U.S. Representative

Barbara Lee

Ninth Congressional District, California **Summer Newsletter 2008**

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

Dear Friend,

In November 2006, the American people sent a clear message that they were dissatisfied with the way things were going in the country and wanted a new direction and new policies to address the economic, environmental, education, and health care challenges facing our country. Most of all, they wanted, and still want, Congress to end the occupation and bring our troops home from Iraq. Congress responded by voting to establish a timeline to bring our troops home. Unfortunately, President Bush repeatedly vetoed and blocked efforts to end the war and occupation.

That is why I continue to lead the fight to pass what is known as the "Lee Amendment," which would limit Iraq war related funding to solely be used for the purpose of the safe and orderly redeployment of our troops and military contractors from Iraq. We should not give the President one more dime to continue funding the war in Iraq.

The war and occupation has wreaked havoc and destruction, claimed the lives of more than 4,000 American troops and tens of thousands of Iraqi civilians, inflicted horrific injuries to more than 30,000 service men and women, and displaced more than four million Iraqis. According to a leading economist, when all is said and done the war and occupation will have drained more than $3 trillion dollars from our national treasury. That is money that is not available to address real and urgent challenges like the foreclosure crisis, astronomically high gas prices, the lack of good jobs, affordable health care, and quality education. It is fair to say that the greatest unintended casualty of the Iraq occupation is the American economy.

We do not need permanent military bases in Iraq. And that is why I led the successful fight to prohibit the establishment of permanent military bases in Iraq. You can rest assured I will remain at the forefront of efforts to end the occupation in Iraq.

One of the most important things that must be done is to prevent the current Administration from restricting the options available to the next Administration by unilaterally signing a security agreement with the Government of Iraq which obligates the United States to defend Iraq against internal and external threats. Congress took a big step in this direction when the House of Representatives adopted my amendment to the Defense Authorization Act of 2009, which renders any such agreement invalid unless it is first authorized and approved by Congress. Now we will work to make my amendment the law of the land. The situation is critical and President Bush and his plans for a long-term security agreement and permanent bases must be stopped.

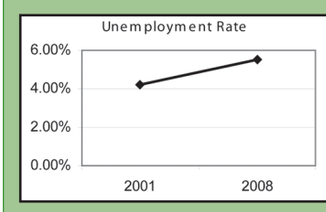
Sincerely,

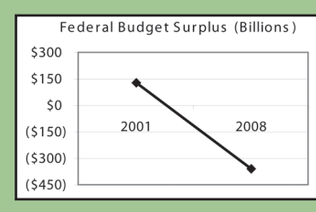
Barbara Lee

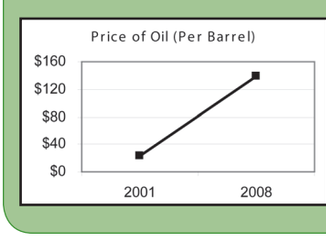
Economy

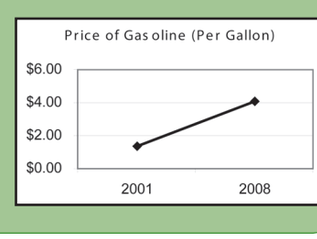
People are paying a high price for the economic policies of the last eight years including tax cuts for the rich, Big Oil and special interests, and the war in Iraq, which have taken us deep into debt and into what I call an "Iraq" recession. Americans have seen the crisis deepen in the past few months – rising prices for everything from gas to food, families losing their homes, and rising unemployment. It is inexcusable that 47 percent of Americans earn just enough income to cover their bills and 18 percent fall short every month.

Americans cannot afford more of the same failed economic policies – here is the record:









Congresswoman Lee meets with local youth at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School in Berkeley during a district bus tour highlighting programs that will receive federal funding this year.

