

Congressman GEORGE MILLER

7TH DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA



SPECIAL POINT OF INTEREST

Did you know?



Every time you switch one light bulb in your home to a more efficient compact fluorescent bulb you can save \$30 to \$60 over the life of that bulb on your electric bills and also keep half a ton of heat-trapping carbon dioxide out of the air.

I support conservation and efficiency as key steps to energy independence. Learn more about saving money and cleaning the air: <http://hes.lbl.gov/>

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CONTRA COSTA UPDATE

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. I am pushing in Congress for an end to the war in Iraq and a new direction in America — putting the common good of all Americans first, for a change. I support 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

Raise the Minimum Wage

The average U.S. CEO now makes 821 times as much as a full-time worker earning the national minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour. And the gap between the rich and the poor is growing wider every day. **That's why I am leading the fight in Congress to raise the federal minimum wage, which Congress has refused to increase for nearly 10 years.**

“Congress is blocking a raise for working Americans.”
— George Miller



In June, Rep. Miller, center, and other lawmakers called for an increase in the minimum wage.

By lunchtime on the first working day of the year, the average CEO has already made what a full-time minimum wage worker will earn all year. Meanwhile, since 1997 the price of regular gasoline has risen 136 percent and the cost of bread 25 percent, but the federal minimum wage has not risen one penny. The House Republican Leader recently said that he opposes a minimum wage increase and has never voted for one in 25 years. That's wrong. **I won't back down until working Americans get a raise.**

My speeches on this issue are on the web!

**SPECIAL
POINT OF
INTEREST**

 **Did you know?**

A high-efficiency washing machine in your home can save 11,000 gallons of water per year, and replacing an old toilet with a high-efficiency model can save another 19,000 gallons per year.

To save water and money, check with your local water utility -- rebates may be available for these purchases.

I support conservation policies that create good American jobs, protect the environment, and save consumers money. But this Congress opposes most common sense measures.

Take This Quiz

As the top Democrat on the House Education and the Workforce Committee, a senior member of the House Resources Committee, and chairman of the House Democratic Policy Committee, I read a lot to stay informed. And I am often surprised by what I learn. Take this quiz below and test your knowledge of some of the issues before Congress. **For the answers and more information about each issue, go to:**

www.house.gov/georgemiller/newsletter/quizzesanswers.html

Who said that reducing American troop levels in Iraq was necessary to "take away one of the elements that fuels the insurgency, that of the coalition forces as an occupying force."

- A) "Fahrenheit 9/11" filmmaker Michael Moore
- B) Sen. Ted Kennedy
- C) Gen. George Casey Jr., top commander in Iraq

How much student loan debt does the average California college student have after graduation?

- A) \$2,750
- B) \$8,480
- C) \$15,340

What percentage of Californians does not have health insurance for all or part of the year?

- A) 5 %
- B) 21 %
- C) 63 %

How many hearings has Congress held over the past ten years on legislation to stop well-documented sweatshop abuses in the U.S. territory known as the Marianas Islands that makes clothes sold in America?

- A) 15
- B) 0
- C) 3

What is the projected federal budget deficit for 2006:

- A) \$100 million
- B) \$10 billion
- C) \$296 billion

Survey of Your Top Concerns

What are your top concerns? Please take a moment to go to my website at www.house.gov/georgemiller/newsletter/survey.html and fill out the survey below. Let me know if you would like to **be kept up to date** on these and other issues. Thank you!

Iraq War Should the U.S. "stay the course" ___ or begin to withdraw and redeploy troops ___?

Energy Do you support ___ or oppose ___ drilling for oil off the coast of California?

Federal Spending Do you think Congress is doing a good job ___ or a bad job ___ of managing federal spending?

Go to my website survey and check off the issues for which you would like to receive periodic e-mail updates:

Energy * Security * Education * Immigration * Health Care
Transportation * Economy * Human Rights * Crime * Other



Photo by Stephen Joseph

Los Vaqueros reservoir supplies much of Contra Costa county's drinking water. We can take steps to conserve water use and save money.

Ending The War in Iraq

There is no more pressing issue today than bringing an end to the war in Iraq as quickly as possible.

Over 2,500 American soldiers have been killed in Iraq, and over 19,000 American soldiers have been wounded, many of them suffering life-long debilitating injuries.

Staying in Iraq undermines American security.

