



2018 BizFed Leadership Roundtable Series Congressional Representatives Hon. Norma Torres (CD35), Hon. Judy Chu (CD27), Hon. Linda Sánchez (CD38)

San Gabriel Valley – April 2018

The 2018 BizFed Leadership Roundtable Series was the beneficiary of the recent House of Representatives spring recess combined with its District Work Week. Three members of Congress, representing the eastern and southeastern areas of Los Angeles County and parts of San Bernardino County, were the honored guests for three individual Leadership Roundtable dialogue.

Fairplex, Los Angeles County Fair Association, Pomona, hosted Congresswoman Norma Torres on Wednesday March 28th, 2018. Torres knows her district well. That knowledge comes from representing different parts of the 35th Congressional District as Councilwoman and directly Mayor of Pomona (while holding the job of a 911 dispatcher) and in the Legislature as a member of the Assembly and Senate.



Congresswoman Judy Chu’s elected history has a somewhat similar path. Chu first was elected as a member of the Garvey School Board, then to the City Council and served as Mayor of Monterey Park, Assemblywoman and then Board of Equalization. She won a special election to replace then Congresswoman Hilda Solis when she was appointed Labor Secretary by President Obama. Chu understands the challenges within the 27th Congressional District. The Pasadena Chamber of Commerce hosted the Roundtable at the Women’s City Club of Pasadena on Thursday, March 29th, 2018.

Rose Hills Memorial Park in Whittier was the site for the Regional San Gabriel Valley Chamber hosted Roundtable with Congresswoman Linda Sánchez on Tuesday, April 3rd, 2018. Prior to her election to the House of Representatives in 2002, Sánchez was an attorney specializing in labor law. She was a compliance officer for two years at International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local #441 (IBEW) and then served for two years as the elected Executive Secretary/Treasurer of the Orange County Central Labor Council. Congresswoman Sánchez has been an effective representative for the 38th Congressional District.



Their observations and remarks shared similar tones regarding the current legislative process in Congress and the White House. In this Second Session of the 115th Congress, being Democrats, having minority party status, makes it much harder to have input and thoughtful debate in the legislative process and work towards solving issues that affect California and the nation. Lack of transparency, discussion and constantly “moving the goal posts” does not result in thoughtful and lasting public policy. To be effective for their districts and California, the Congresswomen work with Republican members that author and/or sponsor legislation to include their amendments.

The California Congressional Delegation totals 55, 53 Representatives (Democrats 39/Republicans 14) and 2 Senators (Democrats 2). For the benefit of California and its economy, the Congressional delegation must vote as a block to advance the interests of the State. “State first, Party second.” That is the lesson to be learned from Texas and New York, which have much smaller delegations (Texas 38 and NY 29).



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The California delegation, hosted by Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, has a quarterly dinner for the Representatives to attend to share a meal, discuss key federal issues that impact California and collaborating in finding solutions. The Congresswomen remarked that they were not well attended. The lack of attendance also applies to the weekly Wednesday lunch for former Assemblymembers and State Senators.

BizFed and its members should ask the California Congressional Delegation to attend and participate in these opportunities to meet with their colleagues and put "California First, Party Second."



At each of the Roundtables, Metro government relations staff highlighted key projects in their districts, the funding sources, the needs for additional reviews and approvals from federal transit agencies, and assistance from the Congresswomen to call key California legislator and officials to support projects requesting SB1 monies for completion. Some of the projects discussed include the Gold Line extension to Claremont, I-605/SR91 Interchange Improvements, Santa Ana Light Rail Transit Corridor, SR71 and update on the Purple Line Extension 3.

BizFed was thanked for its support on behalf of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). The three reiterated that the votes are there in the House and Senate to pass DACA solutions, but the Leadership has refused to place the matter for a vote. Congresswoman Torres said, "These children and young people, are our neighbors, play soccer with our kids, they're friends of our children." "DACA is a top priority", Congresswoman Chu commented. She went on to say that the best that could be done is a patchwork of actions this summer.