Grants Update

(Partial List from FY 2008)

- $49,533,000 ..... Port of Oakland
- $500,000 ..... Oakland Children's Hospital
- $282,000 .. MLK Freedom Center, Violence Prevention
- $735,000 ..... Berkeley/ Albany Ferry Service
- $490,000 ..... AC Transit, Rapid Transit Corridor
- $490,000 ..... Ed Roberts Campus
- $235,000 . City of Oakland, Violence Prevention (RRR)
- $600,000 ..... City of Emeryville, Disaster Mitigation
- $478,492 ..... McClymonds Youth and Family Center
- $286, 899 ..... La Clinica de La Raza
- $735,000 ..... Ashland and Cherryland, Sidewalks
- $191,593 . National Council on Crime and Delinquency, Violence Prevention for Asian Pacific Islander Youth

Protecting the Environment

Congresswoman Lee continues to support efforts in Congress to protect the environment and move the United States towards true energy independence. In December, she supported H.R. 6, the Energy Independence and Security Act, which was later signed into law and includes a renewable energy electricity standard of 15 percent and increases the fuel economy standard to 35 miles per gallon by the year 2020.

As a strong advocate for immediate and bold action to address global climate change, she supports shifting our priorities to truly clean and renewable energy sources. In May, she voted for H.R. 6049, the Renewable Energy and Job Creation Act, which provides $18 billion in tax incentives for renewable energies including wind, solar, hydropower, and plug-in hybrids in order to eliminate our dependence on fossil fuels that has led to extreme price pressures and volatility at the gas pump.

In April 2008, she introduced H.R. 5881, the Environment and Public Health Restoration Act, legislation that will initiate a thorough scientific review process of the Bush Administration's ten most egregious rule changes, or proposed rule changes, that threaten public health, plant and animal wildlife, and the environment.

On the local level, she continues to work on key issues including air quality and environmental justice concerns in West Oakland, the salmon crisis affecting communities throughout the West Coast, and CDFA/USDA's disputed plan to spray aerial pheromones across the Bay Area to address the Light Brown Apple Moth population.

Education

As a member of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, Congresswoman Lee is working to increase funding for K-12 public schools. The status quo under NCLB is unacceptable and urgent action by Congress is needed to eliminate the achievement gap in our schools.

Congresswoman Lee strongly supported H.R. 4137, the College Opportunity and Affordability Act, comprehensive reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, which passed the House on February 7, by a vote of 354-58. The bill addresses the soaring price of college and removes other obstacles that make it harder for qualified students to go to college, furthering Congress' effort to make college more affordable and accessible. This bill reforms our higher education system so that it operates in the best interests of students and families, while boosting our competitiveness and strengthening our future.

Combating HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS continues to devastate communities here in the Bay Area and throughout the world. As a member of the Appropriations Subcommittees that fund our global response to HIV/AIDS at home and abroad, Congresswoman Lee is leading the fight to increase funding to combat this pandemic.

In May, she organized an HIV/AIDS panel discussion in Oakland with Dr. Julie Gerberding, the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to explain what the Federal Government is doing to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS among communities of color. This forum provided Dr. Gerberding insight into the epidemic in Alameda County and highlighted the impact of this disease among African Americans in the East Bay and the strategies developed locally to combat it.

Globally, our AIDS programs have made a substantial difference in the lives of millions of people throughout Africa and the developing world and stand as perhaps the only foreign policy initiative in the last eight years that is widely supported by the rest of the world. In April, the House of Representatives passed HR 5501, bipartisan legislation co-authored by Congresswoman Lee, which will reauthorize and extend our global AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria programs for the next five years at a cost of $50 billion.

With increased funding for both our local and international HIV/AIDS programs we can help put a stop to this global pandemic.

Congresswoman Lee speaks at the groundbreaking of the new Castro Valley Public Library, set to open its doors by fall of 2009.

Healthcare

As a member of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, Congresswoman Lee continues to fight for increased access to affordable high quality healthcare and medications for all. She is also helping lead the fight to increase funding for critical medical research and to address racial and ethnic health disparities.

