

## Endorsement: Hard-working Jim Costa deserves re-election

Jim Costa is considered a hard-working legislator. He works hard in Washington representing California's 16th Congressional District, deeply involved in some of our most important issues – water security, agriculture, transportation and clean air. He works hard in the district, helping us keep air service to Merced County, among other issues. He works hard for constituents, or so we've been told.

Costa is also a formidable campaigner. That, and the power of incumbency, explains why his war chest dwarfs that of his opponent, Burrell dairy farmer Johnny Tacherra. It also explains why Costa is endorsed by so many people who might otherwise be inclined to endorse a Republican farmer – Western United Dairymen, Dairy Farmers of America and even the profoundly conservative U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

That Costa shows up at so many meetings, handles so many constituent requests and isn't just "going through the motions" is all the more impressive considering that Democrats have a huge registration advantage. He doesn't have to work so hard – he just does. So, unless you vote by reflex – any Republican over any Democrat – the choice is clear: Costa.

The Fresno resident first arrived in Congress in 2004 but didn't begin to represent Merced County until district lines were redrawn in 2013.

Tacherra criticizes Costa's support for the Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare). Like many strident Republicans, Tacherra wants to junk the ACA but offers no alternatives. Whatever the problems associated with Obamacare – and there are several – Democrats should be at the forefront of offering solutions, not blind criticism. That's especially true of Democrats from districts where roughly 25 percent of residents benefit from better access to treatment, medication and care.

We sometimes wonder about Costa's ability to walk that very fine line between the water needs of the Fresno region and those of Merced County. He has frequently mentioned his importance to the delicate – and opaque – negotiations between Senate Democrats and House Republicans over finding more water for California farmers. We remain concerned that the only water to be found is in the San Joaquin River tributaries – the Merced, Tuolumne and Stanislaus rivers. If that water is redirected south, it cannot be used here.

On the other hand, we applaud Costa's efforts to facilitate high-speed rail. He has been called the "godfather" of the project and helped write the California initiative that funded it. While we remain skeptical of ridership projections, costs and other aspects, we believe in the bullet train's job-creating potential – and we need the jobs.

Finally, we appreciate Costa's support for creating a medical school at UC Merced. Our entire region is desperate for more doctors and better health care outcomes.

Yes, Costa will be a member of the minority party, but he's earned a return trip to Congress – even if you have to ignore that "D" next to his name.

The Sun-Star's Endorsements

Governor: Jerry Brown (D)

Lt. governor: Gavin Newsom (D)

Attorney general: Kamala Harris (D)

State treasurer: John Chiang (D)

State controller: Ashley Swearengin (R)

Insurance commissioner: Dave Jones (D)

U.S. Congress, District 10: Jeff Denham (R)

U.S. Congress, District 16: Jim Costa (D)

Senate District 8: Tom Berryhill (R)

Senate District 12: Anthony Cannella (R)

Assembly District 21: Adam Gray (D)

Merced County sheriff: Pat Lunney

Measure T, Merced districts: Yes

Proposition 1, water bond: Yes

Proposition 2, budget stabilization: Yes

Proposition 45, insurance regulations: No

Proposition 46, doctor testing: Yes

Proposition 48, Indian gaming agreement: No