

In the last Congress, the bill went from introduction to mark-up in less than a year even though most observers were surprised that it even got a hearing! But what most observers did not count with the perseverance of Congressman Lantos, Congresswoman Morella, Chairman Horn, then-ranking member Kucinich, and all of their incredibly dedicated and hard-working staffs. The observers did not count on the fact that there were many others ready and willing to add their names and prestige to this effort for truth and justice—so many more than 100 House members became co-sponsors in less than a year! Many observers underestimated the tenacity and perseverance of amazing people like Adriana Portillo-Bartow, Jennifer Harbury, Sister Dianna Ortiz, Meredith Larson, Dr. Leo Valladares Lanza, and so many others.

Washington conventional wisdom, continuing to insist that true intelligence reform is destined to oblivion, did not count on the fact that the yearning for truth and justice is a million times greater than the strongest bureaucratic inertia, that the search for truth will always overpower obfuscation and stonewalling, and that the American people and its elected representatives know and are committed to truly putting people first, to truly strengthening families, to truly fighting crime.

And so, thanks to tens of thousands of voices from Hawaii to Florida, and Maine to Alaska, we hear the message: pass the Human Rights Information Act. This message is supported by organizations like the Latin America Working Group, the Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA, the Washington Office on Latin America, the Religious Task Force on Central America and Mexico. I could go on and on!

So we begin anew our quest for the truth, our quest for justice, with the knowledge that both republicans and Democrats, Chairs and Ranking members, have shown and are showing their support for a bill that could rend the web of secrecy and lies that keep the public from finding out what it is entitled to know, that keep family members from healing and reaching closure, that keep criminals, mass murderers, torturers, and assorted thugs on the streets, well, we gotta stop that and we will change the law. This law is for you, Dianna. This law is for you, Jennifer. This law is for you, Adriana. This law is for you, Anne [Larson, mother of human rights worker Meredith Larson who survived a stabbing attack in Guatemala City in 1989]. Indeed, this law is for all of us, for a better tomorrow, for a more just today.

IN HONOR OF FRANK VICKERS

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of the USWA's most respected leaders, Frank Vickers. Over the past 30 years, Frank Vickers has dedicated his life to work extremely hard for the Steel Workers of Ohio. He joined the USWA in 1957, and since that time he has served as Local 5684 President, District 30 Organizing Coordinator, Ohio Legislative Coordinator and the Ohio Legislative Representative.

Frank has chaired USWA negotiations with LTV Steel, Timken, American Steel Foundries, Amsted Industries, Armco, Inc. and Republic Engineered Steels. Frank has also served as Vice President of the Cincinnati AFL-CIO Central Labor Council.

Frank Vickers has been a dedicated USWA worker for the last 30 years. In that time he has made tremendous strides in improving the productivity of the USWA. Through his efforts the USWA has expanded their influence all over the country in order to benefit the steel workers.

Frank has not only been a successful advocate for steelworkers but has also been a dedicated family man. His efforts are greatly appreciated by all the members of the USWA. He is not only a hard worker, but a good friend to all.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in honoring this dedicated man, Frank Vickers, for 30 years of serving the Steelworkers. I would like to wish Frank the best of luck and good fortune in the future.

A FAVORITE SON GOES TO
WASHINGTON

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 1999

Mr. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I commend to my colleagues the following article about one of our very own, Congressman GEORGE MILLER of California, who this year marks his 25th year of service in Congress.

This article poignantly captures GEORGE's commitment to public service and his unwavering belief in our system of government. As GEORGE says in this article, being a Member of Congress "is a privilege. It's what makes me get up in the morning and go to work, knowing in one fashion or another you're going to get to be a participant in our Democratic system. It sounds really corny, except it's really energizing."

This article also presents comments from the people who do not share GEORGE's views but who bestow upon him their respect for his integrity, his candor, and his unrelenting pursuit of what he believes to be right for this country.

[From the Contra Costa Times, June 6, 1999];

A FAVORITE SON GOES TO WASHINGTON—
REPEATEDLY

By Daniel Borenstein

WASHINGTON—Despite George Miller's limp from his surgery, the 6-foot-4-inch congressman sets the brisk pace as he and fellow liberal Rep. John Tierney of Massachusetts cross the Capitol grounds.

The pair lament the high prescription drug prices Americans without health insurance are forced to pay. To Miller, it's a political weapon to embarrass Republicans with ties to drug companies.

And it's a wrong that could be righted—if the Democrats were in the majority. "It sure would be fun if we could get this place back," he says.

Meet George Miller, ambivalent congressman.

