

## **Telephone Town Hall Summary**

A telephone town hall, also called Tele Town Hall, is a new technology that allows the Congressman to reach up to 30,000 homes in the 44<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. The call is much like a conference call; people can stay on the line to listen to the discussion, and if constituents want to ask the Congressman a question, can press “\*3”

The Tele Town Hall lasts approximately one hour and 30,000 households are called and. The questions focused on a few issues and below are a summary of the Congressman’s stance on each of the issues he was asked about:

***Q: What is your stance on illegal immigration?***

**A:** I am completely opposed to amnesty and have voted against providing federal funding to illegal immigrants. I believe it is fundamentally unfair to grant our highest honor – U.S. Citizenship – to people whose first actions were to break our laws. The United States is the most generous immigration country in the world and we should not dishonor those who apply to enter the U.S. legally by granting those here illegally a path to citizenship.

I also believe the U.S. needs to be more proactive in battling illegal immigration. In 1996 I wrote and passed legislation that created the Basic Pilot Program, also known as E-Verify. The program, originally only available to five states, is now available nationwide and has over 30,000 employers participating. The system allows an employer to check the veracity of identification documents provided for the I-9 form. The program is web-based, user-friendly and most queries receive an immediate response. I currently have a bill, H.R. 19, which would make employment verification mandatory over seven years. Until we cut off the jobs magnet, we will never truly have control of our borders.

Along with employment verification, it is imperative that we build the border fence and provide the necessary number of Border Patrol agents. In May I visited the border to inspect the progress of the fence – the pace of construction is frustratingly slow. I think it is ridiculous that our national security is being compromised for outrageous environmental concerns that are holding up construction of the fence. I voted for the Secure Fence Act along with \$1.2 billion to start the fence. The Department of Homeland Security is required by law to have 380 miles of the fence built by the end of 2008 and I will be keeping a close watch to ensure that requirement is met.

***Q: What have you done to help improve the 91 freeway?***

**A:** Since I took office in 1992, transportation has been a top priority. I travel the 91 frequently and understand the frustration of commuters. Over the years I have worked closely with the local cities and transportation agencies to provide funding for transportation. The funding includes:

- \$4.875 million for the Green River Road Bridge Replacement Project – currently under construction.
- \$1.0 million for the 91 Freeway Choke Points elimination project.
- \$119,596,000 in grants for improvements to the 60/91/215 Interchange – currently under construction.
- \$15.8 million, with the help of Rep. Gary Miller (Diamond Bar) and former Rep. Christopher Cox (Newport Beach), for studies to determine the feasibility of a new highway between Riverside County and Orange County.

To ensure the 91 Freeway is more like a highway than a parking lot, I believe we must maximize the 91 freeway by expanding its capacity as much as possible, while developing an alternative transportation corridor connecting Riverside and Orange Counties.

***Q: What are you doing to help with the increase in foreclosures due to sub-prime mortgages?***

A: I firmly believe that home ownership is a central part of the American dream and all Americans should be able to experience the proud feeling of owning a home. However, I do not support a taxpayer bailout for homeowners who find themselves failing to meet the financial commitments they made.

There are other solutions to help ease the situation many honest homeowners find themselves in: increasing the FHA loan limit. That is why I voted for H.R. 1852 which will:

- Increase in FHA loan limits from \$362,000 to \$500,000.
- Extend the maximum length for a Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loan term from 35 to 40 years.

The President has also stepped up measure to help homeowners at risk. He has launched an initiative called FHA Secure. This program will help people who have good credit but who have not made all of their payments on time because of rising mortgage payments. FHA will be able to offer an option to refinance their existing mortgage so they can make their payments and keep their homes. FHA will also charge mortgage insurance premiums based on the individual risk for each loan, using traditional underwriting standards so it can expand access and help even more families.

Last Saturday, I attended a Foreclosure Workshop in Riverside which over 300 of our neighbors attended. It was an informative event and I know that the many homeowners in attendance found some hope in a difficult situation. Foreclosure is the least desirable option for all involved. The workshop was about finding ways to avoid foreclosure,

keeping families in their homes and continuing the American dream of homeownership. I will continue to communicate to my constituents about who they can contact to get help.

If you are someone in need of assistance, NeighborWorks, a national nonprofit organization created by Congress, has established a hotline for American homeowners having trouble paying their mortgages.

The hotline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is staffed by foreclosure prevention counselors.

The phone number is 888-995-HOPE (4673).

***Q: Americans continue to fight and die in Iraq. What is your stance?***

**A:** The most difficult part of this job is making the decision to send fellow Americans into war. My congressional district has lost 20 brave men and women to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and across our country there are families in mourning over the loss of a loved one. My thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends who must endure such grief. The sacrifices of our soldiers, Marines, sailors and airmen are now part of a proud American history and they will not be forgotten.

There is no doubt that we face innumerable challenges ahead and Iraq's problems will require long-term attention. The short-sighted "strategy" of bringing the troops home now would only ensure that we will return to Iraq at some later date and perhaps at a higher price. This is the second time in 15 years we've exerted force in the region and it is my hope it will be the last time. The reality is that a premature drawdown of our forces will exacerbate tensions and conditions in the Middle East in addition to confounding Iraq to escalating violence and disintegration of government which will have profound implications for our security and economy for decades to come.