The 2020 Census elicited strong reactions from the Congresswomen. It's not just about redistricting and the electoral process, they said. It's about ensuring accurate counts = federal dollars. The Census is the tool used to calculate formulas used to fund infrastructure and other projects with federal dollars. The accurate count means dollars for the state and our cities. Federal



funding of projects, in addition to the formula, is also allocated in a per capita basis. The business community utilizes the data and analysis of the Census to make decisions as to market share, location, identify their customers, just to name a few. They suggested that the business community voice their concerns about an accurate 2020 Census to their representatives and key leaders, but to Census officials as well.



The topics of "trade, tariffs, renegotiation of NAFTA" brought much concern to the Congresswomen. Some of their colleagues are concerned about retaliation from nations targeted by the tariffs, especially on agricultural products. "When you go to negotiate, it's a give and take. You can't expect to walk in and the other side gives you everything you want without giving something up. It just doesn't work that way," said Congresswoman Linda Sánchez. She is a member of the powerful Ways and Means Committee which is the chief tax writing committee. "Democrats in the Committee were locked out of the room when



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the tax bill was written. It was never intended to be a bipartisan collaboration”, Congresswoman Sánchez stated. Accordingly, the agreements on the recently passed budget bill are already been reviewed and the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the House are looking to make cuts to the budget.

At risk are domestic programs such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) used by cities and counties, housing assistance, transportation, health care, SNAP, and other areas. Congresswoman Chu would have liked to have seen tax credits for apprenticeship programs,



retraining and increase the reach of EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit) included in the budget bill.



The Congresswomen shared how the steel tariffs would hurt California. Metro has many projects that use tremendous amounts of steel. Those projects can expect the costs to rise as the cost of steel rises. The auto industry would also be hit with higher auto and truck prices. The agricultural sector in California, the country’s bread basket, will be impacted with the tariffs on agricultural products listed, such as pistachios, wine and others. In conversation with the Congresswomen, BizFed’s Tracy Hernandez and Elizabeth Shapiro shared results of the 2017 Poll and highlighting the key issues of housing, fees and taxes, regulations, transportation and public infrastructure.

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Congresswoman Chu, a member of the Small Business Committee touts the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) as the most effective tool of the SBA (Small Business Administration). Chu was a leader in the establishment of two new Small Business Development Centers in the San Gabriel Valley. She has also held a legislative hearing on “Access to Capital”, one of the biggest challenges to small businesses.

At this time, “the economic policies aren’t smart for this country”, said Congresswoman Sánchez. “We should be doing a robust infrastructure bill.” She noted that other states, including those with Republican governors, have adopted a gas tax to make up



for a lack of federal funds to fix infrastructure. “We have to move goods more efficiently in our region, and our roads need fixing and maintenance.” Sánchez will persist within the House Ways and Means committee to see these important issues impacting her district and region addressed in budget legislation.



Housing, economic development and education, while more state and local issues, continue to be key areas of work for Congresswoman Torres. “Logistic jobs are real jobs. They

keep my constituents employed”. Her constituents need housing, jobs, improved infrastructure, she says. She has been working towards an appointment to the coveted Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. And that brought smiles to all at the Roundtable.



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Participants attending Roundtable with Congresswoman Norma Torres hosted by Farplex Los Angeles County Fair Association: Ronald Bolding, Cielo Castro, Roozbeh Farahanipour, Ted Green, Tracy Hernandez, Gilbert Ivey, Lara Larramendi, Steve Samuelian, Miguel Santana, Kristine Scott, Bob Smith, De'Andre Valencia, Marisa Valdez Yeager, Samantha Waterman



Participants attending Roundtable with Congresswoman Judy Chu hosted by Pasadena Chamber of Commerce: Steve Bullock Martha Cox-Nitikman, Roozbeh Farahanipour, Ted Green, Lara Larramendi. Jamie Rojas, Jr., Elizabeth Shapiro, Bob Smith, Michael Turner, Anna Wu



Participants attending Roundtable with Congresswoman Linda Sánchez hosted by Regional San Gabriel Valley Chamber: Anthony Duarte, Julia Emerson, Roozbeh Farahanipour, Tracy Hernandez, Lara Larramendi, Bruce Lazenby, Patrick Monroe, Jamie Rojas, Jr., Ali Sahabi, Marisa Valdez Yeager