On the one hand, he loves throwing political grenades across the aisle and watching Republicans squirm. On the other, he longs for days before the 1994 elections when Democrats ruled the House of Representatives.

Those were days when he wrote landmark legislation on water subsidies, nutritional aid for poor pregnant women, foster care and offshore oil drilling. These days, he tries to defeat Republican bills.

Miller, D-Martinez, was first elected to the House a quarter-century ago, at age 29. Today he is 54. Of the 435 House members, only 17 have been there longer.

He came to Washington with the Watergate class of 1974, one of 75 new Democrats elected to the House three months after President Nixon resigned. Only six remain in the House.

Although most of the players have changed, the game continues. And Miller, who played linebacker in school and belongs to the minority party in Congress, is once again playing defense.

"On offense, you've got control of the game, you know when the ball is going to be hiked, you know what the play is," he says. "On defense, you've got to try to anticipate, you've got to think about it. You've got to stop things from happening."

A mischievous smile spreads under his white mustache. "Sometimes," he says, "it's more fun."

Miller's time on the floor is up, but he won't stop talking.

Rep. William Goodling, R-Penn., chairman of the Education Committee, raps the gavel repeatedly. Finally, he slams it down with a thunderous bang that echoes through the cavernous hearing room in the Rayburn House Office Building.

"Oh, bang it again if it will make you feel better," Miller says.

"I'll bang it and I'll bang it on your head," Goodling snaps back, then threatens to have the sergeant at arms remove him.

This is what Miller calls "calculated chaos."

Later, he marches out of Rayburn House, across South Capitol Street, into the Longworth Building—bypassing the metal detectors as members of Congress are entitled to do—and into the elevator. All the time ranting about the Republicans.

He checks the elevator lights to see what floor he's on and realizes the man next to him is watching Miller complain to a reporter.

"Never mind us," Miller says with a smile. "I'm pontificating."

A BIG BARK

Miller is a top Democratic pontificator. With his booming voice, imposing physical presence and quick debating skills, he has become a liberal voice for, and within, the party.

"Nobody out-barks George when he's trying to make a point," says Leon Panetta, former congressman and former White House chief of staff.

Panetta knows Miller well. He served in Congress with him, lived in Miller's row house 2½ blocks from the Capitol for about eight years and played basketball with him in the House gym.

In some ways, Miller is the same on and off the court, Panetta says. "If he felt somebody hit him wrong, he'd tell him, he'd yell at him, and sometimes he'd stomp off, and everybody knew George was pissed." But, "stay out of his way for an hour and you'd be fine."

There was little doubt you'd want him on your team. "When he plants himself under the basket there aren't a hell of a lot of people who are going to go through him."

These days, the Democrats plant Miller on talk shows, at news conferences and on the House floor. He is one of about 15 House Democratic leaders who meet almost daily in a small windowless conference room in the Capitol to plot strategy.

Last month, when, in the wake of the Littleton, Colo., high school shooting, the Senate passed new gun laws, Miller insisted House Democrats push for the same without delay, despite warnings from some Democrats that there could be political fallout from the gun lobby.

When former Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., was facing accusations he used tax-exempt money for political purposes, Democrats sicced Miller on him, dispatching him to make the case on every national television show from Washington that was interested.

When Miller couldn't get the House to take up campaign finance reform, he used delaying tactics that forced Members to repeatedly drop what they were doing and rush to the House floor to vote on motions to adjourn. It was what the Los Angeles Times called "Miller's guerrilla war."

POLITICAL BLOOD

It's little wonder Miller thrives on politics. He was reared on it.

His father, George Miller, Jr., was a state senator who became chairman of the powerful Senate Finance Committee. Today, the bridge spanning the Carquinez Strait between Benicia and Martinez bears his name.

George Miller III was born in Richmond on May 17, 1945. He was one of four children, and the only boy. About five years later, the family moved to Martinez.

When he was still a baby, his father was first elected to the Legislature. The Miller household was as political as they come.

"When I was younger, it was race relations. We had people coming to our house to get counseling and encouragement from my father to get involved one way or the other, organizing to send people to the South, the Freedom Riders.

"When I was older, in college, it was the free speech movement, the war in Vietnam. Those were the debates that took place in our living room."

When he was in high school, his father would drive by the bus stop in the morning.

"He said, 'What's going on in school?' I said, 'Nothing.' 'Get in the car. Don't tell your mother.' And I'd go up and follow him around. Sit in on meetings in the governor's office, or sit on the floor in the state Legislature, run errands for him, and get to know people.

"And watch and listen and watch and listen."

A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Shortly after midnight on New Year's Day 1969, Miller's father had a heart attack and died. He was 54.