On September 10, 2007, U.S. Army General David Petraeus, the commander of coalition forces in Iraq, briefed Congress on the situation in Iraq. In this report, General Petraeus told Congress:

*"As a bottom line up front, the military objectives of the surge are, in large measure, being met."*

*"Iraq's problems will require a long-term effort. There are no easy answers or quick solutions. And though we both believe this effort can succeed, it will take time. Our assessments underscore, in fact, the importance of recognizing that a premature drawdown of our forces would likely have devastating consequences."*

I am hopeful that the Iraqi political situation will begin to match the improving security situation. Ultimately, we must win this engagement using all our assets - legal, diplomatic, law enforcement and military. Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations

thrive on poverty, despair, violence and fear. They cannot afford for freedom to succeed and the United States cannot afford to allow freedom to fail.

***Q: Health care costs continue to increase. What are you doing about health care?***

**A:** I believe we need to rethink the way health care is regulated in the U.S. I have been a longtime advocate of reforming America's health care structure to increase access to health care and stem the rising health care costs. I have supported the creation of Health Savings Accounts (HSA), which have the potential to radically change how people think of health care. HSAs will make people smarter consumers which will help drive down prices. I have voted for legislation to encourage small businesses to offer health insurance coverage to more employers.

A major concern for health care providers is the very high cost of medical malpractice insurance. All doctors have experienced this cost skyrocket in the past few decades, and it has become a crisis in some locations. I support reforming our civil tort laws to cap non-medical damages to ensure that settlements are more reasonable.

One of the fastest growing costs in health care is the price of prescription drugs. As a co-founder of the Generic Drug Equity Caucus, I have been working to make prescription drug coverage affordable for the government, insurance companies and seniors. By increasing the competition within the drug marketplace, seniors will benefit from a wider variety at lower prices.

I will continue to work for lower prices and a health care system that is strong and ensures affordable health care for all Americans.

***Q: What are you doing to stop Mexican trucks from entering the U.S.?***

**A:** I voted on three different occasions this year to stop and delay the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Mexican trucking program.

In May, I voted for the Safe American Roads Act, H.R. 1773, which **limits** the authority of the Secretary of Transportation to grant authority to Mexican motor carriers to operate beyond United States municipalities and commercial zones on the United States-Mexico border. The Senate has not acted on the bill.

Also in May, I voted to delay the Mexican trucking pilot program and supported provisions included in the fiscal 2007 Iraq War supplemental bill which was signed into law on May 25, 2007. The language required DOT to suspend the pilot program pending a safety report by the DOT's inspector general and a department response to that report. However, the department issued that report September 6, 2007 and initiated the pilot program one hour later.

In July, I supported an amendment to the FY2008 Transportation-HUD measure (HR 3074) that would bar funds from being used for the pilot program allowing up to 100

Mexican trucking companies to operate in the United States beyond a 25-mile radius of the border. The amendment was also recently approved by the Senate.

***Q: What have you done to help Border Patrol Agents Compean and Ramos?***

**A:** I am a co-sponsor of Rep. Duncan Hunter's Legislation (H.R. 563) to provide both Ramos and Compean with a congressional pardon.

On December 1, 2006 I sent a letter, along with several other colleagues, requesting Chairman Sensenbrenner hold hearings as soon as possible. I also joined with other colleagues in sending a letter on December 7, 2007 to the President asking him to commute the sentences of both Ramos and Compean.

I also requested the Attorney General Gonzales allow Ramos and Compean to delay the start of their prison sentences until after the appeals process.

We should not unjustly punish those who guard our borders while protecting the "rights" of foreign drug smugglers.

***Q: What steps do you believe we should take to ensure Californians continue to have a reliable water supply from the California Bay-Delta?***

**A:** As the past Chairman of the House Water and Power Subcommittee I am very familiar with the many water challenges California faces. I continue to believe California must address its water imbalance by increasing water supplies and taking appropriate measures to reduce water demand. Significant investments are needed to improve our water infrastructure, including additional surface and groundwater storage, a comprehensive Delta solution and water use efficiency.

In late August, the reliability of water supplies from Northern California's Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta was cast in doubt when a U.S. District Court judge set into motion one of the single largest court-ordered water curtailments in state history. Based on initial estimates supplied by the state, the Metropolitan Water District—the primary water importer for urban Southern California—stands to lose as much as 30 percent of its supplies from Northern California next year and possibly longer, under Judge Wanger's preliminary ruling in Fresno.

California simply cannot lose important water supplies without real consequences throughout the state. The historic court decision affirms what the water community has realized for some time, but the general public may not fully appreciate—the Delta, both as a valuable ecosystem and essential water supply, is broken. The court ruling did not fix it. The Delta needs a comprehensive solution that addresses all of its problems. Part of that solution must include new ways to isolate the impacts of water diversions from the estuary.

A few years ago I authored the CAL-FED reauthorization bill, HR 2828, the Water Supply, Reliability, and Environmental Improvement Act. The bill was passed by Congress during the 108th Congress and signed into law by President Bush. The law reauthorizes federal participation in the CALFED Bay Delta program, including water supply project approval, balance among program activities (e.g. water supply and ecosystem restoration), and the quality of science used to support policy decisions.

In the current 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, I have introduced, H.R. 1139, the Riverside – Corona Feeder Water Supply Act. The purpose of the Riverside – Corona Feeder water supply project is to capture and store new water in wet years in order to increase firm water supplies, reduce water costs, and improve water quality. The project proposes to manage the ground water levels by the construction of ground water wells and pumping capacity to deliver the pumped ground water supply to water users. The bill was passed by the House in June of this year and is currently pending in the Senate.

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