



The Power of the Purse

By U.S. Rep. Adam Schiff

Joe Biden used to say, “Don’t tell me what you value.

Show me your budget and I’ll tell YOU what you value.” In other words, how we spend our finite government resources is the true test of our values and priorities.

When I came to Congress, I sought to be named to the Appropriations Committee because that is the committee that puts those words into action by allocating the funds for federal agencies and programs.

I was honored to be named to the committee and recent years have given us a vivid look at what’s truly at stake.

In March, the Trump Administration released its budget. As with previous budgets from this administration, it contained enormous cuts to programs like education, housing, transportation and health care.

My priority has always been to make sure that we invest the nation’s resources wisely, that we eliminate any waste or fraud and that we think of our nation’s safety and future.

At the national level, and as Chair of the Intelligence Committee, I spend much of my time ensuring funding levels for intelligence agencies will allow them to keep the country safe while protecting our privacy.

Locally, I have sought funding that affects the quality of life for my constituents, like building and deploying the Earthquake Early Warning System.

I have also been working to secure adequate funding for the Army Corps of Engineers to restore the Los Angeles River to its natural glory. And I have sought resources for our schools, roads and parks, for clean air and clean water.

Funding projects like these is an example of how Congress employs the “the power of the purse,” its constitutional authority to set spending levels.

But over the past two and a half years, President Trump has repeatedly attempted to bypass Congress’ power to fund the government. It’s one of the many ways this president has disregarded the laws and norms that have safe-

guarded our democracy since its founding.

When Congress refused to fund President Trump’s misguided wall along our southern border—something he promised that Mexico, not taxpayers would pay for—the President shut down the government.

When that didn’t work, he abused his executive power by declaring a national emergency, in an attempt to circumvent Congress. On a bipartisan basis, we voted down this abuse of power, which he then vetoed.

This is dangerous. The Constitution vests Congress with the power of the purse for good reason, so that the executive does not become too powerful and to ensure our budgets reflect the priorities and values of our nation. Those of us in Congress, on both sides of the aisle, must recognize that the separation of powers should not wax and wane in favor of whichever party is currently seated in the White House.

The genius of our founders, and our system of checks and balances, is only as good as our commitment to it.



California’s Golden Outdoor Opportunity

By California Assemblymember Laura Friedman

In California, we have an economy that rivals most nations. This is largely due to sectors in which our state leads the nation and world including agriculture, technology and entertainment.

However, there is one sector where we lead that does not get the utilization or recognition it deserves: outdoor recreation.

Did you know that our state is home to outdoor recreation industry giants such as Patagonia, The North Face, Marmot and Specialized Bicycles? In fact, over \$92 billion comes into our state’s economy each year through our outdoor sector—resulting in the creation of 690,000 jobs. California is also home to over 49 million square miles of protected lands.

When I heard these numbers, I instantly knew we were missing out on a big opportunity. Imagine if we could harness this mammoth industry, abundant natural lands and the passionate creativity of our state’s outdoor advocacy and nonprofit

organizations to reap great economic and social benefits?

That is exactly what my bill, AB 1111, will do.

The bill will create the state’s first Office of Outdoor Recreation, which would set up an advisory committee of industry leaders, nonprofits and advocates to collaborate on enhancing tourism and economic growth, educational opportunities, advancing land conservation and stewardship, recommending policies, promoting the holistic health benefits that outdoor recreation brings and focusing on improving the accessibility and experience for all users of California’s truly great outdoors.

Eleven other states currently have their own Offices of Outdoor Recreation or administrative positions that perform the same role. In each, the results speak for themselves.

For example, Colorado, which has a population one seventh of that of California

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Richard Wilkinson | Melinda Marinack | Miles Crakow | Amy Ferguson | Jennifer Wilkinson | Lauren Lee
richard@wilkinson-properties.com
DRE 01812487



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