



Senator Art Torres (Ret.), J.D.



Vice-Chair of the Governing Board of the CIRM (Statutory: elected pursuant to Health & Saf. Code, section 125290.20(a)(6))

In a career spanning more than four decades, Senator Art Torres (Ret.) has distinguished himself as a public servant determined to tackle complex policy issues and stand up for those without a voice. He led crucial bipartisan initiatives in the fields of healthcare, education, the environment, and human rights and has been a leader in the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

In March 2009, Senator Torres was unanimously elected statutory Vice Chair of the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee, the governing Board of the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine (CIRM). CIRM, established in 2005 following the passage of Proposition 71, is charged with allocating \$3 billion to California universities and research institutions to support and advance stem cell research. He is a colon cancer and osteoarthritis survivor.

On November 18th, 2010 he was sworn in by then Mayor Gavin Newsom, to a four year term on San Francisco's Public Utilities Commission. In October 2012, Senator Torres was unanimously elected as the new President of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission before retiring from the commission.

Between 1996 and 2009, Senator Torres served as the Chairman of the California Democratic Party. Under his leadership, the State Party experienced unprecedented growth and achieved substantial electoral successes at the local, state, and national level.

Senator Torres previously served twenty years in the California Legislature, eight as a member of the State Assembly and twelve as a State Senator. Well respected for his policy acumen, Torres chaired the Senate Insurance Committee, the Assembly Health Committee, the Senate Joint Committee on Science and Technology, the Joint Committee on Refugees and founded the Senate Toxics Committee.

Senator Torres authored the California Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 known as Proposition 65. The proposition was intended to protect the State's drinking water sources from chemicals known to cause cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm, and to inform citizens about exposures to such chemicals.

His passion to deter pesticide poisoning came from working closely with Cesar Chavez in the early 1970's as the National Legislative Director of the United Farm Workers Union.

As Chairman of the Senate Toxics Committee, he created the sole toxic reporting repository that helps scientists determine environmental and health impacts. Dr. Eric Roberts said the database Senator Torres helped create is

“a data source that really no one else has on the planet.”

He secured direct funding for university research programs as well as structural support for industry-sponsored work, and funded early HIV/AIDS research in conjunction with Dr. Marcus Conant, before most public officials recognized the severity of the epidemic. He also advocated for insurance reimbursement for breast cancer treatments.

His legislative accomplishments also include the most successful anti high school dropout law in California's history, SB 65.

Through his legislation he helped create the only national Japanese American Museum located in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles and co-authored legislation to create the Museum on Tolerance in Los Angeles.

He led international delegations to release Vietnamese prisoners from "education camps" in Hanoi, Vietnam and to assist Soviet Jewish refuseniks efforts in the former Soviet Union.

In 1989, he assisted in drafting Pope John Paul II's environmental message, and along with Nobel Laureates and international environmental leaders, presented their document to the Holy Father in the Vatican before it was delivered in St. Peter's Square on New Year's Day, 1990.

He also served as a German Marshall Fund Fellow and delivered a paper on Western European immigration issues. He was also appointed by the United States Senate, by the late US Senator Edward M. Kennedy, to the Commission on International Migration and Cooperative Economic Development, which presented its recommendations on immigration reform to then President George Bush in 1990.

Torres also served as President of the Kaitz Foundation, dedicated to bringing more people of color into management within the cable television industry. The foundation also provided grants to minority oriented motion picture and cable television associations. The Kaitz Board was comprised by a majority of the top CEOs in the cable television industry.

Senator Torres is currently on the Board of "One Legacy," the largest organ transplant foundation in Los Angeles. He has previously served on the Board of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, the San Francisco Ballet, "Heal the Bay" in Santa Monica, and the Advisory Board of The Princeton Review, and the Latino Community Foundation, headquartered in San Francisco.

Senator Torres holds a Bachelor's Degree from UC Santa Cruz and a Juris Doctorate degree from UC Davis School of Law.

He also served as a John F. Kennedy teaching fellow at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He was recently appointed as the University of San Francisco Diversity Scholar Visiting Professor.