

Law would allow Congress to vote without being in D.C.

By Bryan Steele, California News Service

WASHINGTON — Since he began his new job in January, Rep. Eric Swalwell, a freshman lawmaker from Pleasanton, has commuted roughly 250,000 miles from California to Washington.

That's equivalent to flying around the planet 10 times. And for California representatives, the commute is not unusual.

Rep. David Valadao, R-Fresno, didn't mind the three-hour drive from Fresno to Sacramento when he served in the state assembly. But add another six hour flight across country and the commute begins to take a serious toll. Rep. Alan Lowenthal, D-Long Beach, calls the repeated trips the hardest part of his job.

The long commute inspired Swalwell to introduce a measure that would let members vote remotely on non-controversial bills.

Under the provisions of HR287, which Swalwell introduced in late June, representatives would be able to vote via secure computers on the road or while at home, on issues with low priority. They would also be able to use video conferencing to participate in committee hearings.

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