

WASHINGTON D.C. (Today) – This week, Rep. Michael Honda (CA-15), vice-chair of the Appropriations Legislative Branch subcommittee, launched a pioneering new project to improve civic engagement with Congress. Rep. Honda's constituents, among many others, will redesign his Congressional website – in what is called crowd-sourcing – in the latest initiative by Rep. Honda to make government more transparent and accessible to the public. To begin generating ideas for the web re-design, Rep. Honda has already started engaging in a dialogue with constituents on Twitter using the #honda2.0 tag (for more info: <http://tinyurl.com/congresscrowdsource>).

Rep. Honda's website is recognized for its outstanding design and has won 3 Gold and 1 Silver Mouse Awards by the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF). Rep. Honda is the only Member of the House of Representatives to be chosen for a website award from CMF each time it was awarded.

“Congress must take advantage of Web 2.0 technologies,” said Rep. Honda, “to transform the relationship between citizens and government. Instead of viewing the public as a customer for services, I believe that we should empower citizens to become our partners in shaping the future of our nation.”

The purpose of Rep. Honda's website redesign/crowd-sourcing is to move America closer to Government 2.0, where the public's ability to access and provide advice to Members of Congress is enhanced by new technology and new online participation.

Rep. Honda commented on the initiative saying, “My constituents in Silicon Valley understand how crowd-sourcing can help more effectively harness constituent ideas and innovation. It is my hope that this process can empower the public to collaborate with Members of Congress. No longer will individuals simply petition their representatives – instead they should be our most valued advisors.”

This project comes on the heels of Rep. Honda's provision in the recently passed Omnibus Bill to provide free access to Congress' legislative databases. Rep. Honda, who placed a measure in the House bill directing Congress, the Library of Congress and the Government Printing Office to make its data available to the public in raw form, is enabling the public to access government data in a more user-friendly format than the government's own.