During a subcommittee hearing last year with the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) she uncovered that people using a common diabetes test, the "A1C" blood sugar test, could get faulty results if they also had sickle cell trait. As a result of the exchange, the NIDDK moved to publicize this problem and is working to update and replace the A1C test.

Last November at a roundtable discussion in Oakland, the NIDDK explained the issue in greater detail. They indicated that people of African, Mediterranean, or Southeast Asian heritage who had a variant protein in their blood could get faulty A1C test results and they encouraged potentially affected individuals to check with their physician to ensure that their test results are accurate.

Preventing War in Iran

As a staunch supporter of efforts to curb nuclear weapons proliferation, Congresswoman Lee supports comprehensive and peaceful efforts to dissuade Iran from seeking nuclear weapons. Toward this end, she recently introduced H.R. 5056, the "Iran Diplomatic Accountability Act of 2008," which directs the President to appoint a high-level envoy empowered to seek to conduct direct, unconditional, bilateral negotiations with Iran for the purpose of easing tensions and normalizing relations between the United States and Iran.

Americans have learned a simple truth after five hard and bitter years in Iraq: no unjust war ever produced a just and lasting peace. It has not worked in Iraq and it will not work in Iran.

To demonstrate the importance of dialogue with Iran, she helped launch a campaign called "Time to Talk with Iran." The event provided Members of Congress and the general public the opportunity to converse by phone with ordinary citizens in Iran sending a powerful message that dialogue is possible and can work. And it is easy; all it takes to begin is one "Hello."

Legislative Highlights

Partial list of the legislation introduced during this Congress:

- **H.R. 1653** Providing grants to States for comprehensive sex education to prevent teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.
- **H.R.5758** Protecting seniors and other borrowers from certain predatory practices of reverse mortgage brokers.
- **H.R. 770** Requiring congressional authorization for any covert act or military action against Iran.
- **H.Res.422** Enlisting China in the fight to end genocide and violence in Darfur, Sudan.
- **H.Res.1019** Highlighting the connection between the current economic recession and the enormous costs of the ongoing occupation of Iraq.
- **H.Con.Res.360** Commemorating the 75th anniversary of New Deal legislation that lifted millions out of poverty and transformed America.

Darfur

Four years since Congress declared genocide was taking place in the Darfur region of Sudan, the conflict continues to rage on. The genocidal regime in Khartoum and its apologists are principally to blame for blocking a joint United Nations/African Union peacekeeping force.

Now, thanks to the Sudan Accountability and Divestment Act (SADA), legislation Congresswoman Lee originally introduced and which was signed into law at the end of last year, we can help put the squeeze on Khartoum and its allies. This bill authorizes states, local governments, and universities to divest their assets from companies doing business with Sudan and bans new federal contracts with these offending companies—pressuring them to end their association with the genocide and remove a critical source of foreign financing for the government. SADA will guarantee that our taxes don't go towards funding companies that support genocide, and it will allow individuals to ensure that their investments are genocide free. This legislation sends a strong message to the government in Khartoum – we won't fund genocide. Not on our watch, not on our dime.

Small, Minority, and Women Owned Businesses

Congresswoman Lee understands small and minority firms are a vital part of maintaining the stability of our local economy, especially during these difficult economic times. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, she works to fund key programs that support small, minority-owned and women-owned entities.

To support small, women owned, and minority business, she is working with her colleagues to restructure and revive the Small Business Administration (SBA), the federal agency tasked with assisting small firms. Sadly, SBA's role has diminished considerably and its budget has been cut by approximately 40 percent over the last seven years.

In addition to taking steps to put the SBA back on track by restoring funding and restructuring the agency, she is also working to modernize government-wide small business programs to offer new tools that help small firms access capital, training, and entrepreneurial development.

Congresswoman Lee speaks at a press conference in support of legislation to create a national holiday honoring César Chávez, commending his work as a "great civil and human rights leader."

