

Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D/CA) - San Jose, California, August 4-5, 2000

Itinerary

10:00-10:25 a.m.	Eric Levy (boy scout) Discuss Constitution District office
10:30-11:00 a.m.	Cecile Williams House and senior issues District office
1:00-1:45 p.m.	Mark Quinn of the SBA SBA's Entrepreneur Center District office
2:00-2:30 p.m.	Carl Guardino Transportation issues District office
3:00-3:45 p.m.	Santa Clara Valley Water District District office
5:30-6:30 p.m.	Rosemary Cambra and full council of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe Petition for federal recognition San Jose, CA

stymie
↑
a "grounded politician"
"from people's mouth"

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- Got up at 5:00 a.m. in Truro, left Ptown at 7:30 a.m. and got into my hotel (Wyndham) at 7:00 p.m. Pacific time. Took light rail down to her office in AM.
- Sandra (Soto) showed me around the office and introduced me to each person. Zoe came in and I stayed throughout the day--went to lunch at "the best burrito place in SJ." She talked till I ran out of questions. And we ended up talking about politics generally.
- She is a strong partisan, a loyal Democrat, pro-Gore, hopes he doesn't choose Gephardt for VP because it might cost the Dems their chance at winning the House. Thought last night's acceptance speech by Bush was insincere. "I said to myself, wait a minute, what's going on here. He's talking like a Democrat. He even used our heroes, Harry Truman, Martin Luther King. Those guys never gave a damn about Martin Luther King."
- A constituent and she swapped anti-Bush comments. She cannot abide "the right wing Republicans," especially those that voted to impeach Clinton. "The NRA owns the Republican party in Congress--that's all there is to it. Tom Delay calls the shots, and he won't do anything. I'm sure Hastert gets his orders from Delay every morning. They have blocked everything." There's not a lot of room for argument with her, so I was pretty careful in trying to move her a little here and there. But not much movement!
- Said she likes the Judiciary Committee (and hopes to become a subcommittee chair), but says "I do get awfully tired of the right wingers. You can't work with them on anything. Some members I disagree with, but we can work together. (She mentioned Goodlatte esp). But Barr and Canady, you can't do anything with them."
- Anyway, I told her that I wanted to catch up on the district and on DC since it had been four years.
- I began with the district, asking her if Silicon Valley hadn't turned the district into "two worlds." She agreed that SV was new, but said "It's not inconsistent with the rest of the district, because they have done so much to help the poor by providing jobs and supporting education. High tech is easy to learn. I learned it in committee; and I've gotten to know all

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the hi tech CEO's. SV has been a terrific resource for the constituency--providing money for schools. My kids went to school with kids who were very poor, in multi-cultural schools, with kids whose parents had no education, and had no interest in technical fields. Now Cisco is hiring these poor kids. One of my daughter's friends spent 50 hours a week at a fast food place to get to college. Cisco found her, hired her and sent her to USC. Cisco has established a Networking Academy at the high schools--an after school program. Kids can learn how to do this even if they don't go to college. And they can make good money! These companies are hungry for personnel. They are going all over the country looking for people."

- "But we are in a dislocated time here in the valley. New people are coming in and displacing old people. Housing costs are going through the roof. The new people are buying up the homes of the old people at outrageous prices. It's a very high cost area."
- "The ethnic mix has changed with Asians increasing. Ballparking it, I'd say that the Asian population is about equal to the Latino population in the county. North San Jose has seen an influx of Chinese--mostly working in SV. A large number of Indians, both Sikhs and Hindu--also work in SV."
- "It's a gold rush in San Jose. The general counsel of Cisco, my friend, says 'we sell machines to all the miners!' It's the modern gold rush."
- Re media and impeachment, "I became a well known figure relative to where I'd been. It changed the way the local media handled me, because I became a local celebrity. It took a while for the media to catch on, however. The people understood at a gut level what was involved--the upsetting of an election--but the media didn't. It was interesting to watch the media learn."
- "It was fun to be on TV. At first, I shunned it. Then I realized I could do it. And I think I became effective at it. I had to learn not to be anxious and just do it."
- Said "I was on Meet The Press, way prematurely--at Easter time. I knew something from Watergate. I had worked on a document on the subject of finding a standard for impeachment."

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We prepared a 30 page document; and I referred to it on Meet The Press. I got a tremendous response. People said 'there's a law here.' But the Republicans were not interested in the document. Henry Hyde was not interested. I knew then that they were plotting to take him (Clinton) out."

- In 1974, she said, Democrats had not prepared any Articles of Impeachment and "I wrote the Cambodian bombing resolution." Her 1974 practice helped her in 1998.
- Knowing, she said, that the Republicans were determined "to take him out," "I thought we (her staff) needed a top notch lawyer who could bring order to the thing." She chose John Flannery. "He was experienced as counsel to several congressional committees. He had the intelligence and stature to do it. My husband and I interviewed him without him knowing it. When impeachment hit, he came on board." Flannery became an important player for her participation.
- For her, the issue was overturning the elected government. And the problem was to get the committee to focus on it. "It fell to us to put it together. I tried to work out something bipartisan. Remember the Boucher plan? My idea was to get the most conservative Democrat on the committee to sponsor it. Boucher was only interested in the Judiciary Committee because of telecommunications and he rarely came to meetings. I asked him to read my 30 page document. "Oh," he said, it totally made sense to him. He believed in the rule of law and there were the facts to put beside the law. But it died." It helped, she felt, as a compromising idea, but it disappeared.
- "I told them I'm not going to be the Chuck Wiggins of the Judiciary Committee. If you put together an argument I can support, I will. If you don't, I won't." She was a stickler for a legal argument, and that's the way she came across, I think.
- "In the beginning, there were ducks all over the place. There was a meeting in Gephardt's office about releasing the Starr report on the internet. I wasn't supposed to go, but Maxine dragged me along. She was wonderful. I said we shouldn't release it, we didn't know what was in it, who might be hurt, what security secrets might be in it. He didn't listen to me. I think 67 people voted vs. it on the floor, and a lot of others wished they had. I was right." (CF voted vs.

