

## **House Republicans choose Californian to lead immigration committee**

San Jose Mercury News (California)

January 7, 2011 Friday

Copyright 2011 San Jose Mercury News All Rights Reserved

**Section:** NEWS

**Length:** 669 words

**Byline:** By Matt O'Brien Contra Costa Times

### **Body**

---

Signaling their approach to **immigration** reform this year will be hawkish but not rhetorically extreme, **House Republicans** have **chosen** a Southern California congressman to head the group of lawmakers that drafts and introduces **immigration** policy.

The solidly pro-enforcement Rep. Elton Gallegly, R-Simi Valley, was named Friday morning to **lead** the **immigration** subcommittee in the **House** of Representatives, which falls under the judiciary **committee**. **House** Judiciary Chairman Lamar Smith, R-Texas, surprised many when he **chose** Gallegly over outspoken Iowa **Republican** Steve King, who was widely considered to have the job. King will instead be vice chairman.

Groups that work to halt illegal **immigration** praised news of the duo's leadership, but liberal groups interpreted Gallegly's higher position as a snubbing of King's harsh tone.

"The answer to illegal **immigration** is fairly simple," Gallegly said in a news release Friday. "First, we must enforce our laws and secure the border. Second, we must remove the magnets that encourage illegal **immigration**. Finally, we must remove the benefits that make it easy for them to stay."

Gallegly said he would oppose any form of amnesty, and he pledged to quickly hold hearings to scrutinize the Obama administration's approach to work site enforcement and to expand the use of E-Verify, a program for employer screening of workers' **immigration** status.

Missing from Gallegly's statements Friday was any mention of revoking birthright citizenship for the children of illegal immigrants, a hot-button cause that has been a pet issue for King and other **immigration** hawks. King introduced a bill earlier in the week that would end automatic citizenship for children born in the United States to illegal immigrant parents.

"Steve King was dethroned because even the **House Republican** leadership must realize that comparing immigrants to livestock and suggesting we keep them out with an electric fence is offensive to Latino voters," said liberal **immigration** advocate Frank Sharry of America's Voice, referring to statements King has made in the past.

Sharry said Gallegly, while not as outspoken, has an equally tough approach to illegal **immigration**.

A former Simi Valley mayor and member of Congress since 1987, Gallegly hails from the conservative-leaning suburbs of Ventura County. He is based in a bedroom community known as the resting place of former President Ronald Reagan but the district also encompasses agriculturally rich regions of Ventura County and inland Santa Barbara County where illegal immigrants form a major part of the workforce.

Labor-intensive strawberries are the region's top cash crop, followed by celery, broccoli, raspberries, wine grapes and lemons, according to the California Farm Bureau.

## House Republicans choose Californian to lead immigration committee

"He's extremely supportive of agriculture in Ventura County and has been with us on every major issue, except immigration," said Tom Nassif, president of Irvine-based Western Growers, a farm industry group that has supported a path to citizenship for farmworkers living in the country illegally.

Nassif said he hoped Gallegly would keep an open mind on the issue.

More than a quarter of the residents in Gallegly's congressional district are Latinos, and the proportion of Latino voters in the district is about 15 percent. The district is mostly cut off from the Pacific Ocean, and the more liberal voters who live on its shore, by the ribbonlike coastal district of Rep. Lois Capps, D-Santa Barbara.

Gallegly takes over his post from San Jose Democrat Zoe Lofgren, who led the immigration subcommittee when Democrats ruled the House.

Aides said Gallegly has long fought illegal immigration, and a conservative magazine once named him one of the top 10 immigration hawks in Congress.

He was instrumental in the drafting of a 1996 immigration bill that made it easier to deport illegal immigrants, but was unsuccessful at the time in adding a provision that would have allowed states to exclude illegal immigrants from public education.

Contact Matt O'Brien at 925-977-8463.

## Classification

---

**Language:** ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** IMMIGRATION (92%); US REPUBLICAN PARTY (90%); ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS (90%); CITIZENSHIP (90%); POLITICAL PARTIES (89%); LEGISLATIVE BODIES (89%); LIBERALISM (89%); POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS (78%); LEGISLATION (78%); PUBLIC POLICY (78%); HISPANIC AMERICANS (73%); CONSERVATISM (73%); BORDER CONTROL (72%); LABOR FORCE (70%); AMNESTY (66%); VOTERS & VOTING (61%)

**Industry:** LIVESTOCK (73%)

**Person:** STEVE KING (89%); RONALD REAGAN (79%); ELTON GALLEGLY (79%); LAMAR SMITH (58%); BARACK OBAMA (58%)

**Geographic:** SANTA BARBARA, CA, USA (58%); CALIFORNIA, USA (92%); TEXAS, USA (79%); UNITED STATES (92%)

**Load-Date:** January 8, 2011