

## **Congressman Mike March 2015 Legislative Report**

### **THOMPSON APPOINTED TO MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

On March 6, U.S. Rep. Mike Thompson (CA-05) was appointed by Speaker John Boehner to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission. Thompson will fill the spot vacated by Former Rep. John Dingell (D-MI). The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission was established on February 18, 1929, by the passage of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act. It was created and authorized to consider and approve any areas of land and/or water recommended by the Secretary of the Interior for purchase or rental by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and to fix the price or prices at which such areas may be purchased or rented. In addition to approving purchase and rental prices, the Commission considers the establishment of new waterfowl refuges.

### **THOMPSON ANNOUNCES MORE THAN \$1.4 MILLION FOR NAPA COUNTY'S CHILD START**

On March 6, U.S. Rep. Mike Thompson (CA-05) announced a \$1,411,750 Department of Health and Human Services Grant to Napa County's Child Start. The goal of the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grant is to expand high quality early learning opportunities for Napa and Solano Counties' most vulnerable infants and toddlers. The grant will be used to form collaborative partnerships between Child Start and local child care programs like Napa Valley Adult Education's Teen Parent Program and Solano Community College Children's Programs.

### **Reps. Thompson, Jenkins Introduce The Medicare Patient Access To Hospice Act**

On March 6, Congressman Mike Thompson (D-CA) and Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins (R-KS) introduced the *Medicare Patient Access to Hospice Act*. This legislation fixes outdated Medicare regulations so that Physician Assistants can provide primary care to hospice patients, which is currently not covered under the current rules.

### **ESHOO, THOMPSON REINTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO MAKE HEALTH INSURANCE MORE AFFORDABLE FOR FAMILIES IN HIGH COST AREAS**

On March 6, U.S. Reps. Anna G. Eshoo (CA-18) and Mike Thompson (CA-5) reintroduced the *Fair Access to Health Care Act*, legislation to expand the eligibility for premium tax credits for people living in high-cost areas who purchase health insurance through the federal and state exchanges set up by the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Currently the ACA allows those making between 138 and 400 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) to qualify for premium tax credits to help them purchase health insurance through the ACA's exchanges. At this level, an individual making up to \$45,960 and a family of four making up to \$94,200 qualify for premium tax credits. However, the income threshold used to determine eligibility for these tax credits doesn't take into account the cost of living for different geographic areas. A family living in New York City or San Francisco is treated the same as a family living in a small town in South Carolina or Texas. The *Fair Access to Health Care Act* would allow the premium tax credits offered through the ACA to be increased proportionally based on an area's cost of living. Under the bill, the federal poverty level threshold will increase proportionally based on an area's cost of living above the national average cost-of-living. The cost-of-living is determined using the Census Bureau's Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM).

### **THOMPSON ANNOUNCES \$4.9 MILLION HEAD START GRANT FOR COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP OF SONOMA COUNTY**

On March 16, U.S. Rep. Mike Thompson (CA-5) announced a \$4,965,527 Head Start Grant for Community Action Partnership (CAP) of Sonoma County. The funding will be used to provide Head Start and Early Head Start services to 552 children and their families at 12 center based sites throughout Sonoma County. Federal Head Start and Early Head Start programs promote the school readiness of

children ages birth to 5 from low-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social and emotional development. Head Start programs provide comprehensive services to enrolled children and their families, which include health, nutrition, social services and other services determined to be necessary by family needs assessments, in addition to education and cognitive development services. For every dollar spent on Head Start, our country realizes almost nine dollars in benefits through participants' increased earnings, decreased welfare dependence and other factors.

