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LA Now Blog

Judy Chu endorsed by union in bid to replace Rep. Hilda Solis

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Rep. Hilda Solis has not yet been confirmed as Labor secretary, but the race to replace her is in full swing.

On Monday night, candidate Judy Chu, a former state Assemblywoman and currently chair of the State Board of Equalization, received a coveted distinction in local politics: a nod from the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor.

"She's got a tremendous labor background," said Ed Rendon, political director for the Teamsters Joint Council in Los Angeles, which is a member of the federation's Committee on Political Education.

He said his union separately endorsed Chu earlier this month.

"I am so grateful that they placed their trust in me," said Chu, a former teacher who said she has worked for the labor movement for decades, including leading rallies, pressuring employers to use unionized janitorial services and sponsoring legislation to protect workers from on-the-job heat illnesses.

The California Federation of Labor technically still has to approve the Los Angeles group's endorsement, but Chu has a 100% voting record with the group from her time in the Assembly.

Chu has been heavily campaigning since she announced her intention to run Dec. 22 and said she's been endorsed by a number of San Gabriel Valley politicians, including school board members and state legislators.

She will be facing state Sen. Gil Cedillo (D-Los Angeles) for the seat, which covers East Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley.

Cedillo, who spent 15 years working in the Los Angeles labor movement, shrugged off the federation's choice.

"At the end of the day, people know me as a public servant who delivers, and not

as a politician," he said.

Voters may be called to vote in a primary as early as March. By state law, a special election to fill the seat must be held within five months of its vacancy.

-- *Evelyn Larrubia*