Immigration

Congresswoman Lee remains commited to the fight for comprehensive and fair immigration reform. In May, she held a Town Hall Meeting in Oakland in response to a series of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids that have recently been conducted throughout the 9th Congressional District. Joined by a diverse group of Bay Area representatives, faith leaders, and community organizations, she listened to eye-opening personal testimony on the impact of ICE raids on the local communities.

The event underscored the critical struggle for immigrant rights and the pressing need to do away with the culture of fear that has pervaded our communities. In response to numerous complaints of overly aggressive and intimidating enforcement operations by ICE, she recently authored language included in the FY09 Homeland Security Appropriations Act directing ICE to publicize clear policies describing how immigration enforcement actions at schools, hospitals, and religious centers are to be taken only in limited circumstances because of the important role these institutions play in our society.

Are You Ready for DTV?

On February 17, 2009, all full power television stations will begin broadcasting exclusively in digital format. Television sets that are not connected to a paid service, or do not have a built-in digital tuner, will no longer recieve a signal. The federal government is offering U.S. households up to two $40 coupons to help pay the cost of purchasing converter boxes that will enable analog television sets to receive the digital signal, but the coupon program is first-come-first serve! For more information, please call 1-888-DTV-2009 or visit **dtv2009.gov**.

Protecting Our Civil Liberties and Ensuring Accountability

Over the past seven years, the current Administration has consistently attempted to expand the reach and scope of presidential power in the name of national security and at the expense of civil liberties. Congresswoman Lee has been at the forefront of legislative efforts to curtail and demand accountability for these abuses of power.

Expressing strong opposition to the recent FISA bill that passed the House in late June, she led the fight against the compromise legislation that fell far short of striking the proper balance between protecting national security and preserving our cherished civil liberties. It is unacceptable that this legislation undermines the ability of federal courts to review the legality of domestic surveillance programs, provides de facto retroactive immunity to telecommunication companies, includes insufficient protections against the practice of "reverse targeting," and does not sunset for four years, delaying additional review or modifications by Congress for far too long.

Congresswoman Lee is a co-sponsor of H.Res. 1258 and H.Res. 333, meticulously documented resolutions of impeachment of President Bush and Vice-President Cheney for high crimes and misdemeanors. The people's trust in their political leaders and institutions is the lifeblood of democracy. Nowhere is that trust more essential than when it comes to deciding whether to go to war. Several of the articles in H.Res. 1258 document President Bush's abuse of the public trust in his decision to launch an unnecessary war in Iraq. Other articles in the resolution explain how the President wrongly abridged the civil liberties of individuals in America under the guise of fighting the War on Terror. She is also a co-sponsor of H.Res. 333, which similarly documents the ways and means in which Vice-President Cheney's misconduct in office warrants impeachment and removal from office.

Violence Prevention and Re-entry Efforts

Reducing crime and helping communities re-integrate ex-offenders has always been a high priority for Congresswoman Lee. After years of work, collective efforts paid off in the enactment, this year, of legislation she co-sponsored, the landmark Second Chance Act of 2007, H.R. 1593, authored by Congressman Danny Davis. This legislation helps former prisoners who have paid their debts build new lives as productive members of society. This legislation also assists state and local governments develop programs designed to reduce recidivism by authorizing and expanding state and local reentry demonstration projects to help adult and juvenile offenders become productive members of society. Additionally, it authorizes the Attorney General to make grants to improve drug treatment for federal inmates.

Congresswoman Lee is also working to secure funding to enable local communities to hire and retain additional community police officers and to expand programs designed to provide alternatives to a life of crime and violence for at-risk youth. She has introduced H.R. 5802, the Food Assistance to Improve Reintegration Act of 2008 (FAIR Act), which will decrease recidivism by eliminating the automatic disqualification of ex-offenders from receiving food stamp benefits.

In November, she held a "records remedy" workshop for formerly incarcerated individuals. Since the inception of the program, the event has helped to expunge the records of over 3500 individuals. The effort is the third in an ongoing series of events designed to assist formerly incarcerated individuals re-enter the community and gain employment. She also continued her efforts to secure federal resources for violence prevention and re-entry programs, by securing over $1.5 million for violence prevention in the FY 2008 appropriations cycle alone.