Looking back, Miller says, that time is a blur. He had just started law school in the fall and he and his wife—Cynthia, who was his sweetheart at Alhambra High School in Martinez—had two young boys.

"I don't think I really had a chance to mourn my father's death the way I would have liked to have," he says.

He was soon running in the special election to replace his dad. Though Miller was just 23, then-Assemblyman John Knox, D-Richmond, and Democratic Party leader Bert Coffey, friends of Miller's father, felt he was the best shot to keep Republicans from gaining a majority in the Senate, which at the time was evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans. He beat Supervisor Tom Coll of Concord and banker Fortney Stark of Danville in the Democratic primary. But then he had to face John Nejedly, who had been a district attorney for 11 years.

Miller was outmatched. "There was no record," Nejedly recalls. "The only thing that could be said was he was his father's son."

The voters agreed. Nejedly trounced him and served in the state Senate for the next 11 years.

Miller went to work in Sacramento as legislative assistant to then-Sen. George Moscone. While working in the Capitol, Miller completed law school.

OFF AND RUNNING

He says he would probably be practicing law today had Democratic Rep. Jerry Waldie not decided to run for governor in 1974.

"I had been to Washington once," Miller recalls. "I thought back east was Reno." But law school had taught him how much influence he could have in Washington. "There was a real sense you could bring about change."

Coffey, who had been his father's longtime political ally, conducted a poll and found the young Miller had a shot. With that, Miller was off and running.

"He was still young, but now he was experienced and ready," says Philip O'Connor, his campaign manager in 1974. "He had five years in Sacramento."

This time, the bigger battle was expected to be the primary, in which Miller faced a local labor leader and Concord City Councilman Dan Helix.

"His previous run against Nejedly helped him a lot," says Helix. This time, "he came over as someone who had studied the issues. He was articulate. He showed a good sense of humor. He was relaxed."

Miller won the primary and defeated Republican Gary Fernandez, Richmond's vice mayor, in the November general election by 56-44 percent.

It was the last time Miller received less than 60 percent in a congressional election. Blessed by reapportionments for the 1980s and 1990s that continued to leave him a heavily Democratic district, Miller has never had another tough election challenge.

Sanford Skaggs, the prominent Walnut Creek attorney who chaired Fernandez's campaign in 1974, says Miller could easily survive in a less Democratic district.

"I respect him a lot for his attitudes and honesty and devotion to public service," says Skaggs. "Even though I disagree on some of his major positions, I think his motives are pure. He could survive in a tougher district."

BANKING ON HIS NAME

The most valuable thing his father left him, Miller likes to say, is his good name.

He also left his son his political connections. The senator was not only one of the most influential members of the Legislature, he was also former chairman of the state Democratic Party and one of the early supporters of Rep. Phil Burton.

He supported Burton when he ran for Assembly in 1956. "Burton never forgot the kindness," writes Burton biographer John Jacobs. "Miller had helped legitimize his candidacy."

Burton went on to Congress, where he became one of the most influential liberals ever to serve in the House. When young Miller ran for Congress, Burton, a prolific fundraiser, helped the kid. Miller remembers seeing Burton work a crowd that year on his behalf at a political event for U.S. Sen. Alan Cranston in San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel.

"He was raising money, literally taking it right out of people's wallets," Miller recalls. "He was saying, 'What are you going to do for the kid?' He came to me and said, 'You need to raise money for George Miller.' I said, 'I am George Miller.' He said, 'Wait a minute,' and then he went on to the next guy."

When Miller arrived in Washington, Burton took him under his wings. "Phil was really his great mentor," Panetta recalls. "It was as close to a blood relationship as you can get."

Burton made sure he and Miller were on the same two committees, then called Interior, which handles environmental issues, and Education and the Workforce. Those are the same assignments Miller holds today, although Interior is now called Resources.

And Burton taught Miller the ropes. "First and foremost, he taught me the place isn't on the level," Miller says. "What you hear is not always what's being said and what you see is not always what's being done. You really have to increase your abilities to observe and dissect information."

Burton also taught Miller how to bridge the partisan gulf. Known for being loud and brash, Burton cribbed together bipartisan coalitions to pass some of the most significant park bills in the nation's history. He made sure his bills had something in there for everybody.

Where Burton doled out parkland as a way to reward supporters or punish opponents, Miller reaches across the aisle with fiscal enticements.

John Lawrence says Miller's approach has often been through economics. Lawrence went to work for Miller's campaign in 1974 while he was a UC-Berkeley doctoral student, followed him to Washington and has worked for him ever since.

"It's been as much how much it tears at your wallet as how much it tears at your heartstrings," Lawrence says. "From a fiscal standpoint, George has always been very attuned that these programs have to make economic sense."

