. We will continue to develop legislation to regulate greenhouse gases and address the challenges in stopping global climate change.

In many ways, the Bay Area and my district represent the hub of the environmental movement. Ongoing research into alternative and renewable energy at UC Berkeley holds the promise of a cleaner and brighter future. Businesses in my district have taken the lead in greening their activities to reduce waste, improve energy efficiency, and save water. Innovative programs funded in part through the City of Oakland are training youth about the importance of environmental stewardship and are providing them with job opportunities and new career paths. Local community based organizations are leading advocates for environmental justice and equity for all our constituents. Together, our community is at the forefront of a robust environmental movement that is changing the world for the better.

Our challenge in Congress is to draw from this local innovation and energy, and to develop a new national environmental policy that will secure our future by addressing global warming and ensuring that we become energy independent.

## Immigration Reform

*"Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*  
-inscription on the Statue of Liberty

Immigrants built this nation, and their contributions are a proud part of our heritage. Over the past year, millions of people across this nation have come forward to demand an immigration policy that lives up to that heritage and the promise of opportunity our nation has always stood for.

That is why I support the local efforts to reaffirm Oakland's historic commitment to being a 'City of Refuge.' We are a diverse community with a long history of openness to those who want build a better life for themselves and their families here, and we refuse to let the antagonism of the national debate on immigration change those longstanding commitments.

I believe that immigration is one of the great moral issues facing our country, and I have been working with my colleagues – African American, Asian Pacific American and Hispanic Representatives – to get Congress to stop playing games with this issue and act quickly to pass comprehensive immigration reform legislation that not only includes family reunification, earned legalization and a path to citizenship, but also addresses issues of job training and job creation.

## Healthcare

Congresswoman Lee continues to lead the fight for universal healthcare and against health disparities. She is a cosponsor of H.R. 676, which would establish the United States National Health Insurance program and provide healthcare, free of charge, to all Americans. She is also working with colleagues on the Health Equity and Accountability Act, which is designed to address the massive health disparities faced by African Americans and other people of color.

As a member of the Appropriations subcommittee that oversees health issues, she will be working to increase funds for research at the National Institute of Health, as well as to address the nursing shortage.



*Congresswoman Lee and local faith leaders at a 2006 press conference calling for comprehensive immigration reform and an end to scapegoating of immigrants.*

## Darfur

Congresswoman Lee continued her efforts to bring an end to the genocide in Darfur, returning from her third trip to the region in April. Later that month, the House approved H.Con.Res. 7, her Darfur Partners for Peace Act, which calls on the member nations of the League of Arab States to take more aggressive action to end the genocide in Darfur. Earlier in the year, she reintroduced H.R. 180 the Darfur Accountability and Divestment Act, which would protect states' rights to divest pension funds from companies whose business supports the genocide in Darfur and would bar federal contracts for such companies. Two companies, ABB and Seimens AG, announced that they would be removing their business from Sudan, citing the legislation as one of the reasons. In June, the House passed H.Res. 422, her resolution calling on China to use its influence as one of Sudan's major trading partners and the host of the 2008 Olympic games to do more to end the genocide.

## Legislative Highlights

Partial list of the legislation introduced by Congresswoman Lee during this Congress:

- **H.RES.272** Commemorating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the transatlantic slave trade (passed by the House)
- **H.CON.RES.10** To repeal tax cuts for wealthiest 5 percent to pay for poverty alleviation
- **H.CON.RES.46** To prevent the establishment of permanent military bases in Iraq
- **H.RES.23** Disavowing the doctrine of preemption
- **H.R.171** Student Support Act
- **H.R. 172** Community Partners Next Door Act of 2007
- **H.R. 174** Public Housing Drug Elimination Program Reauthorization Act of 2007
- **H.R. 176** Shirley A. Chisholm United States-Caribbean Educational Exchange Act of 2007
- **H.R. 177** Pursuit of International Education (PIE) Act of 2007
- **H.R.180** Darfur Accountability and Divestment Act
- **H.R.770** The Iran Nuclear Nonproliferation Act of 2007
- **H.R.1653** The Responsible Education About Life Act
- **H.R.1713** The PATHWAY Act
- **H.R. 1812** Menopausal Hormone Replacement Therapies and Alternative Treatments and Fairness Act of 2007

## Education

Congresswoman Lee joined with Congressman George Miller and local partners to sponsor East Bay Cash for College 2007, a series of free financial aid and income tax preparation workshops for East Bay high school seniors and college students to take further advantage of financial aid opportunities for academic year 2007-2008.

