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Grace Napolitano

Grace Napolitano is the Democratic congresswoman from California’s 32nd congressional district. The district is located in the southern portion of California and encompasses a large portion of Los Angeles County. The county is a Democratic stronghold, which gives Representative Grace Napolitano a relatively secure career in congress serving district 32. She has served as the district representative for the past nine years, often winning her elections by about 30% (Ballotpedia 2-5).

California’s 32nd district is unique in its demographics. The district is 52.6% White, 16.3% Asian, and 2.7% Black, with a large Hispanic population in the district of 61.9% (Ballotpedia 1). The district has relatively poor education completion, only a 73.2% high school graduation rate, and a 19.7% college graduation rate (Ballotpedia 1). This is compared to the US national average with an 85% high school graduation rate, and college graduation rate of 62% (NCES 1). Despite the lower education standard, households are able to thrive because of the economic powerhouse of Los Angeles. With the immense job opportunities Los Angeles provides, the average household income is just over $70,000 annually (Ballotpedia 1).

Los Angeles is a major economic hub, serving as the location of multiple major industries. Manufacturing is the largest industry, employing over 500,000 people in Los Angeles County (LA Econ 1). Major industries within manufacturing are automobiles, general machinery, apparel, and electronics (LA Econ 1). The city is second only to Detroit for the highest production of automobiles in the United States (LA Econ 1). Another transportation-focused industry is the aeronautics and space industry, which often finds a home in Los Angeles. Dozens of research-based companies like SpaceX, Boeing, and Rocket lab often build their headquarters in and around the city (Schroer 1-6). Los Angeles County also derives revenue through tourism, which brings in nearly 2 billion dollars annually (Erase 2).

Congresswoman Grace Napolitano serves in the Natural Resources Committee and the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. In her committees, she focuses on addressing the problems her voters directly face. A major problem facing the Los Angeles community that Representative Napolitano focuses on is stormwater pollution. As storms roll in, the poor drainage systems create frequent flooding in parts of Los Angeles Country. These floods collect pollution, trash, cigarette butts, animal waste, and more, and drain these toxins into local bodies of water (Erase 1). A 2001 study estimated that every month residents drop over 900,000 cigarette butts, litter over 800,000 times, and allow trash to blow out of bins 800,000 times (Erase 1). With so much waste polluting the Los Angeles streets, it is no wonder why creating safe drainage and treatment plants for stormwater is necessary to preserve the beaches, rivers, lakes, and harbor, which all bring roughly 1.8 billion tourists to LA annually (Erase 2). Representative Napolitano addressed this issue in the Natural Resources Committee. Grace Napolitano coauthored H.R. 2355 and H.R. 2510, which promoted: conservation, water recycling, desalination, and sound groundwater management and storage (Water 1). Congresswoman Napolitano is proud of her legislation called “CALFED,” which is a matter management plan designed for Southern California and the fragile ecosystem of the Bay-Delta. In the future, Representative Napolitano wants to continue to peruse advancing technology to preserve the ecosystem and ports, which bring so much life and prosperity to her district (Committees 1).

Los Angeles, being one of the most known and traveled to cities in the United States, has a dense population and congested roads. In the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Representative Napolitano addressed the infrastructure problems of her district, “which lacks mass transit and has the most congested and underserved transportation system in the country” (Napolitano 1). As the most senior member, she advocates for freight and passenger railways, which would lower traffic, decrease the need for parking, and make roads safer for pedestrians. She saw major success through H.R. 22, an infrastructure bill that provided $26 billion to California, $450 million of which to her district (Transportation 1). These funds were allocated to general transportation, “benefiting Foothill Transit, LA Metro, and Metrolink” (Transportation 1). Congresswoman Napolitano is proud her infrastructure policies represent California’s 32nd district’s Hispanic population, as they not only often build these roads but are more likely mass transit (Transportation 1).

Congresswomen Napolitano continuously advocates for solutions to the unique challenges her district and city face. Even if one disagree with her policies, everyone can admire her dedication and commitment to her constituents. Representative Napolitano’s effects on environmental and transportation infrastructure and policy will continue to benefit California’s 32nd Congressional District and the Los Angeles community for generations.

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