

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 6, 2011—Congressman Wally Herger (R-CA) participated in the Franklin Center for Global Policy Exchange's second 2011 Benevolus Series policy discussion on Wednesday, April 6, 2011, in the U.S. Capitol Building.



Congressman Herger represents the second district of California and is currently serving his 13<sup>th</sup> term as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives. He is a senior member of the historic and powerful House Ways and Means Committee, sits on the Subcommittee on Trade and serves as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Health.

The Congressman began the session by complimenting the 87 new Republican members of the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress by saying they're some of the "happiest and smartest" people to work with. He continued by commenting on the current state of the nation, saying that while in some ways the United States was enjoying the "best of times" in terms of technological developments and the quality of life. However, he also believed that the nation faced very "challenging times" as it related to high unemployment, the spiraling debt and the economy.

The Congressman then shifted the discussion to his district, where the effects from the new health care law were causing anger and unintended consequences. He recalled how a small restaurant chain was eager to hire and expand, but decided against it because the new health care law would have required \$2,000 in additional costs per new employee. He said this was just one example of the new system, and is why he feels it is necessary to repeal the bill and replace it with reforms that lower costs without growing government. As Chairman of the Health Subcommittee, this is his top priority.

The conversation then switched to the FY 2010 budget and the potential government shutdown that was looming. Rep. Herger said while neither side was interested in a shutdown, he felt it was important to get significant budget savings in the negotiations. He credited Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) for doing a "very tough job," and said he was convinced the Speaker was fighting for "all the right reasons." "The American people have cut back," he said, "and they can't see why Washington isn't able to do the same thing."

Along the same lines, Mr. Herger was enthusiastic about the new long-term budget plan offered by Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI), Chairman of the House Budget Committee. He contrasted the current budget standoff over a few billion dollars with the Ryan plan that proposes to trim \$6.2 *trillion* from the budget over ten years, and said that level of deficit reduction was critical to preserve prosperity. He was confident the budget plan would pass the Republican-dominated House of Representatives, despite the politically-sensitive policies associated with savings from the highly popular entitlement programs of Medicare and Medicaid.

Shifting to the job market, Mr. Herger said that the Ways and Means Committee would focus on reform of the tax code in order to clear up the uncertainty facing employers. He also felt that expanding trade and exports of US products would benefit economic growth and job creation at home.

In closing, the Congressman believed that many of the current policy discussions about the budget and health care would simply set the stage for the 2012 presidential and congressional elections. Unlike in past elections, however, Mr. Herger predicted that the American people were better prepared for the tough policies that would have to be implemented to bring down long-term debt and restore economic growth in the nation. "The time is different now, and hopefully (the American people) are ready for it," he concluded.