



A passion for making all American's voices heard

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Judy Chu, the first Chinese American woman elected to Congress, looks to continue to pave the way for Americans striving to find their footing in the land of the free. The seasoned politician, who made her way to the state legislature after 20 years as a college professor, vies to serve a second term in Congress, this time in the newly-redistricted 27th district.

Q. You have served at the local level, in the state assembly and on the board of equalization. What fueled your move forward to the congressional level?

A. I wanted the opportunity to serve people and give a voice to those who might not be able to otherwise speak up. I take pride in working on issues that allow those who might be disenfranchised to be able to have some say-so in the system. The opportunity to make change for the better is very gratifying.

Q. What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishment in the Congress to date?

A. I am very proud of the fact that I have been able to get provisions pertaining to military hazing into the National Defense Authorization Act. My nephew was hazed to death over a year ago in Afghanistan and it was very, very shocking. I vowed at that point to make sure this culture, which tolerates hazing, is changed. Thank goodness we were able to work on a bipartisan basis to get this in, and there were very good provisions in there.

I also was able to work on getting a change to a criminal law that was in response to the death of Bobby Saucedo. He was a local elected official killed by the Mexican cartel when he was vacationing down there. I got on the crime and terrorism subcommittee of the judiciary and I was able to get a change in the law whereby the assets of these international criminals would be able to be freezed prior to conviction rather than post-conviction.

As a 20-year college professor, I was really proud of being able to co-sponsor the largest reform of the Pell Grant system ever, changing financial aid so that we were able to get rid of the bank fees and instead put that whole system into the federal government. As a result we were able to save billions of dollars, and had the largest increase to Pell Grants ever.

Q. If re-elected, how will you continue to work to improve our schools?

A. We have to fight for the funding of the Pell Grants. This is a constant battle. I will continue to make sure the Pell Grant system is what it promises to be. I also have a mission to reform No Child Left Behind because it has turned into something that has been counterproductive. Children are basically being taught just how to take tests. If it is allowed to continue the way it is, we will have a vast majority of school systems in the United States failing to meet their goals. We cannot have that happen. That is truly counterproductive. Instead, I have a whole series of initiatives in bills that I have sponsored dissecting the whole education system in terms of those elements that improve the school system—that is, having a wrap-around system, which has been supported by research to show results. Many of the times, kids are not doing well in school because of the kind of conditions that surround them. For instance, they are hungry or they have health problems or they don't have community support for some other kind of looming issue. There needs to be a complete system that will support that child, and my bill does that.

My other bill has to do with teacher training. Far too often, teachers are just thrown into the classroom and aren't given the support they need. My bill provides for a comprehensive set of conditions that would improve teacher performance by having a mentor, by having a system whereby teachers are able to collaborate with one another.

Q. You co-sponsored a bill that would extend and expand the Jobs NOW program, which used federal stimulus funds to subsidize jobs at the local level. How has that bill been successful and how will you continue to work for job creation?

A. I was the one that took the lead on that. In fact, jobs is my number-one issue and what I continue to work on. I am very proud of [co-sponsoring that bill]. It was a terrific program that provided 11,000 jobs in LA County alone. It provided a match for businesses that wanted to hire people and it was a fast way not only for people to get jobs, but also for the businesses to get that extra help that they needed when they were reluctant to have a permanent hire. Many of those jobs turned into permanent jobs for these hirees. There was money leftover in the program so we pushed to have this program extended using the extra money, but unfortunately that bill got into partisan fighting so it didn't pass.

Q. You have also mentioned that you think the San Gabriel Mountains should become part of the National Parks system, and have promised to continue with a promise to carry forward a bill initiated by Hilda Solis that proposes to do just that. Why do you feel this is important? How will it help?

A. [The mountains] are a tremendous resource. The San Gabriel Mountains are a jewel of LA County, and they comprise 70 percent of the open space in the county. There are 2 million residents that go there per year. At that level, it is comparable to Yosemite or the Grand Canyon, yet it is improperly maintained. There is a lack of signage and trail maintenance, there are not enough restrooms or trash receptacles and I think it's because there are so few resources for that area. That's where the National Park Service comes in. If it is declared a national park area, then those resources will start to come in.

Q. You are also a huge supporter of the Gold Line. What is your plan to aid its continuation through Ontario despite lack of funding?

A. This has certainly been a top priority of mine. In fact, when I first got to Congress there was a threat that the MTA was not going to put [the Gold Line] into their long-term plan. I went into action and got a bipartisan letter signed by 14 Congress members saying that it had to be in the long-range plan. Thank goodness the MTA paid attention. We have been able to ensure its success in terms of construction up until the year 2015 to the city of Azusa, but we really cannot stop there. We have to make sure that it comes out to Claremont and all the way out to the Ontario Airport. That goal is what has driven us to look very, very closely at this Measure R, and we have advocated very strongly that Measure R fulfill its promise to complete the Gold Line all the way out to Claremont. We are determined to make that happen. There is some talk about having a certain subsection of the highway funds of Measure R be available for mass transit funds and, if so, it could open the doors to substantial funding for the ultimate completion of the Gold Line.

Q. Your opponent feels Congress' indecision, especially with regards to tax cuts, is contributing to the "sluggish economy." He proposes making the tax cuts permanent and then letting Congress work together to come up with a new tax system that everyone can agree on. What is your thought?

A. It would be a major disaster for our country if we continue the tax cuts. As it is, the upper 2 percent get [tax cuts] they don't need. It is important that those who can should pay their full share. What's worse about the Romney-Ryan plan is that it actually decreases cuts to the middle class. Just yesterday, there was a report that indicated that it would take away critical tax deductions such as donation items and mortgage. That would be devastating to the middle class.

Q. If elected, what is your priority for the 27th Congressional District?

A. Of course, number-one for me is jobs and the economy. We have begun recovery, but there is still a long way to go. That is why I am on the small business committee and have a strong interest in getting help for small businesses. I attended a hearing with the Small Business Administration and discovered there was no Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in the San Gabriel Valley. SBDCs are critical because they

allow us to provide assistance that businesses need. My mission is to make sure we have that resource here, and the SBA has been responsive. We are working on getting one at Pasadena City College as well as at the University of La Verne.

Q. At the convention, you said, “No one ever said achieving the American Dream was easy.” How will you work to ensure that the American Dream is available to all families?

A. It’s a very, very important topic for us in America. I truly feel we have to reignite the American Dream. We have to make sure that there are these ladders of opportunity and that, on the rungs of those ladders, that we are able to make those steps as accessible as possible for everybody in America. That means ensuring that there is access to higher education, that there is the ability to start and expand your small business, that we bring manufacturing back to America so that we have those good, high-paying manufacturing jobs. Those are just some of the steps, but if we are able to get those things together, then I think everybody will have the opportunity to succeed and I truly feel that once we get to the top of that ladder, that each and every one of us has the responsibility to extend our hand so that others can come up behind us.

To learn more about Ms. Chu, visit her campaign site at www.judychu.org.

—**Beth Hartnett**

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