

McClintock: People always know where I stand

By Michael Doyle, McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON – Rep. Tom McClintock, R-Granite Bay, now has a law to his name.

It's pretty modest. But when President Obama recently signed a McClintock bill transferring federal land to an Indian tribe in California's El Dorado County, it was a milestone of sorts.

The one-page bill transferring 40.8 acres to the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians marked McClintock's reaching the White House finish line. More often, the 58-year-old conservative is a voice in opposition, decrying a government gone bad. It's a distinctive approach, strictly principled and at times, some say, uncompromising.

"I think you'll find colleagues that like me, and colleagues that don't like me," McClintock said in an interview, "but they'll always know where I stand."

Presently in his sixth year in the U.S. House of Representatives, representing a sprawling and mountainous district that spans 10 California counties, McClintock does sometimes stand apart. He belongs to the House majority. He's also a natural dissenter, shaped by years in the legislative minority.

The resulting tension is between governance and ideals, between deal-making and holding firm. It's a balancing act, for which McClintock gets both praise and criticism.

"There's no question that he's a conservative," said Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Calif. "And when he gets engaged and really tackles an issue, there's no one better than him. I think he's

a good member.”

Critics, including some within his own party, counter that McClintock sticks to his guns to the detriment of legislating.

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