



The NUNES Report

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Quick Facts

In July, Rep. Devin Nunes wrote to 1,890 constituents in response to their inquiries.

Year to date, Rep. Nunes has responded to 8,705 constituents via the U.S. Mail.

Furthermore, since Rep. Nunes was elected to Congress he has responded to 20,880 constituent letters via the U.S. Mail.

Nunes meets with Trans. Sec. Mineta about Hwy 99

Rep. Devin Nunes met recently with Transportation Secretary Norm Mineta, along with Reps. George Radanovich and Gary Miller, to discuss Highway 99 obtaining an interstate status and getting funds for much-needed improvements.

“As a fellow Californian, Secretary Mineta said he’s well aware of the dire condition Highway 99 is in and said he supports seeing it become an interstate,” Rep. Nunes said. “Transforming the heavily-used highway will be a long-term process but one that must happen in order to maintain our economy, improve our air, and

increase safety on the road.”

Earlier this year, the congressman managed, in a House transportation bill, to designate the highway as a national corridor, making it eligible for \$3.3 billion in special federal funding over six years.

Rep. Nunes said the secretary is waiting to receive a letter from Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger about the state government’s support of an interstate designation. With such support, Rep. Nunes said he and his colleagues in Congress could leverage additional federal funding for improvements.

“I’m encouraged that this



Transportation Secretary
Norm Mineta

process continues to move forward,” Rep. Nunes said.

The congressman has made a priority of improving the highway from Bakersfield to Sacramento, much of which is only two lanes in either direction.

House passes Nunes water measure

In a major step toward meeting the Central Valley’s urban and agricultural water needs, the House of Representatives passed a bill co-sponsored by Rep. Devin Nunes that will make it easier to construct new water projects in California.

“I’m happy we made some progress on getting more water storage for the Valley, but there’s still a lot of work that needs to be done before we actually see the benefit,” Rep. Nunes said. “Water is more than just an issue for agriculture. Virtually every city in Fresno and Tulare counties is facing

a shortage of water. As our population continues to grow, water will be in shorter and shorter supply.”

Language inserted in the bill by the Congressman would allow for automatic authorization of the construction of a new dam above Millerton Lake along the San Joaquin River if a federal study already underway shows that the project is feasible. The dam would be able to capture as much as 1.2 million acre feet of water in wet years and protect cities downstream from periodic, devastating floods.

“This project would help

meet a variety of needs,” Rep. Nunes said. “It would boost our groundwater table for communities, irrigation for agriculture, provide additional hydro-electric possibilities and provide a consistent flow of water to reestablish the natural habitat along the San Joaquin River.”

The language for the water measure was inserted by Rep. Nunes into the Water Supply, Reliability, and Environmental Improvement Act (H.R. 2828), which funds CalFed—the state and federal partnership that manages water projects in California.

House ag spending bill helps Central Valley

A federal spending bill passed in the House of Representatives includes funds for several projects in Fresno and Tulare counties, Rep. Devin Nunes announced.

"In addition to providing the funds for ongoing needs for local agriculture, this bill also offers some exciting opportunities to improve the quality of life for people living in the Central Valley," said Rep. Nunes, a member of the Agriculture Committee.

Most notably, the bill recommended funding be directed from the Department of Agriculture's Rural Development account for the Strathmore Public Utility District to develop a waste-



water treatment plant to dispose of copper-laden sludge that threatens the community's water quality.

"Given the pressing need to deal with this situation, I am confident the USDA will use the funds to resolve this problem," Rep. Nunes said.

The spending bill for the 2005 fiscal year includes soft earmarks for several projects. Soft earmarks are not required spending amounts, but they do signal Congress' intention for how agencies should spend the funding:

- ◆ \$382,000 for the Central California Ozone Study
- ◆ \$14 million for circuit riders who provide

assistance to small communities to improve water quality, as well as \$800 million for rural water grants and loans.

- ◆ \$7.1 million for the management and testing for Johne's Disease in dairy cattle

The appropriations bill also urges the USDA to fund the following projects:

- ◆ The International Agri-Center in Tulare, including a learning center, a new exhibit pavilion, an e-commerce initiative, and a commodities showcase.
- ◆ To improve farm-to-market roads in Tulare County.

Nunes supports increase for veterans

Rep. Devin Nunes and more than two-thirds of the House of Representatives voted to increase compensation to disabled veterans and their dependents.

H.R. 4175—the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2004—directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase compensation rates as of December 1, 2004, and requires future increases to be the same percentage as Social Security.

"This is the least we can do for the men and women who served in our military and became disabled as a result," Rep. Devin Nunes said. "By tying cost of living increases to Social Security we ensure that veterans are not left behind with infrequent raises in compensa-

tion rates."

Assuming a 1.5 percent increase in cost of living rates, spending in disability compensation for veterans will increase by nearly \$500 million in 2005, and by about \$620 million in later years.

This comes on the heels of a 15.3 percent increase in the Veterans Affairs budget this past year. In the past 10 years, overall veterans' spending has grown by 58 percent. Benefits, such as the GI bill, have more than doubled and per veteran benefits have increased 79 percent.

The bill must also be passed by the U.S. Senate and signed by the President before it becomes law.

In other votes, Rep. Nunes also helped pass the

Military Housing Improvement Act, which would lift the \$850 million cap for a private military housing program. The House raised the cap to \$1.35 billion, an increase of \$500 million.

