

**33rd Congressional District of California  
Rep. Henry A. Waxman**

**For Immediate Release: January 30, 2014  
Karen Lightfoot: (202) 225-5735**

## **Rep. Henry A. Waxman Announces Plans to Retire from Congress**

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Henry A. Waxman, a senior Democrat from California, who has played a leading role in the enactment of major health, consumer protection, environmental, telecommunications, and good government laws, released the following statement announcing his decision not to seek reelection to the House this fall:

“In 1974, I announced my first campaign for Congress. Today, I am announcing that I have run my last campaign. I will not seek reelection to the Congress and will leave after 40 years in office at the end of this year.

“As I reflect on my career, I am filled with gratitude. I am grateful for the support of my constituents, who have entrusted me to represent them and encouraged me to become a leader on national and international issues. I am grateful for my supporters and allies, who have worked side-by-side with me to fight for issues we care about: health, environmental protection, women’s and gay rights, and strengthening the ties between the United States and our most important ally, the State of Israel.

“I am grateful for the friendship of my colleagues in Congress on both sides of the aisle. And I am honored that I served under the leadership of my friend, Nancy Pelosi, the first female Leader and Speaker of the House.

“I have long believed that a member of Congress is only as effective as his or her staff. I have been lucky to have a brilliant and committed staff who have labored tirelessly for me and the public good. I thank them deeply.

“And most of all, I want to thank my family. My wife Janet has supported me, cared for me, and made my life a blessing for over 40 years. And my children, Shai and Michael, and my grandchildren have given my life purpose and meaning.

“I first ran for office because I believe government can be a force for good in people’s lives. I have held this view throughout my career in Congress. And I will leave the House of Representatives with my conviction intact. I have learned that progress is not always easy. It can take years of dedication and struggle. But it’s worth fighting for.

“My parents were scarred by the Great Depression and as a result they were ardent Democrats. They believed in the ideals of this wonderful country and made sure that I had the opportunity to be the first in the family to get a college education. They taught me that the special interests have plenty of advocates; it’s the poor, the sick, and the powerless who need a champion in Congress. And that’s what I’ve strived to be.

“I take pride in my legislative accomplishments.

“I took on the pharmaceutical companies that did not want competition and joined with Senator Orrin Hatch to write the law that created the generic drug industry, saving families over \$1 trillion in the last decade alone. My orphan drug legislation led to treatments for hundreds of rare diseases.

“My investigations into the tobacco industry called the CEOs to account and exposed the industry’s duplicity. After more than a decade of effort, President Obama signed into law my legislation to give FDA jurisdiction over tobacco products.

I held hearings to expose flagrant abuses in nursing homes and passed legislation to protect nursing home residents and create a resident’s ‘Bill of Rights.’ And I spoke out early to raise public awareness about HIV/AIDS, holding over 30 hearings to draw attention to a disease no one wanted to discuss. These efforts culminated in the passage of the Ryan White CARE Act, the law that provides medical care and services to Americans living with HIV/AIDS.

“To protect consumers, I wrote three major food safety laws. The first law created the nutrition labels that millions of families rely on every day. The second removed dangerous pesticides from fruits and vegetables. And the third will help make imported food safer.

“Expanding health coverage to those in need has been one of my driving passions. In the 1980s, I led the fight to expand Medicaid, providing health coverage to millions of low-income children, pregnant women, and seniors. In the 1990s, I worked with Senator Ted Kennedy to provide coverage to the children of working families through the Children’s Health Insurance Program.

“And in 2010, when I was chair of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, one of my lifelong dreams was finally achieved: Congress passed the Affordable Care Act, which guarantees access to affordable health coverage to all Americans.

