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Candidates' views of job are different

• In the race for seat in the House of Representatives, each candidate says he knows what's best.

By Chris Wiebe

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY — Both candidates for the 27th District seat in the U.S. House of Representatives want what's best for California, but they have two very different ideas about how to go about getting it.

Rep. Brad Sherman, 51, bemoaned the tendency of California's U.S. Congressional representatives to vote along partisan lines, making it difficult to block legislation that ultimately ends up hurting the state. The state lacks gubernatorial leadership that will unite legislators for the good of the state, he said.

"I hope we get a governor who can rally the congressional delegation and demand that bills treat California fairly," he said. "...So far Arnold [Schwarzenegger] has never urged any Republican to vote no on any bill that does not treat California in a fair way."

Peter Hankwitz, 38, the Republican who is running for the seat Sherman has occupied since 1997, blames Sherman for failing to bring federal dollars to the district, which includes parts of Burbank.

Hankwitz cites a California Institute for Federal Policy Research study reporting that California continues to have the lowest return rate on taxes paid to the federal government, paying \$50 billion more tax dollars than it received in 2003.

"He wants to be a congressman and I want to be a representative," Hankwitz said. "There's a huge difference there."

Hankwitz, who lives in Northridge, is basing his candidacy on the desire to bring the types of benefits to the district that have eluded Sherman as a member of Congress, he said.

"Sherman is very disinterested in actually bringing anything to the district," Hankwitz said.

"My goal right now can be summed up pretty clearly in saying that my intent is to bring the fair share of federal dollars back to this district. And my opponent cannot do that."

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Hankwitz aims to confront transportation problems in the district, some of which are unique to the region.

As the world's fifth largest economy, Southern California is not just a place, but a prime location that attracts millions of people each year, from vacationers to students to businesses.

But ever-present traffic congestion keeps San Fernando Valley residents from easily moving about in the region, whether it's related to commerce, recreation or education, he said.

"It is virtually impossible to make more than one trip a day," he said. "We have to make plans to go to, say, south L.A. from the Valley. We can't just travel effectively the way other cities can ... we have a lot of mass transportation here, but none of it's effective."

The path to solving California's transportation issues lies in looking at the larger picture, which points to a significant investment into a type of efficient and eco-friendly monorail system, he said.

Sherman, whose regional office is in Sherman Oaks, notes in a letter to his Burbank constituents that Congress has allocated \$1 million to construct a regional transit facility near the Bob Hope Airport, expanding the Metrolink and Amtrak rail to include passenger amenities, ticket kiosks, bicycle parking and bus loading and unloading areas, he said.

Sherman has also worked with Rep. Adam Schiff, whose district also includes Burbank, to secure \$400,000 to advance upgrades to the state's freeways, including a carpool lane on the Golden State (5) Freeway between the Ventura (134) Freeway and the Hollywood (170) Freeway and the installation of a full freeway interchange at the 5 and Empire Avenue in Burbank, Sherman said.