

# THE BECERRA BULLETIN

CONGRESSMAN XAVIER BECERRA'S NEWS AND VIEWS FROM WASHINGTON TO LOS ANGELES

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In a continued effort to bring news and relevant information about our federal government back to his home district in Los Angeles, Representative Xavier Becerra (CA-31), the only congressional member from Southern California who is on the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, brings you "The Becerra Bulletin," a newsletter filled with facts and information meant to stimulate thought and discourse about American economic policy and a host of other issues.

## BY THE NUMBERS

### THE STATE OF OUR UNION

This past Tuesday, January 31, the president delivered his annual State of the Union address. The hour-long speech left little confidence that the president has clear and discernable ideas on what this country needs and deserves. Long on rhetoric, but short of real, tangible policies, the few proposals the president did actually put forward were merely recycled ideas from the ghost of State of the Unions past. We also learned a few disappointing realities: first, we heard that despite the increased loss of lives and the absence of an exit strategy, the U.S. will continue to have a major military presence in Iraq; next we learned that the president believes he was and forever will be justified when ordering wiretaps and other surveillance measures on Americans; no State of the Union address would be complete without the president requesting that congress make permanent his irresponsible tax cuts, which benefit the wealthiest Americans; and finally, the president also proposed a healthcare plan that strengthens health savings accounts through a market-based system that echoes the faulty Social Security privatization plan he proposed last year.

When considering the whole state of our union, it's important to look at a cross section of facts to understand the full picture. Here is what we know:

- The cost of health care premiums has almost doubled since 2001
- Health insurance costs in California have increased 54 percent since 2000
- 2.8 million manufacturing jobs have been lost since January 2001
- 920,543 Californians are unemployed
- Over 2,242 U.S. soldiers have died and more than 16,549 soldiers have been wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003
- 23,692 Californians are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan
- The national average price for a gallon of gas has increased \$0.89 since President Bush took office in 2001 (in California, the average increase is \$1.21)
- Since January 2001, 90 percent of our additional debt has been financed by foreign investors
- A 10-year projected budget surplus of \$5.6 trillion in January 2001 has become a \$3.5 trillion 10-year projected deficit
- Over President Bush's first term, real median household income declined by \$1,669
- 1.4 million more children live in poverty now than before President Bush took office (a total of 13 million children live in poverty today)

The state of our union is strong because of the everyday heroism of Americans all across this country who are willing to get up each morning and work hard in an effort to ensure that their children's lives are a little bit better than their own. But our current system is not without its challenges and we know that together, America can do better. The president was right when he said that we are a hopeful society, but if this is as good as it gets, then Americans deserve new leadership and a new vision.

## SHORT TAKES – LOS ANGELES

### MEDICARE PART D

In an effort to educate constituents on the new Medicare Part D voluntary prescription drug benefit that began January 1, Rep. Becerra partnered with Assembly Member Jackie Goldberg to host a Medicare information session at the Highland Park Senior Center this past Wednesday, February 1. Over 60 seniors were in attendance as a Medicare representative provided an overview of Medicare Parts A, B and D. The presentation focused primarily on Medicare Part D to ensure that constituents are informed and better prepared to avoid delayed enrollment penalties for the rapidly approaching May 15 deadline.

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**Representative Xavier Becerra, 31st Congressional District, California**  
 Committee on Ways and Means  
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