In Washington, she supported efforts to make college more affordable by helping the House pass H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act of 2007, which cuts interest rates on subsidized Stafford loans in half, from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent, over the next five years. This reduction will save students thousands of dollars in interest over the life of their loans. For example, undergraduate students that start school in California in 2007 would save \$2,490 over the life of their loans. By 2011, it will be \$4,420.

As a member of the Appropriations subcommittee that oversees education funding, she is working to fully fund the No Child Left Behind program and to increase funding for the TRIO and GEAR UP programs, which are designed to help young people to stay in and succeed in high school and go on to college. National dropout rates show that less than 75 percent of all eighth graders graduate from high school in five years and in urban schools the rates dip below 50 percent



*Congresswoman Lee with Sorreya Moody, a San Lorenzo High School student from Ashland who served as a Congressional Page from the ninth Congressional District from January to June, 2007.*

## Housing

Affordable housing has long been a priority for Congresswoman Lee, who has been leading efforts in Congress to create a national affordable housing trust fund. She also reintroduced H.R. 172, the Community Partners Next Door Act, which is designed to make it easier for teachers and first responders to own a home in the communities where they work. By raising the FHA upper loan limit to allow participants in high-cost locations to participate in the FHA Homebuyer program, the bill is especially helpful in places like the Bay Area, where real estate prices are high.

### Grants Update

- \$4,714,200 .....UC Berkeley
- \$822,900 .....HOPE Housing
- \$633,235 .....Berkeley Food and Housing Project
- \$1,133,725.....Kaiser Foundation Research Institute
- \$300,000 ..Asian Community Mental Health Services
- \$300,000 National Council on Crime and Delinquency
- \$275,000 .....Bay Area Legal Aid
- \$274,962 .....Sentinel Fair Housing
- \$75,837 .....Children's Hospital and Research Center
- \$50,000 ..Oakland Technology and Education Center
- \$25,125 .....Spanish Speaking Citizens Foundation

## Fulfilling the Promise of a New Direction

In November, the American people called for a change in direction, a change in priorities and a change in government. It was an unmistakable call for the end of business as usual in Washington, DC.

As Democrats, we took control of Congress with a clear sense of our responsibility to make comprehensive reforms and to restore public trust in our government. We accepted that challenge and under the leadership of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, crafted an aggressive legislative plan to address some of the most pressing issues facing working Americans.

In the first 100 hours of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, we successfully put Congress on a new path by fulfilling the promise to move legislation rooted in the values and priorities of the American people. We passed legislation:

- To raise the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25.
- To cut student loan interest rates in half.
- To allow the government to negotiate lower drug prices for Medicare beneficiaries.
- To expand federal funding for embryonic stem cell research.
- To repeal billions in subsidies given to oil companies and to redirect the savings into renewable energy research.
- To make America safer by implementing the recommendations of the bipartisan 9/11 Commission.

After six years of Republican rule, it was a Herculean effort to achieve so much in so little time, but that was just the beginning and we have to go further. The unfinished business of creating a more perfect union, of justice, equality and peace should be a reminder for us that while we recognize our accomplishments, we have a lot of work still to do.

## Port Security

In response to the Department of Homeland Security's decision last year to deny port security grant funding to the Port of Oakland, Congresswoman Lee led Congressional efforts to increase port security funding and ensure that is allocated according to risk.

She led efforts to overturn the DHS decision to rank the Port of Oakland in the lowest funding category, and in January DHS announced that the Port of Oakland and other Bay Area ports will be top tier priorities for port security funding. As a result, in May Oakland received more than \$6 million in port security grants, the largest portion of the more than \$14 million Lee helped secure for Bay Area ports.

