



Central Valley Solutions

A summary of key legislative accomplishments from
the first session of the 115th Congress for California's 10th
congressional district

January 2018

Dear friends,

With warmer weather on the horizon for the Central Valley, it's tempting to begin looking ahead to the new beginnings that come with spring. But before we begin sewing those seeds, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on the success we had in 2017 (as you will see in the pages to follow) before refocusing on what must be done in the remainder of the 115th Congress.

Tax reform was a major accomplishment in 2017 – one that most Americans will see reflected in paychecks starting in February. Dozens of companies have announced bonuses, repatriation of foreign assets, and domestic reinvestments as a result of the modernized code, and I believe that we will continue to see successes announced as the new tax code is implemented.

Going forward, we must address immigration reform in a bipartisan manner. This includes passing a permanent solution for Dreamers and putting in place commonsense border security measures to stop illegal movement across our borders – most notably human trafficking activity and the flow of drugs into our country.

Finally, we have a huge opportunity to address the Valley's water storage needs as part of a larger infrastructure package. For too long, our area has suffered from a lack of available water, and America as a whole suffers from aging roads and bridges and an aviation system that still runs on paper strips and World War II radar. We can do better.

These are just a few of the things that I will be focused on in 2018. If you would like to know more about what I'm working on or to contact me about any issue that's important to you, visit my website at www.denham.house.gov.

Thank you for allowing me to continue serving you.

Sincerely,

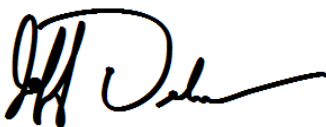
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Denham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "D".

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Jobs, Economic Growth & Education

Over the last seven years, the annual unemployment rate in California's 10th congressional district has *dropped from over 16 percent* in both Stanislaus and San Joaquin counties *to about 6 percent* at the end of 2017. This represents incredible growth for our local economy, fueled in part by successful leveraging of federal resources available to our communities. I remain committed to seeking and taking advantage of such opportunities for our district so that we can continue to this upward trajectory. We also saw success through several additional federal legislative efforts:

- ✓ Congress passed H.R. 1, the *Tax Cuts and Jobs Act*, which was signed into law by President Trump in time to lessen the tax burden on individuals, families and small businesses starting in 2018.
- ✓ "Drive-by" lawsuits threaten our local small businesses' ability to survive. That's why I introduced H.R. 1493, the *ADA Lawsuit Clarification Act*, which gives business owners more opportunity to properly increase access to the disabled customers instead of closing up shop when threatened with costly litigation and legal fees from "drive-by" lawyers.
- ✓ I supported House reauthorization and reform of Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education programs to enhance our local workforce by providing the skills and work experience needed to fill vital, high-skill jobs that are multiplying in the Valley.

Water

- ✓ I reintroduced H.R. 434, the *New WATER Act of 2017*, which provides innovative financing opportunities for water projects throughout the western United States. Eligible projects include new reservoirs, below ground storage projects, recycling and desalination projects. If the next generation of Californians want water, we must expand our water infrastructure.
- ✓ I led a bipartisan effort in support of federal funding for the North Valley Regional Recycled Water Program. This project will provide a new supply (30,000+ acre-feet per year) of recycled water to the Del Puerto Water District. After being used by the cities of Modesto and Turlock, the water will go to Del Puerto to irrigate farm land and rehabilitate wildlife refuges and wetland areas.
- ✓ The House passed H.R. 23, the *Gaining Responsibility on Water (GROW) Act* with an amendment I proposed to expedite the study of New Melones Reservoir and extend a pilot program to protect endangered species in the Stanislaus River. This bill fixes California's complex and inconsistent system of laws, court rulings and

regulations that have resulted in mismanagement of water in our state. It also expands infrastructure and storage, protects water rights, and updates the Central Valley Project Improvement Act to ensure water resources are predictable, reliable and remain available for future generations.

- ✓ The “Save Our Salmon” pilot program I authored to address predation by invasive species against endangered salmon in the Stanislaus River is finally on schedule to get up and running this spring – in time for the 2018 field season.
- ✓ I met with National Marine Fisheries Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration officials and worked with the Modesto Irrigation District and Turlock Irrigation District on the relicensing of the Don Pedro hydroelectric project by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Getting this done in a responsible manner will secure our water supply, hydropower and recreational benefits for the next 50 years.
- ✓ With an infrastructure package on the horizon, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to solve California’s water storage needs. I am advocating to include several major water projects, such as enlargement of Shasta Dam, construction of Sites Reservoir and Temperance Flat Dam, and expanding Los Vaqueros Reservoir. Taken together, these projects would add nearly 4 million acre-feet of available water for our state; help with flood control, ecosystem restoration and water quality; and generate more hydropower.

