

More than 25 members of California's Congressional Delegation gathered for historic briefing at UC San Diego, Nov.5-7

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More than 25 members of California's Congressional Delegation gathered at the University of California, San Diego Nov. 5-7 for a historic briefing by UC experts on issues facing California's federal lawmakers.

The briefing, sponsored by the University of California in cooperation with the California Institute on Federal Research, the California Republican and Democratic Delegations, and Governor Pete Wilson, marked the first time in about a decade that a majority of the state's Congressional Delegation has assembled together.

A highlight of the briefing was a talk by Governor Pete Wilson on the importance of state and federal cooperation. Wilson urged the delegation to work in concert for the good of California by translating its overwhelming numerical advantage into real political clout. He also urged Congressional representatives to support California's two new senators in working toward and promoting the best interests of the state.

Wilson cited trade, protection of intellectual property rights, and the economic conversion of military installations in the state, as issues important to the delegation that will require cooperation between state and federal government.

He also called upon all Congressional representatives to support projects that will be good for California, even if they do not yield any immediate benefits to their district. As an example, he said, "There are nine UC campuses in different Congressional districts throughout the state. A high level of research funding for UC is going to be good for the entire state of California, not just for the individual nine districts. It's going to pay us all to have a sum that is greater than all the parts."

Briefing topics included Congress and the political system, California's role in the world economy, the federal budgetary process, and trends in international politics. Presentations were made by UCSD professors as well as faculty members from the other eight UC campuses. UCSD Chancellor Richard C. Atkinson also led a session on the University's role as a national resource.

The briefing was designed as training for new members of Congress. According to Democratic and Republican Congressional leaders, the session provided an excellent overview of the workings of government for first year federal lawmakers, as well as a timely update for veteran members of Congress.

Representative Don Edwards, dean of the Democratic delegation, said, "We learned a lot at the briefing and came away refreshed. It was the right event to have after a bruising campaign. It gave us a sense of harmony. It's going to be a new era of cooperation between Democrats and Republicans in this delegation."

Congressman Carlos Moorhead, dean of the Republican delegation, said, "Current economic and political conditions make it imperative that all of California's 52 members of the House of Representatives work together for the betterment of every resident in the state. The UC San Diego briefing was an important step for the delegation in achieving that goal."

The UC briefing was the first since 1982 because of a lack of turnover in the California Congressional Delegation. The 1993 delegation will include 16 new members and two new senators representing the state of California.

The agenda for the briefing was developed by a UC faculty advisory committee consisting of: Joel Aberbach, UCLA; Larry Berman, UC Davis; Samuel Kernell, director of UC San Diego's American Political Institutions Project; Jack Peltason, UC President and former UC Irvine Chancellor; Nelson Polsby, UC Berkeley; and Barbara Sinclair, UC Riverside.

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