

Legislative work—cont.'d

Act. This letter spoke about the legislation, which would create a one dollar silver coin in the name of Celia Cruz, the “Queen of Salsa.” Proceeds from this coin would go to the Celia Cruz Foundation, which provides financial aid to low-income students who wish to study music and for cancer research and cancer victim assistance. This letter asked other Members to sign up as co-sponsors.

Education

Currently, tuition increases are outpacing the rate of inflation and family incomes throughout the nation. Congressman Nunes believes that our tax code should encourage employers to further the education of their employees’ dependents, just as it encourages retirement savings. Consequently, he has become an original co-sponsor of the Education Savings Act.

This bill would clarify that employers can make tax-

deductible contributions to employees 529 and 530 education savings accounts for all employees at every income level. Furthermore, it would clarify that any amount contributed to these accounts will NOT count towards an employee’s gross income.

Environment

Wetlands Easement – Tulare Basin

Rep. Nunes, along with a number of his colleagues, wrote to Director Steven Williams of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to urge him to promptly take the necessary and appropriate steps to initiate the establishment of the wetlands easement program for the Tulare Basin duck clubs which lie in Tulare and Kern counties.

A proposal has been submitted to the Fish and Wildlife Service that would provide for protection of these wetlands areas through conservation easements funded by Migratory Waterfowl Hunting Stamp (“Duck Stamps”) revenues paid for by waterfowl hunters, not appropriated tax dollars. It is his understanding that there have been preliminary meetings held on the subject at the local level and there is broad support for the establishment of just such an easement acquisition

program.

Eco-terrorism

Recent attacks on buildings and auto dealerships in California by militant “environmental activists” resulted in over \$2.5 million in damages. This destruction – purportedly in the name of environmentalism – caused hundreds of tons of pollutants to be released into the atmosphere, millions of dollars in property damage, and endangered the lives of innocent bystanders and emergency personnel. These radical acts amount to nothing more than domestic terrorism. Therefore, Rep. Nunes cosponsored the Stop Terrorism of Property Act. The STOP Act will amend the federal code to include a provision on “eco-terrorism” and make these acts a federal crime.

Endangered Species Act

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) has had a significant negative impact on property values. Both residential and commercial land owners have suffered due to regulatory action under the ESA. Consequently, Rep. Nunes became an original cosponsor of the ESA Fair Compensation Act which would change the present unfair system. Under this legislation, any action taken under ESA, that reduces the fair market value of any non-federal property (including water rights) by 20 percent or more shall be treated as a taking of property for which compensation is required to be paid under the fifth article of amendment to the Constitution which states

“nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.”

Foreign Relations

Laos

As part of Rep. Nunes’ continued effort to bring to light the terrible acts of the Government of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, he cosponsored legislation that called for an urgent need for freedom, democratic reform, and international monitoring of elections and human rights in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic. The legislation was introduced by Rep. Dan Burton (R-IN)

Rep. Nunes, along with a number of his colleagues, sent a letter to Secretary of State Colin Powell asking that he designate the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (LPDR) a “country of particular concern” (CPC) pursuant to the criteria stated in the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has recommended that the LPDR be designated a CPC for “gross violations of human rights, including religious freedom.” Rep. Nunes urged him to follow the commission’s recommendation and designate Laos a CPC this year.

Grant Support and Announcements

Education

The City of Tulare was awarded \$50,000 from the



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