It's a concept embraced by Rep. Dan Miller, R-Fla. The two Millers are not related and are far apart on most issues. But they are the lead sponsors of the bill to end sugar subsidies, which they call corporate welfare that stimulates overproduction of sugar, and pollution, in the Everglades.

When it comes to sugar subsidies, cheap mining of federal lands or building roads in national forests, Dan Miller says he and his East Bay colleague find common ground in their opposition.

"I'll come at it from a fiscal perspective, he'll come at it from an environmental perspective, but we agree."

STAYING POWER

The reality is that the Miller-Miller bill has almost no chance of passage in this Congress. But George Miller is used to that.

Most of his legislative accomplishments have come after years of persistence. "He's had a lot of staying power," says Lawrence. "That has served him well. That's what is largely responsible for his reputation as a legislator."

It also helped that he was in the majority party for his first 20 years in Congress. It was then that he won passage of some of his most significant legislation, including:

Poor pregnant and postpartum women and their infants receive free food and nutritional supplements.

Oil drilling rights on federal lands are now awarded by competitive bidding, replacing lotteries that gave the rights away for almost no fee.

The federal government shares revenue it receives from off-shore oil drilling with the affected state. In California, the money is earmarked for education.

Federal matching grants are available for local programs that aid victims of domestic abuse.

Parents who adopt foster children receive federal money for a youngster's care. Previously, funds were cut off when a foster child was adopted, leaving a disincentive for adoption that kept a child from being bounced from home to home.

WATER WARS

Miller's toughest and biggest legislative victories have been in his battle with California farmers over water. It culminated in 1992, when Congress passed legislation co-written by Miller and then-U.S. Sen. Bill Bradley, D-N.J.

The bill is Miller's "legacy," says one of its opponents, Dan Nelson, executive director of the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority.

"He is thought to be the father of that legislation. It has fundamentally changed the way we do business. Some of it good and needed and some of it, frankly, punitive or inequitable."

The Miller-Bradley bill overhauled the distribution of federal water in California.

Farmers lost the open-ended contracts for cheap water and now face tiered pricing that encourages conservation. For the first time, using water to restore fish life in San Francisco Bay and the Delta became a priority.

Many California farmers hate the bill, which dramatically drove up their water costs. And they blame Miller.

"He's got a long history of vilifying and terrorizing agriculture, which has given him a bigger-than-life place in the eyes of farmers," says Jason Peltier, manager of Central Valley Water Project Association.

Though Peltier has fought Miller for years, he admires the political skills the congressman displayed as he masterfully pushed through the bill.

The water reforms weren't left by themselves in the legislation, but packaged with dozens of major projects for 16 Western states. The lessons from Miller's mentor were being used.

"We needed the ornaments on the Christmas tree," Lawrence says. "We learned a great deal at Phil Burton's knee."

CLINTON CLASHING

Those were heady times for Miller. He had just ascended to chairman of the House Interior Committee, the post Burton had held until his death in 1983.

With Bill Clinton's defeat of President Bush in 1992, Miller was about to lead the House's environmental committee while his party controlled Congress and held the presidency.

Miller was even being mentioned as a possible interior secretary in the new Democratic administration. He took himself out of the running, however, saying he didn't want the post.

It's unlikely he would have fit in. The Clinton administration has been a disappointment to him on environmental issues.

"They get a little weak in the knees when the pressure gets turned up," Miller says.

Most recently, Miller was sharply critical of a Clinton administration decision to weaken the standards for labeling tuna "dolphin-safe." Miller, who fought for the original standards, says the latest move will increase the number of dolphin caught in tuna nets.

"You have to look at all of this on a continuum," he says. "The clock doesn't run out and you win or lose. Things ebb and flow in politics, and that's what makes it frustrating to some extent because it's never static."

A HAVEN IN MARTINEZ

Miller is also in continuous motion.

He usually rises Monday morning in Martinez, gets on a plane and heads for Washington. Barring a congressional trip to Brazil, Japan or the Northern Mariana Islands, come Thursday night or Friday, he returns to the district.

That's the way he's done it for the past 25 years. For a few years, his family lived with him in Washington, but his late hours during the week and the need to be back in the district on the weekend led to even less time together.

During that period, the family bought the Washington row house, where Miller still stays when he is in the capital.

The two-bedroom, two-story, pale green brick house with the chipped paint and over-

grown front yard in the middle of urban Washington is a striking contrast to Miller's suburban Martinez home nestled under towering trees.

Martinez is his sanctuary. "It really is the one place where I can just relax," he says, "because I know on Sunday night or Monday morning I have to get back on an airplane and go back to Washington."