The war has cost taxpayers almost half a trillion dollars in only three years. And it has greatly damaged our reputation and ability to lead in the world. Our brave soldiers, their families, and our Nation are paying the enormous price of President Bush's unnecessary decision to go to war in Iraq. Meanwhile, we face serious threats from North Korea and Iran.

It is now well established that

our troops were sent into combat with poor planning, inadequate resources, and little understanding of what would occur after the invasion. Tragically, despite the clear failures in Iraq the Republican Congress has given the president a blank check to go forward rather than provide an independent voice for the American people.

The current Majority in Congress continues to insist that success is just around the corner. As a result, Iraq is engaged in a bloody civil war that threatens to consume its own people—and our troops.

America desperately needs a new direction in Iraq. That's not just my view. That's the view of decorated combat veterans like Congressman Jack Murtha of Pennsylvania, who has called for troops to be redeployed to fight the real war on terrorism. And it is

the view of Gen. George W. Casey, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, who said that troop reductions were necessary to *"take away one of the elements that fuels the insurgency, that of the coalition forces as an occupying force."* America does not have to stay in Iraq to make us safer. In fact, staying there is undermining our security—encouraging the insurgents and depleting resources from the critical battle to make America and the world safer.

What should the U.S. do about Iraq?

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American troops in Baghdad.

High Gas Prices and Global Warming

Sick and tired of getting hosed at the pump? Since 2003, the price of gasoline has doubled and is now well over \$3.00 a gallon. Plus, despite growing scientific evidence of the causes and dangers of climate change, we still don't have a national policy to address it. **Here's what we should do:**



With gas prices creeping towards \$4-per-gallon, many commuters are looking toward other options for transportation. But Congress isn't helping.

Short term

- ☑ Offer larger tax credits for people who make fuel-efficient purchases, including cars that run on alternative fuels, electric cars, and hybrid cars.
- ☑ Take back billions in unjustified subsidies to oil companies and invest in alternative technology and fuels.
- ☑ Increase conservation by promoting the use of mass transit, biking, the expansion of carpooling.

Long term

- ☑ Cut U.S. oil demand by investing in research that will make the U.S. the world leader in new technologies and markets for the next generation of revolutionary energy sources. Make energy innovation a priority – biotechnology, nanotechnology, solar, and fuel-cell research.
- ☑ Set firm and enforceable pollution-reduction targets to avoid dangerous, irreversible warming of the planet. Pass the Safe Climate Act. The bill would establish a flexible economy-wide cap-and-trade program for greenhouse gas emissions and reduce emissions through renewable energy, efficiency, and cleaner burning cars.

Make College More Affordable

College was already too expensive but it is even worse now, since interest rates on outstanding federal college loans went up in July to their highest levels in six years for student and parent borrowers. College affordability is one of my top priorities at the House education committee, where I serve as the senior Democratic lawmaker. That's why I introduced a bill in April to cut interest rates on new college loans in half.



Since 2001, tuition and fees at four-year public colleges increased by 40 percent. The typical student borrower graduates from college with a record \$17,500 in education loan debt. I am hosting an **online forum** on college affordability, giving you the opportunity to tell Congress directly about your experiences in paying for college and to share your ideas about what we should do to make college more affordable.

Learn about my bill and the E-forum at: <http://edworkforce.house.gov/democrats/>

“My bill would cut student loan interest rates in half.”

— George Miller

Sign up for Miller E- Updates
www.house.gov/georgemiller

George Miller

M.C.
Presorted Standard
W/S/ Carrier Route

Congressman George Miller's "Contra Costa Update"

This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense.

Helping Our Community



↑ I recently joined members of the Fernandez family, local environmentalists, and the Muir Heritage Land Trust, seen above, to commemorate the purchase of **land near Hercules**. Known as the Fernandez Ranch, the land includes a critical portion of the **Bay Area Ridge Trail** and connects to the Crockett Hills Regional Park.

In Congress, I helped establish the trail, which today is almost 500 miles long. **Preserving open space in the Bay Area is important to our quality of life.**

Despite the biggest California storm in 20 years, the Water and Environment class at **John Swett High School in Crockett** worked to restore nearby Edward Creek in January, when I visited with teacher Meilin Duncana and a team of ten students as they got the densely wooded area ready for habitat restoration.

I talked with the class about how habitat restoration is an important part of my efforts on the House Resources Committee to strengthen the **Endangered Species Act**. The students removed invasive non-native plants and replaced them with native coast live oak trees to attract endangered California wildlife. ↓