Public Safety

- ✓ With human trafficking becoming an increasingly dangerous issue in the Valley, I hosted an in-district roundtable on human trafficking with our local law enforcement, government officials and victim advocacy groups to discuss the current state of human trafficking in our community and ways it is being combatted.



- ✓ Identity theft and security have received greater national attention as a result of several recent high-profile data breaches. To help combat this crime, I introduced the *Moving Americans Privacy Protection Act* to require Customs and Border

Protection Agency to remove personally identifiable information from publicly-available documents.

- ✓ Mail theft and identity fraud continue to plague our community. To maintain vigilance on these issues, I hosted several conference calls with our local law enforcement and U.S. Postal Service officials to discuss new and ongoing cases.
- ✓ I introduced H.R. 1818, the *Big Cat Public Safety Act*, a bipartisan bill that helps to crack down on irresponsibly-owned exotic cats that – if escaped – can threaten communities and residents.

Immigration

- ✓ Along with Representatives Will Hurd (R-Texas) and Pete Aguilar (D-Calif.), I introduced the *Uniting and Securing America (USA) Act* to provide a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers, implement commonsense border security measures, address the immigration backlog, and advance reforms in Central America to address the factors driving migration.



- ✓ I am a cosponsor of the RAC Act, BRIDGE Act and DREAM Act to protect Dreamers and provide them a pathway to earned citizenship.
- ✓ At 217 bipartisan cosponsors, my ENLIST Act is the most cosponsored Dreamer bill ever introduced in Congress. I re-introduced this bill in January to allow DACA recipients to earn citizenship through military service.
- ✓ I supported the *No Sanctuary for Criminals Act*, *Kate's Law*, and the *Criminal Alien Gang Member Removal Act* to ensure criminal aliens are caught, prosecuted and prevented from returning to our communities.
- ✓ In December, I sent a letter to President Trump noting my concern for the public safety with California's sanctuary state policies and urged the administration to focus on those who put compliance with the law – like our local law enforcement – ahead of political gamesmanship.

Transportation & Infrastructure

- ✓ After seven years of fighting to reduce the federal government's footprint, my *Federal Assets Sales and Transfer Act* (FASTA) was signed into law in December 2016. FASTA provides new oversight of federal agency real property management and removes barriers for the sale of unneeded assets. The law should generate \$8 billion in taxpayer savings and better align federal property use with actual need. The first comprehensive federal real property database was made public as a result of the law; no longer can federal agencies hide their assets from taxpayers.
- ✓ I've continued to fight the California High Speed Rail boondoggle and apply necessary oversight to the flawed plan to spend Central Valley tax dollars. In January, I led a letter with the Republican California delegation to the new Secretary of Transportation making her aware of the project overruns and mismanagement and requesting that no more federal dollars be spent. And in May, I sent a follow-up letter reemphasizing those points and requesting an audit. Costs continue to soar, and as of January 2018, the Central Valley segment was estimated to increase 77 percent.
- ✓ The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, particularly the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials that I chair, spent 2017 positioning for the Trump Administration to roll out an infrastructure proposal. The committee hosted several hearings on the need for regulatory reform, passenger rail upgrades, and building a 21st century infrastructure.
- ✓ The latest highway bill included a number of my proposals, most notably an environmental streamlining provision that exempts states like California from redundant and unnecessary reviews – reducing project costs and improving project delivery. The rulemaking to implement the program made significant progress in 2017, and the results for California are imminent.
- ✓ Innovative transportation technology is on the horizon. With an appropriate combination of oversight, guidance and a hands-off approach by the government, logistics efficiencies will benefit all Americans. I am taking an active role in working with Department of Transportation to find this balance. I stood with Secretary Chao and spoke at the rollout of the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Integration Pilot Program to encourage local governments to participate in integrating drones into everyday life.

Healthcare

- ✓ Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Administrator Seema Verma accepted my invitation to join a roundtable discussion in Modesto with local health care professionals to discuss and see first-hand our unique access and care issues in the Valley.



- ✓ I introduced H.R. 2779, the ACCESS Act, to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for our physicians, enabling them to see more Medicaid patients. California currently ranks 48 out of 50 in lowest reimbursement to medical providers, which not only deters physicians from accepting more Medicaid patients, but also hinders recruitment of new physicians to the Valley to fix our doctor shortage.
- ✓ I introduced H.R. 3541, the CARE Act, to train more physicians in the Valley and help address our doctor shortage. These provisions were included separate legislation that passed the House on Nov. 6, 2017.
- ✓ The CHAMPIONING HEALTHY KIDS Act, which I supported, passed the House in November. This bill reauthorizes the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), Special Diabetes Program, National Health Service Corps and other programs.
- ✓ The *Protecting Seniors Access to Medicare Act*, which I cosponsored, passed the House in November. This bill repeals the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB) enacted through the Affordable Care Act to prevent unelected bureaucrats from cutting senior's Medicare benefits.
- ✓ I cosponsored several additional bills to address our nation's most pressing needs with regard to Alzheimer's and other chronic diseases: H.R. 820, the *Childhood Cancer STAR Act*; H.R. 1318, the *Preventing Maternal Deaths Act*; and H.R. 1676, the *Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act*.