### **THOMPSON ANNOUNCES MORE THAN \$4.3 MILLION TO RESTORE RIVER HABITAT AND IMPROVE WATER QUALITY**

On March 17, U.S. Rep. Mike Thompson (CA-5) announced more than \$4.3 million in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grants to restore river habitat and improve water quality in Napa and Sonoma Counties. The grants are part of the \$8.7 million in federal funds awarded to local and state organizations for projects to restore tidal marshes, river habitat, and improve water quality in and around San Francisco Bay. The grants will support the following projects: Sears Point Tidal Marsh Restoration, Napa River Restoration, Upper York Creek Dam Removal and Restoration, and Clean Streams in Southern Sonoma County. San Francisco Bay, a designated "estuary of national significance" under the Clean Water Act, is recognized around the world for its natural beauty and ecological significance. The Bay and its tributaries provide vital fish and wildlife habitat within the Bay-Delta estuary which drains nearly half of California's watersheds via the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers. Since 2008, EPA's San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund has provided over \$40 million in competitive grants for nearly 60 projects that are restoring water quality and wetlands, reducing polluted runoff, and greening development in San Francisco Bay and its watershed. These grantees and their partners represent a network of over 70 government agencies, resource conservation districts, land trusts, watershed groups, and non-profit organizations across the Bay Area's nine counties.

### **THOMPSON HONORS PAMELA PHILLIPS AS LAKE COUNTY'S WOMAN OF THE YEAR**

On March 21, in recognition of Women's History Month, U.S. Reps. Mike Thompson (CA-5) recognized Pamela Phillips as Lake County's Woman of the Year. Phillips was one of five women recognized. One woman from each of the five counties that make up the Fifth Congressional District was honored. Over her exemplary five decade career as a public servant, Phillips worked her way up from receptionist to Field Manager of the Lakeport Social Security Office. Throughout her career, Phillips always did her utmost to alleviate the immediate personal need in every dire situation and to see that every question was answered and every beneficiary was well-served.

### **THOMPSON HONORS CYNTHIA GUZMAN AS NAPA COUNTY'S WOMAN OF THE YEAR**

On March 22, in recognition of Women's History Month, U.S. Reps. Mike Thompson (CA-5) recognized Cynthia Guzman as Napa County's Woman of the Year. Guzman was one of five women recognized. One woman from each of the five counties that make up the Fifth Congressional District was honored. In 2011, Ms. Guzman was diagnosed on her 63rd birthday with younger-onset Alzheimer's disease. Not one to accept her challenges without a fight, Ms. Guzman moved to Napa to be closer to her family, and began raising awareness and advocating for increased research funding for this terrible disease. She has been an active member of the Alzheimer's Association and has been spreading her personal story throughout the region. Ms. Guzman's story has been published in multiple books, magazine, and newspapers. She has come to Washington, D.C. as a part of the Alzheimer's Association Advocacy Forum and has organized multiple Walk to End Alzheimer's in our community.

### **THOMPSON HONORS KAREN TAYLOR AS SOLANO COUNTY'S WOMAN OF THE YEAR**

On March 22, in recognition of Women's History Month, U.S. Reps. Mike Thompson (CA-5) recognized Karen Taylor as Solano County's Woman of the Year. Taylor was one of five women recognized. One woman from each of the five counties that make up the Fifth Congressional District was honored. Taylor is a considerate woman with a loving and giving heart, and is always seeking to help the less fortunate in

our community, especially youth, homeless, and elders. From block parties that she put on as a teenager to field trips to take kids to Lake Tahoe to see snow for the first time, she has been a fixture in her neighborhood and the Vallejo community. She has helped young people in Vallejo by forming activity groups, such as Karen's Tiny Tots and Karen's Girls Clubs for kids and teenagers. Taylor has strived to improve our community for more than thirty years. She has worked with kids to perform plays, has hosted meetings on pregnancy prevention for teenage girls, and has devoted countless hours of work to the Solano AIDS Coalition.

### **THOMPSON HONORS MAUREEN TOMS AS CONTRA COSTA COUNTY'S WOMAN OF THE YEAR**

On March 22, in recognition of Women's History Month, U.S. Reps. Mike Thompson (CA-5) recognized Maureen Toms as Contra Costa County's Woman of the Year. Toms was one of five women recognized. One woman from each of the five counties that make up the Fifth Congressional District was honored. Toms has been a strong supporter of the Special Olympics; as a parent of a child with Down Syndrome, she has been a tireless advocate for children with disabilities. She has also donated hundreds of hours as a volunteer on numerous planning committees that have led to improving the quality of life for the families and residents in the City of Pinole and West Contra Costa County. Toms grew up in a family that believed in serving their community, and that philosophy became a lifelong passion. From helping children with intellectual disabilities overcome barriers through sports and shatter stereotypes with the Special Olympics to helping beautify her local neighborhood by obtaining grants to plant trees in a local park, she has been a tireless advocate for the people and places that make our community special.

