



Rep. Becerra speaks at an event at Esperanza Community Housing Corporation with Vice President Biden, May 15, 2009.

LOS ANGELES—Today Congressman Xavier Becerra (CA-31), Vice Chair of the House Democratic Caucus and senior member of the House Ways and Means Committee, welcomed the Vice President of the United States Joe Biden, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Deputy Secretary Ron Simms to California's 31st Congressional District to highlight the progress of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the impact it's having in the quality of lives for the families he represents.

Vice President Biden, Congressman Becerra, Mayor Villaraigosa and Deputy Secretary Simms visited the Esperanza Community Housing Corporation, located in the Figueroa Corridor of South Central Los Angeles. Esperanza has received a \$875,000 grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development through the Recovery Act to clear 225 low-income homes of lead through their Healthy Homes Project.

"Mr. Vice President, you can walk from here 40 blocks long and 50 blocks wide and you can see an area filled with older apartment buildings contaminated with lead paint and other toxins," Rep. Becerra said. "There are people in this community ready to do the work to make these buildings safe and healthy places to live, if we make the critical investment. Today, thanks to the leadership of our new President and Vice President and the good people at Esperanza, the work is already underway to improve the living conditions of hundreds of families here in South Los Angeles."

Since 2002, more than 10,000 children from South Los Angeles have been tested for lead poisoning at St John's Well Child & Family clinics. More than 50% of those children show elevated lead levels in their blood. Approximately 85% of the housing in the Figueroa Corridor neighborhood was built before 1978, when Federal lead-reduction efforts began, and therefore there is a high likelihood that the buildings contain lead paint.

The funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will create jobs for people to improve the health of vulnerable residents in their own community. In total, California will receive \$17,624,182 to clear 1845 homes.

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