October 3, 2010

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Jerry McNerney (CA-11) announced that legislation he authored to help address the threat of methamphetamine abuse in California's communities passed the House of Representatives late last week with unanimous and bipartisan support.

H.R. 2818, the METH (Methamphetamine Education, Treatment, and Hope) Act will support youth involvement in creating programs to deter drug usage, improve identification and prevention of methamphetamine addiction, and broaden support for treatment programs targeted to serve pregnant and parenting women. Congresswoman Mary Bono Mack (R, CA-45) is an original cosponsor of H.R. 2818.

"Meth abuse is one of the most serious crime issues in northern California. It tears apart families and communities, and we need to fight back," said Rep. McNerney. "I want to make sure that we have the resources available to combat meth abuse and that we make people aware of the negative impact it has on our entire community. This bill will help us do that by providing grant funds to areas where resources are needed most."

Specifically, the bill instructs the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to:

- Collaborate with professionals to raise awareness about how to recognize signs of substance abuse and apply practices for screening and treating individuals with or at-risk for developing an addiction, including addiction to methamphetamine or other drugs.
- Grant awards in rural areas, areas that are determined to have a shortage of mental health professional or substance abuse treatment options, and to areas determined to have high rates of addiction to methamphetamine or other drugs.
- Expand, intensify, and coordinate efforts to provide methamphetamine or other drug addiction treatment to pregnant and parenting women.
- Maintain a clearinghouse that provides information and educational materials to employers and employees about drug testing policies and programs.
- Support youth involvement in developing and implementing prevention strategies for youth with regard to meth and other drugs.

The bill provides for the funding of such programs for five fiscal years, beginning with $16 million in FY2012.

“I am pleased that my bill passed the House today with broad bipartisan support,” Rep. McNerney said. “That just goes to show that this is not a partisan issue – this is an issue my colleagues and I agree on, and it is something I have worked hard to achieve. With today’s action, we are one step closer to providing our communities with the resources they need to fight back against this dangerous drug.