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releasing it, too.)

- "I learned how to put things together. And I raised my profile because I had been guided by the law and I behaved in a dignified manner. At first, I didn't speak to the press. Then I realized that the Republicans were going to try their case in the press. So I did. When I came home, people would mob me. They would hug me in the supermarkets, strangers would come up to me crying. A mother with two kids came up to me crying and the kids were crying. 'What will become of our country?' Once, I was standing in line at the supermarket checkout and all the women said to me, 'You go to the head of the line. We know you don't have time!' I went to the Dress Fair and the clerk said, 'can I talk to you!' Two of them took me outside, and they started to cry over impeachment. 'Save the country,' they said. They called impeachment 'a coup d'etat.' And it was."
- "It helped me in the House because they knew I had no leadership ambitions, that I was only interested in accomplishing something, that I'm not a goof ball. I won't think about leadership as long as my son is in high school. Leaders can't get home every weekend."
- Said she thought Hyde would operate in good faith. Said she and Watt tried to approach him "to bring the Constitution into play," but failed. "No negotiation." "Leadership controlled him."
- "The vote was upsetting and wrong. It frightened people to think we were undoing an election."
- "So I learned the mechanics and learned how to do it and raised my profile. I also found out something about myself-- how important the basic principles of our Constitution and our values are to me. I learned that they are more important than who has the job. I didn't know I felt that way until I was tested. I did not know at the time whether or not my decision would be the end of my political career. But I decided it didn't matter."
- "I wrote out a statement with the help of Flannery and my husband. But the thing I liked best was when I spoke, I did not know what I was going to say. I just went into the computer room and wrote out a statement that was exactly what

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I said. It was about politics. My brother listened as he was driving the car, and he told me that when he heard it, he pulled over to the side of the road and cried." It was pretty moving when she said that--and it effectively put an end to that subject!

- "Afterwards, it took me a long time before I could work with the Republicans again. Their behavior fell so far short of what was called for that I lost all respect for them."
- Then she went on to say that she had to work with some of them in order to get anything done as a minority member.
- I asked about David Dreier as co-sponsor of her HIB on immigration. I don't think he was a good choice--got his back up about something because he thought she was setting him up. "It was my bill and I asked him to join me. It was not the best choice."
- Works with Goodlatte on encryption. "It was his bill and he came to me and asked me to join him. I did. I disagree with him on a lot of things, but we worked well together on encryption. He had some ideas that I agreed to; I had some ideas that he agreed to. I gave him credit and he gave me credit. I don't agree with him much. But we worked well together and we got the bill passed."
- Chris Cannon: "He's a good guy. I don't agree with him on a lot of things, but we talk. I tell him that I hope that I will chair our subcommittee and he will be the ranking member. But if we don't, I hope he will be the chairman and I'll be the ranking member. We laugh a lot about that. We could work with each other."
- I asked him about other districts--Echco, Tauscher, Pelosi, Campbell. Were they like hers? Could she run in them? She turned it around. "I could never get elected in any of those districts. My family was not wealthy. All of those women came in at the top--with money. Ellen is wealthy, Nancy is wealthy, Anna was once wealthy. I came up scrappily through local government." Said she might be too conservative for San Francisco. And said she'd be right at home in Campbell's district.
- Re staying in touch in a changing district. "Since 1977, I

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have gone to the 4th of July parade and barbeque in my neighborhood. I never go to big city-wide festivities--only to my own neighborhood. This year I went; and I said 'who are these people?' They have all moved in during the last 18 months. And they are all Ph.D's, all hi tech, and all Anglo--and they are Democrats."

- *That's her typical way of pinning down a point--with a story. At one point, apropos of a general point, she said, "You know that something is true, but it helps to bring in reality." Reality for ZL is a story--and her story always has people in it--it is concrete, not abstract or allegorical. The July 4th story was apropos of staying in touch.
- She doesn't do a lot when she comes home because "when I get home, I'm beat." She doesn't have a heavy schedule. This schedule "is a recess-type schedule," she says. The first thing she said to me, "I'm fine, but I'm tired."
- I asked about the ironing board. Do you still set it up? "It's a struggle to connect with constituents in a way that's comfortable for them. When I set up the ironing board, it makes them nervous. They have to wait in line. They don't know what it's for. If you do a mailing, mostly it's constituent service. I tried telephoning, but they all come at once. When you make them wait, it seems disrespectful."
- "Staying connected is done better by shopping in the supermarket than by formal outreach. I like to shop in different grocery stores in different parts of the district. I can talk while I shop. And people will talk. I like that. It fits my comfort level. It drives my daughter crazy."
- "We wallow in our diversity. We love our diversity. We cherish it. But sometimes it slows things down when you're trying to get agreement." Apropos of what I don't recall.
- Took me to her new house after lunch--tennis court, pool, large spanish-style house. Kitchen and family room done over, living room great for entertaining and she wants to entertain--says that Sue Hammer, former mayor, "a great mayor" used to do it. Tile inside, beam, stucco, gardens, many statues, \$1.2 million old house--bought for \$40,000, sold for \$800,000. "I'll see if my son is still asleep." Calls him upstairs, no answer. She has a landscape architect--

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everything needs brushing up. Will cut down trees in front. A big house among big houses.

