

[Close Window](#)[Send To Printer](#)

The 11th District needs to re-elect Richard Pombo

Article Last Updated: 10/29/2006 05:47:28 AM PST

REP. RICHARD POMBO is facing the most difficult campaign of his political career. It has almost nothing to do with his representation of the people in the 11th Congressional District and almost everything to do with the power and clout he has acquired in the House of Representatives.

The Tri-Valley Herald recommends Pombo's re-election because he is the best candidate in this race to represent the people in his district.

Nearly four years ago, Pombo became chairman of the House Resources committee, which oversees a vast expanse of issues, ranging from the environment and wildlife to public lands, Native Americans and minerals and mining. As a conservative Republican from a San Joaquin ranching family, he set out to bring what he saw as common sense to such issues as the Endangered Species Act and national energy policies, among other issues.

Ever since, he has been a target of virtually every environmental organization in the country. And when accusations of ties to disgraced lobbyist Jack Abramoff surfaced, the attention to the race for Pombo's seat in Congress intensified dramatically. The Democratic National Committee sensed that what had once been a safe Republican district could now be in play as the party looked for ways to win back control of the House. Money that had been earmarked for other races suddenly was sent to California in an attempt to bolster Democratic challenger Jerry McNerney's campaign, already infused with donations from environmental groups.

We haven't agreed with everything Pombo has proposed or championed during his seven terms in Congress, but he is certainly the best person to represent the 11th District in this race. The campaign against him is being waged on a national level, with no regard to district issues, such as the ability to deliver federal funds for badly needed transportation projects. Losing Pombo's hard-earned clout in Congress would be a major setback for his constituents.

His opponents have tried to paint a picture of corruption around Pombo, but the evidence has been weak or completely lacking. The congressman has been able to defend himself against all charges, including the supposed link to Abramoff, in a calm, reasonable manner, making his critics appear shrill and overly partisan.

McNerney was not the choice of the Democratic Party in the primary. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee viewed him as too liberal for the district and initially refused to include him in its fundraising program. McNerney quickly moved toward the center of the political spectrum after the primary. He, in fact, changed answers to 55 questions on a Project Vote Smart online questionnaire.

The 11th District does not need a freshman congressman. We recommend that Richard Pombo be re-elected.