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House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

HENRY A. WAXMAN
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HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
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ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Dear Friend:

It is a real pleasure for me to share with you a recent article pointing out some of the accomplishments of my colleague Congressman Julian Dixon of Culver City.

Representative Dixon is one of the hardest working and most effective members of the House. He is also one of the congressmen with whom I work most closely. Were it not for Julian's strenuous efforts, I do not believe we would have reached a consensus on the Metro Rail project. Julian was able to bring together all the key figures in support of a plan of action that would guarantee federal funding for Metro Rail. Equally important, Julian saw the need to guarantee adoption of a route that will avoid those areas identified as posing a danger of methane gas explosions.

Representative Julian Dixon has especially distinguished himself as an eloquent and inordinately consistent proponent of human rights and the peaceful resolution of conflict. Julian's concern with these issues has been especially evident in his work against apartheid and his support for the security of Israel.

On reading the enclosed reprint, I'm sure you will understand my pride and satisfaction in having as a personal friend and neighboring congressman so distinguished a legislator as Julian Dixon.

Sincerely,


HENRY A. WAXMAN
Member of Congress

Enclosure

Rep. Dixon Named One of Unsung Heroes on the Hill

By BETTY CUNIBERTI, *Times Staff Writer*

WASHINGTON—One hears a lot in this city about members of Congress who are overrated . . . who are loud, hors d'oeuvre-grabbing publicity hounds using thousands of words to say absolutely nothing.

Rarely in Washington does one hear conversation about a member of Congress who is *underrated*.

After 15 years of covering Congress, Alan Ehrenhalt, Congressional Quarterly reporter and editor of the highly respected yearly congressional reference book, "Politics in America," decided that some of them are underrated, indeed. Lest people dismiss this as a hallucination, he named them.

On Ehrenhalt's first list of "The 12 Most Underrated Members of Congress" is Rep. Julian Dixon (D-Culver City).

"I don't mean to be critical of anyone else's style," Dixon said, "but I think it's better to have an

impact on the issue than to give a speech that gets picked up in the national press.

"Everyone would like to be recognized for doing a good job. I'm certainly flattered to be in the group."

The other 11 on the list are: Sens. Thad Cochran (R-Miss.), Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Dan Quayle (R-Ind.) and Reps. James Broyhill (R-N.C.), Bill Gradison (R-Ohio), Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.), Edward R. Madigan (R-Ill.), Matthew McHugh (D-N.Y.), Al Swift (D-Wash.), Charles Whitley (D-N.C.) and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.).

Ehrenhalt said he believes they are "unpretentious rarely partisan legislative professionals who are candid, well-informed and not prone to self-promotion. Most are not well-known off Capitol Hill."

The only Californian and black

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AL STEPHENSON

Rep. Julian Dixon, left, confers with Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley Tuesday during a business breakfast meeting.

DIXON: 'Underrated' Official

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on the list, Dixon was included not so much for any single accomplishment, but for his style and professionalism, Ehrenhalt said.

"I don't think you can point to any monumental legislation or achievement on his part," Ehrenhalt said.

Instead, Dixon is "serious, pragmatic, unconcerned with publicity . . . a symbol of the newest generation of black House members—the post-civil rights generation."

Ehrenhalt said that traditionally, black leaders always have drawn attention by taking part in protests and giving fiery speeches, and that if a black leader was not involved in those things, the tendency was to overlook him.

"Instead of working the media and drumming up support for moral causes, Dixon is plugging away at the Appropriations Committee," Ehrenhalt said.

Chairs Ethics Committee

Dixon also was asked by House Speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill (D-Mass.) to chair the House Ethics Committee, a peer-policing job that nobody wanted but Dixon accepted.

"He is clearly a leadership favorite," Ehrenhalt said. "Selecting him to chair the Ethics Committee reflects a certain amount of trust."

Dixon agreed that a new generation of black leaders is emerging.

"I think they differ by using different techniques to work within the system," Dixon said. "The civil rights movement was confrontational, confronting the system.

"I make an effort to understand the other issues involved in an issue I'm working on. I have seen very few black-and-white issues. Most issues are gray."

An example of the way Dixon has worked within the system came when he chaired the Congressional Black Caucus. Rather than submit the caucus' proposed budget for a

vote in 1983, Dixon agreed to a request from O'Neill to throw support instead to a budget proposal that had been hammered out in the Budget Committee. The caucus traditionally offers its own version, not in hopes of its passage, but as a way of drawing attention to the caucus' budget preferences. And some members were unhappy that Dixon did not offer it.

"I recognized that the Speaker was trying to hold together a coalition," Dixon said. "And although we had been very proud of the caucus budget, looking at it historically, it was only going to receive 65 or 70 votes. Working within the process, we were able to get some other concessions in the budget. I thought that was much more important than having a symbolic vote."

If Dixon is underrated, he said he does not mind.

"I feel that I enjoy a good reputation among my constituents. That's the most important thing," said the 51-year-old Dixon, who has represented Culver City and parts of downtown Los Angeles since 1978.

"I do not work the press. I never had a press aide, as such. I realize there are sexy issues one can get a lot of public attention working on. I have not avoided those issues but I have not pursued them."

Fan of Jazz

While in Washington, Dixon would rather listen to jazz than hop around the party circuit. He flies back to Los Angeles twice a month, where he tries to fit in some tennis.

He said his biggest frustration in Congress does not have anything to do with how much attention he gets, or whether he occasionally is criticized for his low-key, compromising style.

"My frustration is that as an institution, we traditionally move very slowly and have a lack of ability to respond to the immediate needs of our society," Dixon said.