- *My point is, that's just like a woman in my experience. Men never show me their homes. All the women have--KT, STJ and ZL.
- Incidentally, we talked about women in Congress. "If you specialize in women's issues, you are not taken seriously." Not true of foreign affairs. She says there's a lot of unconscious sexism in that men treat women differently. One guy interprets what she says to another member and Zoe says to him "you sound like you are translating for an alien." Some blatant discrimination--Hyde calling her "the little lady from California." "I get dozens of emails and letters from all over the country expressing outrage at that comment. He was putting me down. I could have taken him up on it, but I was winning the argument and I did not want to create a distraction." In general, she does not see much of that.
- "Women do have a better understanding of some issues than men. There are women's issues. And very important that women work on those issues. But if that's all you do, you are not taken seriously in the institution. You aren't respected and you don't count. Encryption is not a women's issue.
- *Upon reflection, there is no reason to change my idea of Zoe as a deeply involved community person. It's just that in the four years since I was here, she has folded SV into her community. She speaks of personal ties with their CEO's, of going to them for help, of meeting with them. She throws their names around and drives along pointing out which company does what, i.e., Mentor does very high end graphics, started an elementary school to educate (Orchard Elementary School).
- Invitation list for visit by Gephardt and 40 members of Congress for a high tech seminar (i.e., will the CEO or the President come).
- She sees SV as a huge net asset to the community, especially Cisco. "I love Cisco. They are the most socially sensitive and socially helpful company in the world. They are wonderful citizens, better than any of the others--and the others are very good. They are now the biggest company in the country--bigger than Microsoft or GE. I should take you out to see

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Cisco--their buildings stretch down the valley so far as the eye can see." (Then she launched into a technical explanation of how hard it is to split up and move these high tech industries out of San Jose and into smaller towns. The high tech needs the infrastructure of parts, etc.; the low tech parts can be done in Indarascis more economically than in Modesto." (Apropos of housing developments going up in Modesto--two hours away from SV.)

- And so it goes--her conversation is full of SV. Four years ago it was not. On east side, she pointed out a huge area that HP is trying to restore.
- "I'm not a high tech person. But I'm very interested in technology. In high school, I took computer classes--they called it business machines then. After I got elected, I started learning about the high tech business. And I found it came easy to me. I enjoy it. And it's not just a high tech issue. It's a civil rights issue; it's a privacy issue. And those issues interest me deeply. You have to catch on fast because the industry is so volatile--up, down, up, down. If you miss one product revolution, you may be so far behind that you're out of business. Time is money for these companies. You have to be able to talk with them in their language, at their speed. I've learned to do that."
- How did you get interested in encryption?
- She told two stories. Mickey Kantor is Secretary of Commerce and White House tells her she can have him for a meeting of some kind with SV people for him to get acquainted with SV. She calls the CEO, Regis _____, whom she knows because his wife sat with her on Board of Supervisors. He says, don't have a fund-raiser, have a lunch. So she plans a lunch "in the special restaurant where these guys hang out and in their special dining room (library room)." Problem is: "how can I get them to come. They all want to know 'who's coming' and they won't come unless others are, too. So we used a little sleight of hand to get a maybe from one, turned it into a "yes" and they all fell in line. We had a luncheon that turned into a rousing discussion of encryption. Kantor saw how deeply these people felt about it, how absolutely crucial it was to their business. When I pitched in on their side, they realized that I knew the subject and we bonded."

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- "The next thing I did was to help them with their "No on 211" campaign. A lawyer whose business was starting frivolous lawsuits against technical companies and then settling for large sums was able to get a proposition on the ballot (211) making it easier to bring such lawsuits. He was already driving the SV people wild and it promised to get worse. So John Dorr, the premier venture capitalist of SV and billionaire, started raising money for a campaign to defeat it. I worked to help him. I got the local Democratic party to support the drive, calling on all my friends from the Board of Supervisors. And then I went to my friend _____, head of the building trades, with whom I had worked when I was on the Board, and he rounded up trade union support. In that fight, I got to know John Dorr; and he has been very friendly to me ever since. I can't raise \$40 million in two weeks like he does, but I can be of help to him from my position."
- Re her hard votes--she mentioned PNTR and estate tax.
- Re PNTR, "I knew what the right vote was. And I did it. But it made a lot of my union supporters unhappy. It was the right vote for my constituency."
- On the estate tax, "I voted for the Republican bill on the estate tax. It may have gone too far, but I voted for it to make a point. A group of us did, Anna Eshoo, Sam Farr, Tom Lantos. And that's not a Republican group. But we were voting our districts. At the end, everybody wanted to talk to us."
- "We told the Democratic leadership that if they came up with a milder alternative, we would support it. They didn't. So I voted for it. With housing values going up the way they are, working people in my district, who have worked all their lives, now have something to pass on to their children. And they want to be able to do it. This bill was not about Bill Gates. He is not worried about his estate tax. It is about working people in my district. My father doesn't understand this at all. He hung up on ^{me} ~~my~~ three times when I tried to explain! He's a union man. To him there are the rich managers and the poor working people, nothing in-between. He cannot understand that working people might have something to pass to their children. (She told story about girl next door, Valerie, her Dad's friend, who goes to work for high tech firm and gets stock options and buys a house. Dad doesn't understand what happened to her.) He couldn't understand that

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I voted my district. And I wasn't the only one."