### **THOMPSON HONORS GAYE LEBARON AS SONOMA COUNTY'S WOMAN OF THE YEAR**

On March 22, In recognition of Women's History Month, U.S. Reps. Mike Thompson (CA-5) recognized Gaye LeBaron as Sonoma County's Woman of the Year. LeBaron was one of five women recognized. One woman from each of the five counties that make up the Fifth Congressional District was honored. LeBaron is a renowned columnist for the Press Democrat newspaper, the best known historian of Sonoma County, and has been prolifically telling the story of our county, with over eight thousand articles published. Her influence and acclaim have grown over the years because of this focus and the level of trust she has built with the general public through her constancy. She's worked for the Press Democrat for 45 years.

### **THOMPSON STATEMENT ON WAPPO TRIBE RULING**

On March 24, U.S. Rep. Mike Thompson (CA-5) released the following statement after U.S. District Court Judge ruled against the Mishewal Wappo tribe in their suit against the federal government seeking status restoration. Had the tribe been successful in its suit, land in Napa County would have been placed into federal trust, exempting it from all local and state regulations. "More than 50 years after the Wappo tribe was congressionally derecognized, an attempt to circumvent Congress and the U.S. Department of Interior by going through the courts rightfully failed," said Thompson. "The motivation behind this lawsuit was clear. By the group's own admission, if the lawsuit was successful, they would have attempted to build a casino in Napa or Sonoma Counties. This ruling respects separation of powers, complies with established statute of limitations law, and protects our region's important agricultural lands from Las Vegas-style gambling."

### **THOMPSON SECURES FINAL \$1.8 MILLION TO COMPLETE NAPA FLOOD PROJECT**

On March 24, U.S. Rep. Mike Thompson (CA-5) secured the final \$1.8 million needed to complete the Napa Flood Project. The \$1.8 million will be used for landscaping, turf reinforcement, irrigation and erosion control. In June 2013, Thompson secured \$16.62 million in funds in the Army Corps of Engineers' Fiscal Year 2013 work plan to complete the Napa Flood Project's Downtown Bypass Channel. This project will provide 100-year flood protection to the City of Napa and support business development and job creation throughout the community. The Napa Flood Project will improve water quality, create

urban wetlands, and enhance wildlife habitats, while also providing flood protection to 2,700 homes, 350 businesses, and more than 50 public properties. Thompson previously worked to secure more than \$226 million on this project. To date, over \$900 million in public and private investment has been made in Napa because of the promise that the project's completion will reduce instances of flooding in the City and County.

#### **THOMPSON, FITZPATRICK URGE APPROPRIATORS TO PROVIDE FUNDS TO STRENGTHEN CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK SYSTEM**

On March 25, U.S. Reps. Mike Thompson (D-CA) and Mike Fitzpatrick (R-PA) led 125 of their colleagues in calling on appropriators to provide funds to strengthen the National Criminal Background Check System (NICS). The letter, signed by 119 Democrats and 8 Republicans, urged the House Appropriations Committee to, at minimum, maintain Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 funding levels in House version of the FY 2016 *Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations* bill. Last year, Thompson and Fitzpatrick passed a bipartisan amendment which led to NICS funding being increased to record levels in the FY 2015 omnibus appropriations bill. The funds are used to help states improve data submissions to NICS. NICS, the database used to determine whether or not a prospective buyer is eligible to buy a firearm, is missing information. Because of this, people who otherwise would not pass a background check can slip through the cracks and buy guns.

#### **THOMPSON VOTES AGAINST HOUSE GOP BUDGET**

On March 25, U.S. Rep. Mike Thompson (CA-5) voted against H.Con.Res. 27, the House Republicans' Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 budget resolution. The budget resolution passed by a vote of 228-199. No Democrats voted for the resolution and 17 Republicans voted against the resolution. The budget, if passed by the Senate would be vetoed by President Obama. According to the non-partisan Economic Policy institute, the House Republicans' budget plan will destroy 2.9 million jobs in 2017, and decrease economic growth by 2.5 percent.