She also helped secure \$48 million for the 50 foot dredging project, part of the maritime expansion program that is projected to add an estimated 8,000 jobs, \$1.9 billion in increased annual business revenue and \$55.5 million in increased local taxes each year.

## Iran

With the Bush administration's increased saber-rattling towards Iran, Congresswoman Lee has been leading efforts to prevent another preemptive war. She convened a forum of experts in January to discuss current U.S. policy towards Iran, the potential implications of preemptive war with that country and the non-military alternatives to addressing Iran's nuclear ambitions and engaging Iran in efforts to strengthen regional stability by bringing an end to the civil war in Iraq.

She also introduced H.R. 770, the Iran Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 2007, which prevents the U.S. from launching a preemptive war against Iran in the absence of an imminent threat or without congressional authorization. It also blocks the use of funds for regime change in Iran. Finally, the bill declares that no previous act of Congress constitutes authorization to use military force against Iran and states that there should be no preconditions to engaging Iran in diplomatic dialogue. In January, she also reintroduced H.Res. 23, her legislation to renounce the doctrine of preemptive war.

In May, along with several colleagues, she offered an amendment to the FY'08 Defense Authorization Act that stated that no previous authorization constitutes an authorization to use force against Iran and would make certain that no funds would be used to take military action against Iran in absence of specific congressional authorization or a direct attack as defined by the War Powers Act. Unfortunately, the amendment was defeated.

## Community Office Hours

### Oakland

Mon - Fri: 9am – 5pm

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

### Fruitvale

Thursday: 3pm – 5pm

Spanish Speaking Citizens  
Foundation  
1475 Fruitvale Avenue, Oakland

### Castro Valley

Monday: 5pm – 7pm

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.*

## Save a Tree! Visit Our Award Winning Website!

Did you know that you can save paper by signing up to receive newsletters from my office electronically?

Visit <http://lee.house.gov/signup> and update your profile so that in the future, you will receive only electronic communications from our office.

In February, my website was honored by the Congressional Management Foundation for being one of the best in Congress. Come check out what all the fuss is about.

## Service Academy Nominations

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

## Constituent Finally Gets \$33K in Back Benefits

A caseworker in Congresswoman Lee's Oakland office recently helped a constituent resolve a disability claim. The constituent had been denied disability, despite having been unable to work since an accident in 2003. By the time she sought help with the caseworker, she had lost her home and was living in the street. The caseworker helped the constituent successfully appeal the ruling, and nine months after contacting the office she received her first regular disability check, as well as a \$33,000 check for retroactive benefits.

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



*Photo Courtesy of the SF Chronicle*

*Congresswoman Lee, accompanied by rock legend and AIDS activist Bono and Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums, discusses efforts to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS in the African American community and other communities of color at a press conference in Oakland in January.*

## HIV/AIDS

Congresswoman Lee has continued her efforts in Congress to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. In January, she led the successful effort to prevent more than \$1.3 billion in global AIDS funds from being cut, and she reintroduced 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.

She has also led efforts to fight the spread of the disease in the African American community and other communities of color. In addition to working to increase funds for the Minority AIDS Initiative, on World AIDS Day she led a group of local leaders in getting publicly tested for HIV. In February, the House passed H.Con.Res. 35, her resolution recognizing the goals of National Black AIDS awareness day, and she reintroduced H.R. 178, the JUSTICE Act, her legislation to allow the distribution of condoms in federal prisons and to develop a strategy to reduce HIV and other STIs in prisons.

## Upcoming Congressional Events

**Tuesday, August 7th, 6 – 7:30pm**

**Town Hall Meeting:** Iraq and legislative update  
Piedmont Community Center, 711 Highland Ave., Oakland

**September 15th, 10 – 11:30am**

**Veterans Appreciation Breakfast**  
Albany Community Center, 1249 Marin Street, Albany

**September 15th, 1 – 3pm**

**Town Meeting:** Port of Oakland/Environment  
West Oakland Library, 1801 Adeline Street, Oakland

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

*Official Business*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Lee".

M.C.  
Presorted Standard  
W/S Carrier Route