- At the second town meeting the next day, a young woman (with baby beside her) in the poorest east side of SJ, said "I never thought I would every say this, that I'm in favor of repealing the estate tax. I never imagined I would have an estate. But I have a house, I have something to give my daughter here and I thank you for voting for it." Afterward, in the car, Zoe said "Did you hear what that young woman said? She's a yuppie! What a change. The best solution would be to raise the exemption."
- "The story that brought the whole thing home to me was the story of Sam Farr's gardener--a man who worked hard all his life, brought s small house and then watched the value of his house skyrocket. Working in the garden one day, he asked Sam to vote to repeal the estate tax. That says it all."
- *Different from last time: she's full of Silicon Valley this time.
- Is there a Republican party in San Jose? "Yes, there is a County Committee and they hold meetings." Do they ever elect anyone to anything? "In my district? No." In San Jose? "No."
- Are there any term limited officials eyeing your job? "I don't think so." She went through the list. One state senator is in mid-sixties, one long-term supervisor also in 60's. The state reps have just started. Re a woman who is doing a great job. "She may run for state senate. We all knew each other and we've known each other for a long time. We all get along well with each other--all except the Mayor." How old is he? "He's about 42 or 43. He could never beat me." Spoken with finality.
- Do you have an organization ready just in case? "No, I don't have an organization as such. But we do keep in touch with our volunteers on a regular basis. We have a barbeque every year in the summertime for our volunteers, as we've had as many as 2,000 people come to that. We've done it for 22 years now--Zoe Lofgren's Barbeque. That's the main thing we do to keep in touch with our volunteers."
- Re her HIB immigrant visa bill with Dreier. "Dreier was not

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a good choice. Latino Fairness was the number one priority for the Hispanic community and when I put that provision in, he got pushed out of shape. He thought it was the White House putting pressure on the Republicans. He called the Mercury and asked them to "put pressure on Zoe." But I won't back off. So there have been problems."

- I asked about the treatment she's gotten from the (San Jose) Mercury (news). She mentioned an editorial on the HIB, "a good editorial on encryption," a good editorial on her "Z's to A's" bill.
- "The Mercury's focus is and always has been local. Now they are trying to cut into the territory of the (SF) Chronicle. I think that's a big mistake. They already are replacing San Jose news stories with San Francisco stories, and they will lose readers here."
- She is not at war with the Mercury, but she is not friendly with it. It's just there, and not much of a factor in her life.
- At one point, she spoke of "the pervasiveness of immigration in the district." In the office, there is a specialist on immigration. (Delores, who has been with Zoe longer than anyone.) But Sandra said to me that "everyone has to handle some immigration staff because the case load is so huge." And Zoe, in her town meetings, called the INS "the worst, most messed up agency in the federal government."
- "There are three groups from whom I never got anything but trouble no matter what I did for them--and for whom I have no respect: the humane society, the gun nuts and the private pilots."
- At another point, she joked that "I went to Congress to escape animals, guns and planes, the humane society, the gun nuts and the recreational pilots. They will not leave you alone. You cannot please them."
- The first comment came driving away from the meeting and past the private plane general aviation airport. "It's all for recreation; it serves no useful purpose. These rich guys don't live anywhere near here and they have nothing but contempt for the people over whom they fly making so much

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noise."

- The citizens in this poor area listen to these planes all day, as we did during the town meeting--at the Hank Lopez center in what is the poorest part of her district. "This is the area where Cesar Chavez came and organized the farm workers--most of whom are now dead."
- When she rides around, she says such things as (in Chavez area) "I remember when these low income homes were built--almost overnight--to house poor farm workers," or "we put together a plan to build those houses."
- Again, we passed the intersection of King and Story and she said "this was the most crime-ridden, drug infested part of the city. It's a little better now, but it's still pretty bad."
- Re the private airport, "when I was on the Board of Supervisors, I worked as hard on that as anything--to get rid of that airport and put that land to a better use. I had the three votes to do it and one of the three went south on me and we lost." In the car and at the Mexican restaurant where Zoe, Sandra and I had a late (3:00) lunch of "super burritos," Zoe kept saying "I had three votes and I lost it. I couldn't hold Gonzalez. The Pilot's Association got to him. They are terrible people."
- As we drove to the third meeting, we drove through a Portugese area--which, as always, triggered a story. "This is the largest Portugese area in the county. That lovely church (she named it) is the center of their community life. When I was on the Board of Supervisors, CALTRANS wanted to put a huge railroad bridge over the creek, right where it would block out the view of the church. It was awful and the community was up in arms. I organized a little group all over the area; and we came up with an alternative route. That company is almost impossible to deal with, but I went to the President and asked him to look at our alternative. He said, "we've committed. It would be impossible." I said "just look at it." He did and they changed it--and it turned out that they saved money. The architect who designed the new plan came to me later, with tears in his eyes, and thanked me for giving him the chance to be creative. He said working out the new plan was the highlight of his life. Later, in retirement, he came and

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offered to walk precincts for me, and he did."