The house is just down the road from the house he grew up in. His mother, now in her mid-80s, still lives nearby. The house is also where his two boys grew up.

They're both grown now. In 1996, the oldest, George Miller IV, tried to follow his father and grandfather by running for the Assembly. He lost in the Democratic primary to Contra Costa County Supervisor Tom Torlakson, whose campaign slogan was "His own record, his own name."

Once again, a young Miller was beaten because voters felt he had little to offer other than a family name.

THE FUTURE

Certainly, that can no longer be said of the congressman. At a time when many Democrats can only win by moving to the center, Miller clings to his liberal roots.

"He has never apologized for it," says Lawrence. "He has never taken to the term progressive."

Although he's been in Congress nearly 25 years, he's relatively young for a senior congressman. The 17 House members who have been there longer are all at least 60.

On the other hand, his mentors—his dad, Burton, Moscone and Coffey—are all dead. And Miller is the same age his father was when he suddenly died from a heart attack.

It all makes him think about his future. Sitting with his sleeves rolled up and his tie loose as he adds hot sauce to his enchilada at a restaurant half a block from his Washington home, he reflects on life in the capital.

"The loneliness factor, the empty house factor, it just wears on you," he says. "But with all the stress and the strain and the long hours, I still think it's worth it."

Miller still loves to be a political player. He ticks off the issues he had worked on that very day: child labor and sweatshops, sugar subsidies, the war in Kosovo, Sierra forests, Delta water, education standards.

"I've never taken the honor of being a member of Congress lightly," he says. "It is a privilege. It's what makes me get up in the morning and go to work, knowing in one fashion or another you're going to get to be a participant in our Democratic system. It sounds really corny, except it's really energizing."

The bottom line is that there's no sign Miller will retire any time soon. Indeed, he's making plans for the next phase of his congressional career.

Rep. William Clay, D-Mo., the ranking Democrat on the Education and the Workforce Committee, announced last month that this will be his last term. Miller is in line to succeed him, to lead the Democrat's education agenda in the House. And to become committee chairman if Democrats win back a majority. Miller has put out word he wants the job.

But to get it he will have to give up his ranking position on the Resources Committee. Central Valley water leaders are quietly gleeful.

"I'm excited for him to go pursue other areas," Peltier says. "It also excites me that if the Democrats take control of Congress again, he won't be breathing fire on us immediately."

Nelson concurs. "Someone will just have to warn all the education people just what they're in for. It will not be status quo."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM TURNER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 1999

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 50, I was absent because of my participation in a congressional delegation trip to Russia with members of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Research and Development for the purpose of discussing with the Russian Duma pending anti-missile defense Legislation. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on H.R. 819.

INDIAN COLONEL: TROOPS "DYING LIKE DOGS"

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 1999

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, all of us have been following with alarm the Indian attack on the Kashmiri freedom fighters at Kargil and Dras. India has been losing many of its troops in this desperate effort to crush the freedom movements within its borders. Casualties are mounting. The soldiers they sent to discharge this dirty war are demoralized. According to the Associated Press, an Indian colonel said that Indian troops "are dying like dogs." A corporal is quoted as saying "Even in war we don't have such senseless casualties."

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, most of these troops are Sikhs and other minorities sent to die for India's effort to suppress the freedom of all the minorities. These Sikh troops should not be fighting for India; they should be working to free their own country.

Now there has been a new deployment of troops in Punjab. A mass exodus from villages in Punjab is underway because the villagers are justifiably afraid that India's war against the freedom movements will spread to their homeland.

India reportedly also used chemical weapons in this conflict, despite being a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention. India has a record of escalating the situation with regard to weapons of mass destructions. India began the nuclear arms race in South Asia by conducting underground nuclear tests.

There are steps that we can take to make sure that this conflict does not spread and that all the peoples and nations of South Asia are allowed to live in freedom. We should impose strict sanctions on India, the aggressor in this conflict. We should stop providing American aid to India and we should support a free and fair vote on national self-determination not only in Kashmir, Punjab (Khalistan), Nagaland, and the other countries held by India.

I thank my friend Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh for bringing this situation to my attention, and I urge India to allow the basic human right of national self-determination to all the people of South Asia.

Mr. Speaker, I place the Associated Press article on the conflict in the RECORD.

"WE ARE DYING LIKE DOGS," SAID ONE [INDIAN ARMY] COLONEL

BLACK MOOD HOVERS OVER KASHMIR

(By Hema Shukla)

DRASS, KASHMIR—June 11, 1999 (AP): On the eve of talks aimed at ending a month of