Homelessness

- ✓ An amendment I authored to fix a shortfall in Runaway and Homeless Youth grants that help rehabilitate homeless youth nationwide, including at the Modesto Center for Human Services, was included in the House-passed 2018 appropriations bill. Subsequently, I led a bipartisan letter signed by 72 Members of Congress to make sure this amendment is included in the final 2018 appropriations bill.




Disaster Relief

With 2017 being the most devastating year in California wildfire history, my focus was to ensure that appropriate resources were made available immediately and commonsense reforms were made to emergency management programs.

- ✓ The House passed emergency resources totaling over \$133 billion for major disasters, with over \$5 billion specific to California wildfires.
- ✓ I introduced the *SMART Rebuilding Act* to save lives and taxpayer dollars. This bill would incentivize and enable states and communities to build more resiliently both before and after disasters strike by increasing the federal cost share for communities that adopt mitigation measures. These reforms were included in the House-passed *Disaster Recovery and Reform Act*, which included more than \$4.4 billion for California.
- ✓ I led a letter to President Trump with my California colleagues asking for his assistance in determining the appropriate resources for wildfire response and recovery.

Veterans

- ✓ Working together with the California National Guard, the bonus repayment scandal with the Department of Defense that affected several Valley residents has been resolved. To mark the occasion, I hosted Major General David Baldwin at the Manteca VFW hall where we also featured the Work for Warriors program, which helps connect California veterans with jobs when they transition from service.
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- ✓ H.R. 3218, the “Forever GI Bill,” was signed into law in August 2017 and removes restrictions to use the GI Bill, enabling future eligible recipients to use their GI bill benefits for their entire lives instead of the current 15-year timeline. It also provides significant increases in GI Bill funding for Purple Heart Recipients, Reservists and Guardsmen, dependents and surviving spouses.
 - ✓ The House passed a bill that I introduced with Rep. Tim Walz (D-Minn.): H.R. 1725, the *Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act of 2017*. This bill allows veterans to seek initial examinations from their local physician and skip an extra VA appointment if it takes too long, easing the benefits process for veterans in rural communities, expediting the diagnoses of disabilities and reducing wait times and backlog at the VA.
 - ✓ S. 1094, the *Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017*, was signed into law on June 23, 2017. This bill protects whistleblowers and streamlines the process for removing poorly performing employees while still protecting employees’ due process rights.
 - ✓ The House recently approved Fiscal Year 2018 VA appropriations – the highest funding level ever for VA. This bill provides for better care and increased access for our veterans.
 - ✓ The new French Camp VA clinic is on track for 2018. In September, I met with the head of the VA Palo Alto Health Care System to ensure construction remains

on schedule. In 2016, I secured funding for this facility and look forward to beginning construction later this year.

- ✓ Together with Rep. Charlie Crist (D-Fla.), I introduced the *Veterans Treatment Court Coordination Act*, to set up more veteran treatment courts across the nation. This will keep more veterans in crisis out of the criminal justice system and give them the help they need and deserve.

Agriculture

- ✓ As an active member of the House Committee on Agriculture, I hosted a 2018 Farm Bill Listening Session in Modesto with Chairman Mike Conaway and three other Members of Congress to hear the Farm Bill priorities of over 100 local attendees.
- ✓ I supported the *Securing our Agriculture and Food Act*, which was signed into law on June 30, 2017 and will help defend our nation's food supply, port system, and public health from terrorism and other security threats.
- ✓ I sent 10 letters on ag issues to the Trump Administration in 2017. Eight letters expressed support for new and existing trade agreements and urged fairness and reasonable precautionary measures to protect our farmers' livelihoods and consumers' food supply; two letters highlighted the dire need for agriculture labor and ongoing shortfalls in our existing visa programs.
- ✓ I supported Committee and House passage of the *Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act*, which aims to tackle conflicting bureaucratic standards that hinder the safe, timely application of pesticides that help fight viruses like West Nile or Zika.



Second Amendment

- ✓ The House passed H.R. 38, the *Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act*, of which I was a cosponsor. I also supported the House passage of H.Con.Res. 40, which prevents certain federal agencies from unilaterally acting to limit a person's right to firearms, outside of the standard court decision.

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