- It was just another story triggered by riding around the district. She had her fingers in everything--14 years on Board of Supervisors.
- When I said to her that I thought her immersion in the community stood her in great good stead when she answered the question from constituents about various issues. She said "Yes, I was deeply involved--and they knew that I was."
- Indeed, she is just as comfortable--if not more so--looking back than she is looking forward. Which is to say she has, to date, accomplished a lot more in San Jose than in Congress.
- But she does come across in town meetings as someone with a lot of ideas about what she'd like to do in Congress--IF the Dems take over--"and I think there's a very good change that we will."
- She keeps saying "I'm going to see if I can't help elect Democrats to Congress." She's pretty sure Campbell's seat will go Dem. She'll go to help Darlene Hoolay. Went to help Sanchez. "A member of Congress from some other area is a celebrity. Anna and I were celebrities in the Sanchez district."
- In her office, she has framed the front page of the Mercury announcing her primary victory in 1994. They described it as a surprise, saying that her own polls showed her 20 points down at one point and described her defeated opponent as "once the most powerful leader in the region." (McInerney)
- When I mentioned the sense of shock in the article, she laughed. "On election night, there was not one single reporter assigned to my headquarters. The Mercury sent one photographer to take a picture of the loser. When the returns started to show I was winning, he had to start writing copy for the paper." That's how sure they were she would lose.
- "I haven't done town meetings in a while. This is the first time I have ever done three on the same day. I've only done one at a time. This way, you have a reason to leave. You can say "I have another group waiting at Berrysea." (We went late to Berrysea because it was 3:00 and we had had no lunch--so we

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stopped.)

- Alphonse drove me to the hotel on Saturday. We figured the three town meeting crowds were 40, 30, 12--as one might expect on a bright sunny August Saturday--especially the afternoon one.
- After the first day's office events, I asked her which one was most important to her--and when she hesitated, I said, if you could only have done one, which would you have done? And she said "the older woman who needed housing. She had all sorts of problems, her operation, her mother, her six year wait and it looks like we have been able to help her--with her certificate. It was the most rewarding for me, to help a needy person. It was the right thing to do. She loves to talk, as you could see. And she would tell 100 people her story and how I helped her. So it was good policy and good politics. I would give up all the others before this one."
- She is pretty passionate about gun control. She mentioned it as one of her priorities in every (?) town meeting during her opening remarks. And when we talked one-on-one, her concern about it was as nearly unequivocal as anything she talked about. She said that it was her children's experience that made the difference in racheting up her concerns. Her kids went to public school (Horace Mann) and twice someone was shot near the school. "I took them to school one day and found yellow police tape all around the front door. We had to go through a side entrance. Someone had been shot and killed right in front of the school. It was the second killing near the school and I was frightened for the safety of my kids. That's when I fully realized what was really at stake in gun violence--the children. I think I learned far more about this issue as a mother than I ever had learned as a woman. And I expect that's true about a lot of other issues, too."
- Talking about conventions, she said she remembered the one in SF (1984) "because I had just learned I was pregnant with my son and I was so excited about that--not the convention. My husband had been a Hart delegate and that had blown up."
- On gun control, she tells everyone that "I'm working with Carolyn McCarthy on a sensible gun control bill." She likes that company and, in private, she noted that Carolyn had a more powerful incentive than she did because of her husband's

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death. But she indicated, too, that she felt just about as strongly on the issue and, again, emphasized children. In the town meeting, she repeatedly said that "I'm not against people having guns for hunting or sportsman. In the northern hills of my district, you'd better have a shotgun because there are wild boars and rattlesnakes there. But..."

- Re McCarthy tie up, she seems to want "cover" when she talks about what she's doing. Her estate tax vote is an example--spoke of Farr, Eshoo, Lantos and said that none of them are conservatives. Something the same on PNTR.
- It's as if she has a strong ideological bent and needs some way of explaining when she doesn't vote according to that ideology. I'm not sure how much of an independent streak she has. That is not the way she describes herself, i.e., "I think for myself." She doesn't want to get too far out front on anything.
- In her town meetings, she often maintained that she was in the minority and, therefore, couldn't expect to have her legislation passed. She sometimes described the partisan-based organization as not sensible but "that's the way it is." Spoke hopefully that "if the Democrats take back this Congress, I'll be a subcommittee chairman." She did talk about working with others and often said that if she became a chairman, she would work across the aisle "with the good Republicans," not those who are "way out on the right wing."
- She said that to me privately when I said, "If you win, I hope that you don't take vengeance on the Republicans," and she said "that would be a disaster. The Republicans did it to us, but the Democrats had done it to them, so I don't blame them. But I've given some thought to how we should treat the minority. And I'd start by giving them more space. Right now, we have only one small room to work in and it's impossible."
- In her opening remarks at town meetings, she also said how great it was to leave the "idiocy of Washington for the normalcy of San Jose." Or "to leave the crazy people of Washington for the normal people." She apologizes for not always been available. "I travel 5,000 miles every weekend and sometimes when I get home, I'm shot." Also says "I'm only human and I know I make mistakes. I hope you will tell me

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when I do. And I'll keep trying to do the best I can." It's a nice, low key, pleasant introduction, but serious. And she comes across as serious, knowledgeable, dedicated and low key. Nothing frivolous or flashy or light hearted. She is empathetic and seems especially quick on the trigger to see and abhor injustice--or what she and her listeners together see as injustice. She seemed in all three meetings to be on the same wave length with almost every person and every audience. In every meeting, several people thanked her for coming.

