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Filner Holds Town Meeting, Says Economy An "Enormous Problem"

By

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Congressman Bob Filner held a town hall meeting on Monday, May 16, 2011 at the Adult Center on 1st Street in El Centro.

People from different agencies, both public and private, sat down and listened to Congressman Filner discuss the current situation of the national economy and its effects on a local level.

"There is an enormous economic and fiscal problem at the moment," began Filner to the citizens. Filner explained that unemployment is still at a high point and the country's national debt has surpassed fourteen trillion dollars. Filner further explained that while there was a projected surplus in the coming years after the Clinton administration, the numerous wars and conflicts the country is involved with have changed the situation.

The biggest problem addressed with starting the war, according to Filner, was the absence of taxation. Filner, while against the war, believes that since the country is involved the American people should pay for it.

Filner said this is the first time in the history of our country where taxes have not been



SEDALIA SANDERS GOES over the schedule for the night and introduces Congressman Filner to the stand.

increased to pay for war, which has led the government to borrow a lot of money to fund the costly battles.

He added that with the amount of debt that the country is in, the federal government has set out a budget to try and get back on track. Unfortunately, Filner believes that the government is targeting the wrong programs and expenses for cutbacks.

Instead of aiming to cutback money from the defense budget-which is one of the largest expenses for the country-Filner said the government wants to cut more programs that affect citizens on a local level.

These programs include social benefits, healthcare, education, and local construction, among others.

Filner explained that not only

were local programs to be cut, but earmarks-money that the congressman uses on his district-would no longer be available.

"This will mean less road and city improvement projects," he said.

As an example, when the Brawley Bypass construction was at the verge of halting for an indefinite period of time, Congressman Filner said he was able to fight for the money to keep it going.

Filner addressed many solutions to the problems. "The cities must communicate with Washington and fight for what they need," Filner told attending city officials. He suggested ideas such as creating a group of border cities to send to Washington to lobby for more funding.

Filner explained that with all of the problems with communication between the city and federal level, local leaders lobbying in Washington would be the best solution.

"We are struggling for the soul of America," the Congressman said as he finished off his lecture. Filner then went on to answer questions that the audience had regarding different issues including oil companies involvement with the government and party issues that stop key decisions from being made.

Filner had also said that he might run for mayor of San Diego in 2012. "This could mean good things for the Imperial Valley," noted Filner. "I care about this district and will make sure that if I win, communication between the Imperial Valley and San Diego will become a key issue, which could mean more commerce and jobs coming here to the Valley in the near future."



FILNER TAKES QUESTIONS and further explains why it is difficult to make changes with two parties. *Photos by Max Lemuz.*



FILNER EXPLAINS TO citizens that his budget to help the Imperial Valley is cut despite his efforts to prevent it.