“I’ve also worked throughout my career to strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship. I have traveled to Israel on numerous occasions and will never forget the times Janet and I were there to greet President Sadat of Egypt and to see the arrival of the airlift carrying Ethiopian refugees. I fought for the right of Soviet Jews to emigrate and took great satisfaction in seeing Refusenicks that I had met in the former Soviet Union achieve their

dream of living in the Jewish State of Israel. I authored the Middle East Regional Cooperation Program for scientific exchanges between the U.S., Israel, and the Arab countries. And it is with pride that I have seen my daughter thrive in Israel and my grandchildren serve in the Israeli army.

“In perhaps no area have the special interests held more sway than environmental policy, and I have battled them to protect clean air and safe drinking water throughout my career. It took a decade of effort to pass the landmark Clean Air Act of 1990, but the controls on urban smog, toxic air pollution, acid rain, and ozone-depleting chemicals have saved lives and vastly improved our air quality.

“In recent years, I have been leading the fight in Congress for limits on the carbon pollution that is causing global climate change. In 2009, I joined with now Senator Ed Markey to pass the Waxman-Markey climate bill through the House. Last Congress, I formed a Safe Climate Caucus in the House and a Bicameral Task Force with Senator Sheldon Whitehouse to build public support for the effort to protect our fragile atmosphere for our children and grandchildren.

“Even if Congress won’t act on climate, President Obama can. The President has laid out a plan to reduce emissions by 17% by 2020, the goal we set in the House legislation. And he is working with other nations to set an ambitious target for post-2020 reductions. Whether Congress acts or not, the Clean Air Act gives President Obama – and future Presidents – ample authority to achieve these emission reductions.

“Most of the public thinks of Congress as a legislative body. But Congress can also serve the public through oversight. The investigations I led on the Oversight Committee with Tom Davis, a Virginia Republican, identified procurement abuses that cost taxpayers billions of dollars, especially in Iraq. Our hearings on steroids in baseball prompted reforms that cut steroid use by teens in half and pushed all sports leagues to strengthen their drug policies. We also held hearings to reveal the causes of the mortgage meltdown and Wall Street crash.

“When I was first elected to the House – in 1974 – I hoped to be able to serve 20 years and leave a mark on some important issues. I never imagined I would be in the House for 40 years and be able to advance every issue I care deeply about. But in what feels like a blink of an eye, it has been 40 years and I've devoted most of my life to the House of Representatives.

“It has been an extraordinary experience. The House is a remarkable institution and it is an honor to have a chance – every day – to make a difference in the lives of my constituents and families across our country.

“I want to add a few comments about my decision.

“There are elements of Congress today that I do not like. I abhor the extremism of the Tea Party Republicans. I am embarrassed that the greatest legislative body in the world too often operates in a partisan intellectual vacuum, denying science, refusing to listen to experts, and ignoring facts.

“But I am not leaving out of frustration with Congress. Even in today’s environment, there are opportunities to make real progress. Last Congress, I worked with Democrats and Republicans in the House and Senate to pass legislation that will ease the nation’s growing spectrum shortage, spur innovation in new ‘Super WiFi’ technologies, and create a national broadband network for first responders. Just last year, I worked on a bipartisan basis to enact legislation strengthening FDA’s authority to stop dangerous drug compounding and to track pharmaceuticals through the supply chain.

“And I am not leaving because I think House Democrats have no chance to retake the House. House Republicans have no compelling vision for the future. The public understands this, and I am confident that the Democrats can regain control of the House.

“The reason for my decision is simple. After 40 years in Congress, it’s time for someone else to have the chance to make his or her mark, ideally someone who is young enough to make the long-term commitment that’s required for real legislative success. I still feel youthful and energetic, but I recognize if I want to experience a life outside of Congress, I need to start soon. Public office is not the only way to serve, and I want to explore other avenues while I still can.

“I have had a long career and an eventful one – and I wouldn’t trade any of it. I woke each day looking forward to opportunities to make our country stronger, healthier, and fairer. And I will always be grateful for this honor and privilege.”

A report documenting Rep. Waxman’s record of accomplishment is available online [here](#).

###