- One exception was for the anti-immigrant guy at Hank Lopez Center of whom she said as soon as we got in the car. "There is always someone who, having come to America and succeeded here, wants to keep everyone else out." That was her first reaction to the meeting; the pro-estate tax "yuppie" was her next one. The only other possible exception was a guy who complained about fire fighters and their training in a little incoherent question
- "I love Karen Thurman. We don't always agree on everything, but she has a tough district. We'll be sitting in her office and she'll pick up the phone and talk to a constituent. She's so direct and so plain. What you see is what you get. I love her."
- An interesting habit of hers is that whenever she talks about someone with whom she has any disagreement on the issues--always with a Republican, sometimes (as with KT) with a Democrat--she feels compelled to acknowledge their differences. "I don't agree with her on everything, but..." "We differ among issues, but..." It's as if she sees her colleagues first in terms of their disagreements on the issues and needs to get that out of the way before she simply says "I worked with X on such and such." Of "I like so and so." Why does she go through this kind of table-setting exercise in demarcation? Who cares? Does she think people expect some kind of partisan or ideological consistency or patterning from her? It's almost apologetic in some sense. Or may be it's just a "tic" by now and meaningless. But it's very noticeable and quite idiosyncratic.
- One of her appointments was with the staff director of the Santa Clara Manufacturers Assoc., Ron Guardino. Assessing his visit, mostly concerned with the BART extension which business

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wants and she opposes (privately). "He just wanted to find out whether I was going to go public with my opposition. I told him that I would not. I have other fish to fry. All the rest of our conversation was window dressing. Sometimes in politics you have to understand the message behind the message..."

- Later, she went through his career. Assistant to the top staffer at the association, ran for some office (Board of Supervisors, I think) and was "clobbered." Went back as top staffer at the business group. As for his judgment about business, she squished him. "He's just a staff guy. He doesn't know anything about business trends. He doesn't talk business with his members. I talk with Tom Chambers (CEO of Cisco) ten times more than he does. I'll bet he doesn't even know Chambers."
- About the meeting with the Water Department people, "I like the Water people. They have a tough job." We talked some about the water supply and the flooding problems. SJ is a valley, almost a flood plain. It is ribboned with creeks (see map) that overflow. In rainy season, water is on top of the ground. They get water from the aquifers underneath, from reservoirs formed by creeks and "we import a lot of our water from the San Luis project." Flooding is a big issue for the area.
- Head of agency is a woman. A big change, says ZL. Re meeting, "I applaud what they are doing. They might not have thought of the two questions I raised--about insurance and the seniors. But those were not crucial."
- Woman in dire straights comes in, says, "I'm glad to meet you, I've voted for you many times." They both blast Bush's speech. Woman says "It was a good Democratic speech and he's a hypocrite. "I'm just hanging on. (Put fingers together), I'm that close to being homeless. I've worked all my life. My social security doesn't kick in for six months. I've just lost my job. I'm taking care of my mother. She's ok, but she can't get around. I found an apartment--the rent is \$750 and I'll lose it because I won't be able to pay in two months. I've been on the housing list for eight years and I'm near the top for a Section 8 certificate. The Director won't listen to me--and I worked in the apartment business all my life. You can see the scar on my neck from my heart surgery. I'm not

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complaining, but I need a little help. We have to take care of our seniors. I'm that close (fingers apart again). If there is anything you could do." (Zoe talks to Sandra--"can we get her the certificate.") "There are thousands of people in this same situation, but we'll see what we can do." Woman says, "there are 149 units in my building. I'd like to start a voter registration drive if I stay, get people together."

- Re impeachment, she said that when she questioned Starr, "I was the only person who got him flustered. I knew some things that he didn't think anyone knew and he started looking around, shifting his papers. I'll tell you sometime."
- "When and if we take over the House, I'm going to propose that we open up all the papers, all the documents from the investigation. The public should know what he did." A little mysterious--but it must have had something to do with 1974.~~9~~
- Her first office visit was a little 12 year old boy scout, all dressed up with uniform and merit badge sash, and his mother. He was virtually tongue tied, but Mom said he needed to meet with an elected official and ask questions. She asked him question. And he would look at his book and his mother would coach him. Anyway, she went through each of the Bill of Rights explaining very slowly and simply what each one meant. Then she told him about her "Z's to A's" legislation. It suggested that school should begin earlier for little kids since they wake up earlier and late for older kids since they find it hard to get up in the morning. "As it is now, the school schedule is backwards. Scientists have found out that it would work better the other way around so I have proposed that suggestion be included in the regulation." (Check the vehicle here.)
- She gave the kid a half-hour. When it was over, she thanked the mother. "Thank you for all you have done for us." And said to me, "she is a great person. She has been with us from the very beginning." She did it for the mother. "He was cute, but I'm sure it meant more to his mother."
- How do you decided to intervene locally and when not to. "It's a very compact district except for the part down south. I know everything that's going on and I've been involved in most of it. It's fun and I care. Sometimes people pull me back in. And sometimes when things don't seem to function, I

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get people together to make things work. With the Gear Up program, the San Jose Central School District was totally dysfunctional and couldn't act. So we got together the east side schools with San Jose State in the lead. It's a university, public school, non-profit partnership. We didn't have a non profit, so I created and organized a non-profit! We have worked together very hard on that application."