Community Office Hours

Oakland
Mon - Fri: 9am – 5pm
District Office
1301 Clay St., Ste 1000-N, Oakland

Castro Valley
Monday: 5pm – 7pm
Castro Valley Library
20055 Redwood Rd., Castro Valley

Fruitvale
Thursday: 3pm – 5pm
Spanish Speaking Citizens Foundation
1475 Fruitvale Ave., Oakland

We are here to help you with any federally related issue, such as: Social Security, immigration, veteran's benefits, IRS, Medicare, school loans, etc.

Congresswoman Lee with constituent Sophia Blum at the Chiodo Art Development Studio in Oakland. Ms. Blum is the Ninth Congressional District winner of the 27th annual Congressional High School Art Competition. The winning piece (above) will be displayed in the US Capitol.

Ending Poverty in America

Congresswoman Lee is spearheading efforts in Congress to eradicate poverty in America. She believes it is a national disgrace that in the wealthiest and most powerful nation in the world we allow over 37 million people, 5 million more than when this administration took office, to live in poverty.

The crushing burden of poverty falls most heavily upon our nation's children and communities of color. 17. 4 percent of children under 18 are in poverty. Most disturbing of all, 29.9 percent of Hispanic children under 5 and 39.9 percent of African American children under 5 live their childhoods in poverty.

In January of this year, the House passed Congresswoman Lee's resolution, H. Con. Res 198, setting a national goal of cutting poverty in half over the next decade. It is an important step to put poverty back on the Congressional agenda. She has also introduced several other anti poverty initiatives this Congress, including: H.R. 352, the Poverty Impact Trigger Act, which makes sure that every time the government creates a new program, or funds an existing one, we know just how much or how little it will help to reduce poverty; and H.R. 1050, the Living Wage, Jobs For All Act, which will modernize and reinvigorate Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1944 Economic Bill of Rights.

(Continued to the right)

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 Saundra Andrews in the Oakland Office, or call (510) 763-0370 for more information. The deadline for applications is December 1, 2008.

In March 2008, Congresswoman Lee sponsored a complete progressive budget alternative, along with Congresswoman Woolsey, which was debated on the House floor and received 98 votes. The budget would have invested $73.05 billion to: rebuild New Orleans and assist Hurricane Katrina survivors; reduce child poverty by expanding the child tax credit and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC); expand early child care programs and increase Head Start funding; repair our crumbling infrastructure and create thousands of green jobs.

Visit My New Website!

Please take a moment to visit **lee.house.gov** for more information regarding my work on key issues and to discover how to take advantage of the constituent services my office can provide.

Don't forget to sign up for the E-newsletter: LeeMail, to recieve timely updates on upcoming events occuring in the 9th Congressional District, news in areas of particular concern, and information on important legislation pending before Congress.

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

Upcoming Congressional Events

Saturday, July 26th, 9am – 2pm
Citizenship Fair
Unity Council, Fruitvale Transit Village
3301 East 12th Street, Suite 101, Oakland

Monday, July 28th, 10am – 2pm
Green Jobs Fair
Berkeley City College, 2050 Center Street, Berkeley

Saturday, September 20th, 10am – 12pm
A Discussion on the Economy and the War in Iraq With Former Secretary of Labor, Robert Reich
Location: To Be Announced

Monday, October 20th
Voter Registration Deadline (reminder)
November 4, 2008 General Election

California Office
1301 Clay Street
Suite 1000-N
Oakland, CA 94612
Tel: (510) 763-0370
Fax: (510) 763-6538

Washington, DC
1724 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Tel: (202) 225-2661
Fax: (202) 225-9817

Website:
www.lee.house.gov

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

Official Business

Barbara Lee

M.C.
Presorted Standard
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This mailing was prepared, published and mailed at taxpayer expense