

April 22, 2007: Honoring the Life of the Honorable Juanita Miller-McDonald

The Honorable Loretta Sanchez

EXPRESSING SORROW OF THE HOUSE AT THE DEATH OF THE HONORABLE JUANITA MILLENDER-MCDONALD, MEMBER OF CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

April 23, 2007

Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from California.

Juanita Millender-McDonald was my friend. I used to love coming into the Chamber and sitting down next to her and asking, "What's up, what's going on," because Juanita knew. She knew what was going on in the Congress. She was the mayor of Congress, if you will, being the chairwoman of the House Administration Committee. And Juanita knew what was going on back in California.

When I first decided to run for Congress and nobody knew, Juanita called me up and said, "I'm stuck on the freeway, but I'm coming down to walk precincts with you. So let's hope the sun stays up and we get to go and walk together." And we did, and that is how I met Juanita Millender-McDonald.

When I first came to the Congress, and coming as a young woman which, quite frankly, 12 years ago there weren't a lot of us, it was always very difficult and hard to be accepted. It is always hard to find your way in the Congress. But Juanita was right there. She was like a touchstone. She was somebody that I could talk to and tell her my frustrations or the happy points here. She really is what I would call a friend, and to many of us here she was a friend. She is a friend back in her district.

I wish the people of the United States really understood the work that Juanita did. The Alameda Corridor was her dream. It was her project. This was the project to move goods that come to this country from the port across and through L.A. and out into the rest of the United States. When you think of the fact that 50 percent of everything that comes into the United States comes through the ports that were right there at Juanita's side, you would understand how important it was to each and every American. You see, if that cargo didn't leave L.A., if you were an auto worker in Tennessee, building a car, and you were waiting for inventory just in time, it wouldn't get there in time if it hadn't been for Juanita. And last year on the very last day of the 109th Congress, we passed the Safe Port Act. That really was Juanita's legislation.

She will be remembered for a long time in this country and in this Congress. Juanita, and to her family, I love her