- She only explained it during meeting #3. And I thought of Chaka! Here was his idea being realized. She's into everything. My original question was a good one, but silly in her case! Although it was triggered by her decision not to go public with her BART opposition.
- She has an opponent this time--spending zero money. Old guy who wants to be on committees.
- She told funny story about an adventure on the Board of Supervisors. Some important judge (Avakian) wanted them to speed up the building of the new county jail. He ordered them to build 100 cells in 30 days and in order to force them to do it, he threatened to throw the whole five-person board into jail for contempt of court. The supervisors looked up the law and found out he had the authority to do that! So Zoe and Mavis (her long time aide and political person) went to Sacramento and talked to the people they knew--Speaker of the House, Senate leader--about passing a bill making it illegal for a judge to throw the supervisors in jail. "We got it passed through the House at 12:00, through the Senate at 3:00 and the governor signed it at 5:00. We got a bill passed in one day! Avakian was furious. And we built the jail in a reasonable time."
- I can't put this all together, but it seems as though everywhere we went, someone wanted her body--to sit on a board, host a meeting, appear somewhere, or get the president to come--as with the SBA center opening.
- An interesting meeting at end of first day with the Muwekma Indian tribe. She has been working for them for years. Their recognition as an aboriginal Indian tribe was withdrawn some years ago and they are trying to get it back. When they do get "recognized," they will have a chance to go into some economic venture. Zoe urged them not to go into "gaming," but they can taste it. We had a tribal council meeting and a

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great dinner in their very modern headquarters.

- Alan _____ the SJ State archeologist who has helped them, spoke movingly about the status of Native Americans. "Zoe, you are the rock on which our future will be built." The agreement was that they would counsel with one another and as Zoe kept saying, "the decision is yours." She will try to develop alternatives for them to consider, using her high tech contacts. She wants economic development that will lay a long term foundation and send kids to school. They feel they've paid a heavy price already, but will listen. Her argument is that gaming has terrible consequences for people around in the community--Vietnamese are inveterate gamblers and she tells story of middle class Vietnamese man who lost everything and committed suicide. The issue was not joined. They thank her over and over, she is the one who got the recognition going through legislation (?) with the BIA, and in the courts. The meeting was to celebrate a favorable court ruling. But even that projects a three year wait and they are trying to get it to one year.
- Zoe keeps saying "No matter what you decide, I will stand by you and push your case in every way I can because it is a matter of justice. The reason I took up the tribe's case in the beginning and have argued it ever since, and will continue to argue it is because it is a basic matter of justice--a matter of civil rights." To the tribe, it is also a religious matter.
- They are immensely deferential and grateful to her and at the same time they cannot wait to gain their place on a level playing field. And their sense of being wronged is deep and historic.
- Had it not been for the tracing of lineages by the archaeologist, they would be nowhere, says Zoe.
- ZL keeps in touch with politicians she has worked with in the past--had lunch with a man (Carl _____) yesterday who had been chairman of Alameda County Board of Supervisors when she was chairman of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors.
- *Her networks are very personal. But there was an interesting coolness to her relationship with me. She took me everywhere with her and talked openly. We ate burritos together and

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tamales together. But when, at the end of her last meeting, we said goodbye (a staffer was going to take me back to the hotel), she put out her hand and said "Goodbye Professor." I thanked her and I guess she nodded. But that was it. Not "Dick." Not "I enjoyed it." Nothing. She was tired, I'm sure, after three consecutive town meetings. But for an obviously super people person, it was very correct. She never did call me by name. Always, "we have a professor with us today. He's writing a book. I hope it's all right if he sits in." Several times I mentioned my family in an obvious context--usually humorously. But not once did she ask me anything about me, my work or my family. She talks about "my husband" a lot--never "John." She is very professional, that's for sure. But her openness in our talks and meals is in sharp contrast with her correctness in every other context. Strange.

- I have no idea whether she thinks I "agree" with her or "like" her or not and may be that is what accounts for her correctness. She can see me as a student and she likes to teach me. But she can't make me out on the agree/disagree, like/dislike dimensions and so she stays aloof in a personal sense. She's a battler and she bonds with those who battle on her side. Maybe since I deal with Republicans, she figures she'll keep her distance. She does seem to trust me. Only once she said, "don't put this in your book." It was some personal comment about someone she opposed somewhere--nothing I can or would remember.
- There is a lot of like/dislike in her comments about people. "I like Carl." "I love Karen." "I like the Water Department people." And there's a lot of agree/disagree with people. [She'd be great on these poll questions.]
- *Her connections now are full of Silicon Valley. They were not in 1994. That's the big change. Question: Do I need another trip to see SV high tech relationships? And if not, can I do the job I need to do?
- First question in first town meeting: "I have a question about the Patent Office." Hello SV! I told ZL later, "I've sat in on dozens of town meetings in my day and that's the first time I ever heard a question about the Patent Office!"
- This is the first time I've tried three town meetings in one

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day. It's been quite a while since I've done any. But usually I do them one at a time. It's nice to be able to say that I have to leave now, because I have another group waiting."

