

UNA-USA East Bay Chapter Advocacy Visits March 2011

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Executive Summary

Rita Maran, Chair and scribe, and Stephen Murphy, Board member, were joined by Jerry Weber, and Jordan Chan, also members of the Chapter Board, at some of the delegations to California's two US Senators and the House Representative for the 9th Congressional District. We made presentations at all meetings, based on research done in advance by committee members including each legislator's Committees and Caucuses. We sought to link the legislator's program and the Chapter's program wherever and whenever appropriate.

- 1) Four Priority Advocacy issues recommended by UNA-USA national office
 - a. Payment of US dues to the UN
 - b. Ratification of international treaties including the International Criminal Court Statute
 - c. Human Rights compliance with respect to the Human Rights Council, and the recent Universal Periodic Review,
 - d. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

- 2) Special issues:
 - UN World Food Program and related global food and hunger issues
 - Presenting signed petitions urging ratification of international human rights treaties (see attached copy)
 - Situation at Guantanamo Bay camp, including settlement of cleared Detainees

See Comprehensive Advocacy Report March 2011

UNA-USA East Bay Chapter

Comprehensive Advocacy Report March 2011

The Chapter Advocacy Committee organized meetings, on the 1st and 2d of March 2011, with legislators in the East Bay; namely, Senator Dianne Feinstein, Senator Barbara Boxer, and House Representative Barbara Lee, 9th Congressional District.

Each Advocacy Committee member researched one of the legislators' votes and records with respect to UN-related issues, and came prepared to speak on that issue.

After setting up the meetings, Rita sent a confirming letter to each legislator, including the Advocacy issues that the delegation would wish to cover.

Following are:

1) the common agenda that we brought to the table at all three meetings, and 2) special issues particular to individual legislators:

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Criminal Court Statute

- c. Human Rights compliance with respect to the Human Rights Council, and the recent Universal Periodic Review,
- d. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

2) Special issues:

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1) Four Priority Advocacy issues

On the 1st of March 2011, we met in San Francisco office with **Sen. Dianne Feinstein's** staffer John Murray, with whom the Advocacy Committee has met on previous visits. East Bay delegation: Rita Maran, Jerry Weber, Stephen Murphy with Giau Murphy (8 months).

Rita introduced the East Bay Chapter members. The group discussed the 4 issues that National prioritized (see above: 1) Four Priority Advocacy issues).

a. US finances for UN

Congress was due to hold important discussions on US payment of UN dues and specialized expenses in February and March. Efforts might be made by some Members of Congress to stop payment of UN assessed dues altogether.

b. Ratification by the Senate of human right treaties including but not limited to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and Their Families, and other international treaties. We showed John Murray the Chapter's petitions on which we continue to collect signatures. The petition lists treaties awaiting ratification. We will hand the signed petitions over when we meet in Sen Feinstein's office in Washington on 14 June.

c. US's welcomed renewed participation in the UN Human Rights Council, with the appointment of Eileen Donahoe as Ambassador to the Human Rights Council, and possibilities for an increased and positive US participation at sessions of the International Criminal Court.

d. The 8 Millennium Development Goals with respect to Goals 2 and 3 concerning improvements in the situation of the girl-child and women, and ensuring primary education. We left a good supply of MDG business cards, because John Murray wants to hand them out to other staffers.

On 2 March 2011: We met in Oakland office with **Congresswoman Barbara Lee's** staffer Lauren Riggs. We have met with her on previous visits.

East Bay delegation: Rita Maran, Stephen Murphy, Jerry Weber, and Jordan Chan.

Lauren greeted us with the information that she had taken the opportunity in advance of our meeting to call staffer Scott Exner in Lee's DC office, for his input on any issues he would like to have discussed before we get to Washington. Lauren's very positive initiative will be helpful when we meet with Exner on Tuesday 14 June 2011.

Barbara Lee is seeking to be selected as the US House rep to the UN General Assembly. We complimented the Congresswoman, offered to assist in any way, and wished her unbridled success

We agreed that the Chapter will seek support from Barbara Lee with respect to CEDAW. Lauren suggested we send the request to Ann Taylor, Head of Office, with a copy to Lauren. Lauren expressed interest in receiving from us the arguments against US ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Rita will send her the information.

Stephen raised the question of the death penalty and "life without parole" for new young offenders.

Jerry discussed the issue of food, the World Food Program, and the MDGs. Jerry gave Lauren the prepared fact-sheet he had prepared on this issue, containing useful statistics and data. We discussed the cuts being discussed in Congress at present. We handed over MDG business cards for Lee's staff

Rita discussed current efforts to have the City of Berkeley offer a symbolic welcome to cleared Guantanamo detainees, and was encouraged to seek support on this from Rep. Lee. Our request, going to Ann Taylor with a copy to Lauren, will include favorable statements on this issue by President Obama and Senator Feinstein. Our synopsis will review the action to date in the Berkeley City Council, to enable Scott Exner in Washington to review the issue as well. Lauren will also ask Scott about progress on appointing a Member of Congress to the General Assembly, and find out the length of term of that position.

Following that communication, we will write separately to seek support from Rep. Lee on the Berkeley City Council's unanimous decision in favor of implementation into Berkeley municipal code of the operative articles of CEDAW, the Women's Treaty.

Finally, the Chapter will write again, separately, to ask that Barbara Lee or a member of her staff be present at the opening ceremony of the Run for Peace around the International Day of Peace on 21 September, and also for UN Day on 24 October.

On the 2d of March 2011, we met in San Francisco with Senator Barbara Boxer's staffer Jennifer Tang. We have met with her on several previous visits.
East Bay delegation: Rita Maran, Stephen Murphy, Jordan Chan.

We took turns speaking to the four priority issues (as above) in the context of UNA's interests and the Senator's activities. Jerry Weber spoke about food cuts and handed over his fact-sheet on the World Food Program and global food issues.

In passing: there was at that time a two-week temporary Resolution - HR 1 - in force, to keep the government's budget operating, but a long-term solution to the budget problem is not likely at this time.. Feinstein opposed HR1, considering it a partisan-based initiative. It passed, and was followed by another resolution to extend the government's budget for another three weeks.

Similar discussions to those in the meeting at Sen. Feinstein's office were raised in Sen. Boxer's office, with variations according to Senator Boxer's record and committee responsibilities. As with the other legislators, we will send Sen. Boxer a summary concerning CEDAW's history in Berkeley, in case Sen. Boxer would like to say something about the importance of ratification by the Senate of the Women's Treaty. and about implementation of the CEDAW principles in Berkeley. Municipal code The Senator moves cautiously on local issues, being careful to remain outside local politics.

Senator Boxer will also receive a letter on the Berkeley City Council issue of the cleared Guantanamo detainees, should she wish to make a statement on that matter.

