

## Chu takes first step in run for Congress

By Daniel Tedford, Staff Writer

Posted: 02/27/2009 05:20:44 PM PST

EL MONTE - California Board of Equalization head Judy Chu Friday kicked off her campaign to grab the seat vacated by now Labor Secretary Hilda Solis.

Bringing with her what she described as "the toast of the town" in terms of San Gabriel Valley leadership, Chu made formal her commitment to run for 32nd District's congressional seat.

Assemblyman Ed Hernandez, West Covina Mayor Roger Fernandez, El Monte councilwoman Pat Wallach, union leaders and others came to the El Monte Titan Development Group offices for the event.

Chu commended Solis on her accomplishments, saying she was "overjoyed" for her nomination and confirmation.

Then she told the story of how she decided to run for the seat.

"It occurred to me this seat would open, and who could carry on ... (Solis') desire to represent the constituents?" Chu said. "I decided that I wanted and needed to take up this challenge."

Solis' confirmation sets the ball rolling for a special election. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger gets to make the call for when an election takes place and must do it within 14 days of Solis' confirmation.

Then the election must take place within 126 days, officials said.

It is likely the vote will be placed on May's special election ballot with several statewide measures up for voter approval.

Chu will be competing with fellow Democrats state Sen. Gil Cedillo and financial analyst Emanuel Pleitez, who worked on Obama's transition team, in the primary election for the seat.

Neither candidate returned phone calls.

"The real fight is in the primary," Chu said.

Chu made clear her top priority, if elected, would be to secure stimulus dollars for the area.

"California is really short-changed," Chu said. "There are projects in desperate need of money right now."

Chu pointed to the 10 freeway and 605 freeway interchange, and the Gold Line as "ready-to-go projects" primed for stimulus funds.

Hernandez said Chu was the best person vying for the seat and can "fill the shoes" of Solis.

"We now need to consider who will represent us best in this region ... in a time when the economy is alien and jobs are scarce," Hernandez said.

All the speakers referenced Chu's history in the valley, as a former councilwoman in Monterey Park and former Assemblywoman.

"She has always been an advocate for the guy down here," said Wallach. "We have always been treated as the adopted step-child over the Westside. But I know she is going to follow in Solis' footsteps and take care of us down in the trenches."

[daniel.tedford@sgvn.com](mailto:daniel.tedford@sgvn.com)

(626) 962-8811, Ext. 2730