- In her first meeting, she mentioned her interest in encryption. Afterwards, she said to me, "You couldn't see this, but when I mentioned encryption, I got some big thumbs up from people in the back row." Welcome to SV!
- A story I heard her tell more than once--a young Vietnamese girl came here when she was a baby. She lived here all her life, was Valedictorian of her high school class, was admitted to UCLA. But then she was not eligible for scholarship wholly because she was not a citizen. Now she's a waitress. "What a waste. What a dumb law." *A lot of outrage at discrimination A law topic with her*
- "I taught immigration law at Santa Clara Law School I know something about immigration law."
- "The immigration service is a mess."
- She said, at some point, that Congress passed a law to make it easier for foreign kids adopted by American parents to become citizens. But I don't know what it was.
- It's important to note, with respect to changes in the community, that she grew up with the changes, understands them and finds it easy to cope with them. Or at least natural to cope.
- Gear Up, third meeting.
- San Jose was "a sleepy little town in farm country; it's motto was "The valley of heart's content." "The last of the canneries closed a couple of years ago." Lots of towns to farms.
- Symbolic of district, there are clocks on the wall of her conference room--Viet Nam, India, Greenwich, San Jose and DC.
- Meeting #1 (30 people)
- Lots of complaints about airport and air pollution, carfew (some traffic).

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- Pan. Canal.
- National health care?
- Aids, drug funding drops when they go to college.
- Kids who live here and can't become citizens--especially ones that came here when they were young. "Undocumented children." SV needs people--these kids can't take those jobs.
- Argue about federal fire protection.
- Debt--pay down the deficit.
- We planted trees--great community, but jets are having big negative effects--can't hold picnic in back yard, young kids scared of noise. Got many questions, mostly noise pollution, also the Bart expansion.
- She came out vs. Bart, called plan "outrageous!" That's a very district-specific issue.
- Very articulate audience.
- "May be we could have a partnership with you" on Bart stuff.
- vs. Star Wars project-ADM is key treaty, "betrayed by Dem party."
- She voted vs. Def App. because of Star Wars.
- Campaign spending.
- Guns.
- Gore/Clinton ticket.
- Your energies and those of staff.
- She mentions guns, encryption and Gear Up.
- Sad story re a kid. Continuation school--people tell kid he won't go anywhere--no justice for kid--wants to be shot.
- "We want to inspire children; belittling them is not they way

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to inspire them."

- School of the Americas. Shades of Mac Collins' district.

Meeting #2

- Starts with major talk on medicare, prescriptions.
- Money for fixing up my house?
- Bart, "what's in it for us?" She says that she opposes it.
- HIB, engineer--I don't believe there's a technical shortage. People from other counties are "crowding out"--finishing school for foreign engineers.
- 40% of new starts are done by people from other countries.
- FAA--general aviation poor school district here want a high tech campus instead of airport--would increase schools--can we tax pilots? FAA is opposing the community center and library! How to fight the pilots, FAA and land use concession. She talks about her experience on
- Help for physical and mental hardship cases in school, has a grandchild.
- Airport carry on at all times of night--no enforcement of limits.
- Has sex education from school.
- Senior citizens generally want things to be done and can't get anything done. "Tired of city saying we need a golf course. What are we getting over here... we want cross walks and stop signs. We want something done. It's the overall position of the thing... why doesn't the mayor help the poor people."
- "We got a stop sign put in."
- She asks them to get together.
- She wants to get a WWII memorial. She's pushing it--an over price postage stamp!!

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- Social security not being safe--"you hear about that every day." Complaints and bickering.
- Rules.
- Guy stands up and praises her for her work with kids in danger and she mentions her trip to the county jail (on tape).
- "No politics--free zone--every issue has to be a wedge issue and it drives me crazy."
- "It's not the rules. It's the culture."

3rd Meeting

- Edwards story in Berrysea, "He came out here, saw thousands of new homes and he asked "what is this place?" We told him, "This is your district."
- She thinks it's more Asian here.
- Solid middle class area.
- With each meeting, her two important issues are different. Here it's HMO and prescriptions. In last one, it was Medicare and gun control.
- First, drug offenders and treatment vs. incarceration. She got a drug court in.
- A doctor: more insurance for emotional disturbance, addiction--parity.
- Health care--going to close downtown hospital--east side has only one hospital. Keep the one hospital open. Seismic standards--can't be met, a controversial hospital. The man has 65 organizations in coalition.
- Tax relief, pro-marriage penalty, she opposes the one that passed.
- Homeless, homes are being built for upper class and lowest class are being displaced by business. Section 8 not good enough.

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- Housing: she's head of a housing coalition at home to get a trust fund, revolving from construction and first time home buyers. Fannie Mae money for SJ.
- Increased militarization in USA to fight drug war. Phony-Columbia vs. Star Wars and nuclear war posture.
- Drugs in person-partnerships can be bad (Bart) what say?
- Teacher: juvenile had 2 or 3 kids, for drugs, bet relief.
- Education: what's happening?
- Gear Up, "That's I'm working here and as you can see, I'm very excited about it."
- Energy: new energy center "worst solution I could conceive of," "a real disaster"--discussion of fusion technology.
- Dem party thing, Gray Davis is like Pete Wilson until two years ago, no meeting of CA delegation.
- Re matter of boy scout, "she's a wonderful person who has been with me from the beginning."
- Re Cisco, "When I was elected, not so many years ago, they were a small company in Mountain View. Now they have the biggest capitalization in the world and they are the biggest employer in my district."
- She credits the former mayor, "Susan Hammer did it. She was the best mayor we ever had.
- Re the SBA people, they need a big pitch in describing their new center that they wanted to connect with "ethnic small businesses." Just a flavor of the district. They want ZL to get Clinton for them.

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