The program allows the Department of Defense to turn over to developers and property managers the renovation, construction and management of residences for military families. The program has been successful at saving money and building homes faster than before the program was created.

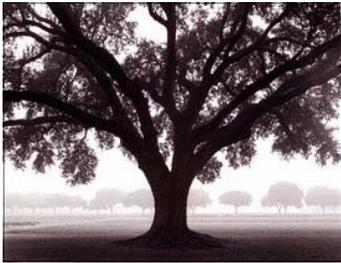
Housing projects for 50,000 military families in 22 states will be put on hold in November if the cap is not increased.

Legislative work continues in July

Agriculture

Sudden Oak Death

The American nursery industry is valued at \$14 billion and is vital to rural economies. The proliferation of Sudden Oak Death (SOD) is a significant threat not only to this important industry, but also to wild forests. Cases of SOD have



been found in 16 states, including California. As a result of SOD discoveries, foreign trading partners have instituted quarantines against California nursery growers. Recognizing the importance of addressing SOD through a nationally coordinated, scientifically sound approach, Congressman Nunes co-sponsored legislation, H.R. 4569, directing the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a national plan to control and manage SOD.

Peaches

The peach industry is suffering from record low prices. Complex and inter-related economic problems, including the consolidation of retail buyers, has resulted in significant hardships for peach growers. Congressman Nunes shared his concerns with Secretary Veneman in a recent letter, including his appreciation for the USDA's initial 22 million pound pur-

chase of fresh frozen free-stone peaches. While this was a good start, it was not enough. Mr. Nunes pressed for additional commitments for purchases and impressed upon the Secretary the importance of leveraging as much federal assistance as possible during this very difficult time for peach growers.

Energy

Hydro Power

The House of Representatives passed Rep. Nunes' legislation, H.R. 3932, to reauthorize the continued use of hydroelectric facilities in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. In this time of diminished capacity of electricity generation, the last thing we need to do is close down a clean source of energy.

Healthcare

Children's Hospital Graduate Medical Education

The Children's Hospital Graduate Medical Education (CHGME) program assures that our nation will have the pediatric workforce needed for future generations. Children's hospitals represent only one percent of all hospitals in the United States, but



train nearly one-third of all doctors specializing in pediatrics. Existing federal law recognizes the importance of these hospitals in training our medical workforce.

However, federal funding for these hospitals is due to expire.

Congressman Nunes co-sponsored H.R. 4578, the Children's Hospitals Education Equity and Research Act, to make certain that doctors may continue to receive important medical training at institutions like Children's Hospital of the Central Valley.

Portuguese Issues

Congressman Nunes has been working with Rep. Pombo and Rep. Cardoza on a proposal to the Luso-American Foundation



(FLAD). This month the Portuguese project proposal was mailed to Rui Machete and Ambassador Palmer, both of whom are members of FLAD's Executive Council.

The goal of the project is to connect the academic world of Portuguese studies with the average person of Portuguese heritage. If all goes according to plan, there will be a "one-stop-shop" for all things related to Portuguese culture.

Factor or Fiction

There is a lot of false information floating around the Internet. I want to take this opportunity to provide you the facts to some of the fictional claims.

Fiction:

Members of Congress do not pay into Social Security yet they receive it.

Fact:

Prior to 1984, federal civil service workers nor Members of Congress were not required to pay into Social Security, nor were they eligible to receive Social Security benefits. Members of Congress and federal employees were instead covered by a separate pension plan called the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). However, this changed in 1983 when all federal employees hired after 1983 were required to participate in Social Security program.

Furthermore, all Members of Congress were required to participate in Social Security regardless of when they first entered Congress.

Nunes honors Portugal's support of U.S.

The House of Representatives passed a resolution authored by Rep. Devin Nunes honoring the government of Portugal and its people for its long-standing friendship and support of the United States.

Rep. Nunes submitted the resolution on behalf of himself, as well as Rep. Richard Pombo, R-Tracy, and Rep. Dennis Cardoza, D-Merced. The three congress-

men are of Portuguese descent.

The resolution praises Portugal for being a "devout, resolute, and steadfast ally of the United States" in peace time and in armed conflict.

"The Portuguese people have committed a full array of their country's resources to fight the terrorist threat all over the world," Nunes' resolution said.

Rep. Nunes explained his reason for submitting the resolution.

"In a time when alliances between the United States and its allies in the rest of the world are being put to the test in the war on terror, it's important to recognize those countries who continue to stand by the US," Rep. Nunes said.

Drug war: Up close and personal

Rep. Devin Nunes dispatched two of his staff members to accompany Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents on a recent raid of a marijuana garden in Sequoia National Park.

Marijuana gardens are a persistent problem in the national parks and forests of Tulare County.

The agents have long worked in concert with local authorities to eradicate the illegal gardens. The agents flew a Blackhawk helicopter to track suspects and find gardens obscured by trees. This raid netted 13,000 plants with an estimated street value of \$53.8 million.



Above: A Blackhawk helicopter with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) lands at Ash Mountain Helipad in Sequoia National Park. Right: Nunes' Homeland Security representative John Gong asks the pilot a question.



Left: The ICE helicopter hovers over a canyon in Sequoia National Park where a marijuana garden was found growing under the canopy of trees. The Blackhawk helicopter is an essential tool in helping locate the illegal plantations, as well as tracking the people who cultivate them.

