

By Brianna Boyd

*Advocacy Council Meeting
August 13, 2019*

Solano County, its residents, and the business community are and will continue to be a priority for State Senator Bill Dodd.

Dodd, D-Solano, was the speaker Aug. 13 at a morning advocacy meeting hosted by the Fairfield-Suisun Chamber of Commerce at NorthBay Healthcare. More than 50 people, most from Solano County cities and chambers, attended to hear Dodd's remarks on the important issues before state legislatures.

He started off his one-hour presentation praising the group for coming together as one.

"Let me tell you, I'm really appreciative of how Solano comes across, not their governments but also business to business," he said. "As a former business owner, as a former county supervisor, I know how important these types of groups are."

Altogether, California's legislature includes 120 members. He describes the group as "jacks of all trades and masters of none."

"When you take a look at the breadth and depth of the subject matters we are asked to vote on, it's really amazing," he said. "There are no excuses for not knowing, not understanding, you have to hone your game."

In his first four years in office, Dodd saw 58 of his bills pass and he expects another 20 to have the same success this year. He praised his district office and capitol staff for the work that they do. He and his staff are incredibly thorough when vetting the bills that pass his desk.

"We want to hear what people have to say about the bills, chamber groups, schools businesses," he said. "A lot of times, we pass bills that become problematic down the line because of unintended consequences of the bill... that's why you have to work with the different interest groups before you pass it. It's a new day of sorts in the California legislature and I'm real pleased about that."

On the regional level, Dodd expressed concern for the many victims impacted by the state's destructive fires, especially the Camp Fire in Paradise. Re-building of the homes and businesses lost is only at 20 percent, he said, and many people are either under-insured or un-insured that they cannot rebuild.

"The prices to re-build are just out of this world," he said.

A law was recently passed, he added, that extends the insurance funding for fire victims from two years to three years. Unfortunately, the new law only applies to victims of future wildfires.

Those re-building from the Camp Fire and fires in Napa and Sonoma have just two years of funding.

“I know luck is not a strategy but California can use a lot of luck in terms of the weather and conditions that create these horrible problems,” Dodd said.

Also big topics that morning were housing and homelessness. Dodd said Solano County is fortunate to not have near the number of problems in housing faced by other Bay Area counties.

“With high demand and low supply, you don’t have to be an economics major to see what that will do and it has killed the north Bay Area,” he said. “We have to build in California a million more houses over the next 10 years or we haven’t come close to solving the problem.”

Homelessness and the increase in the numbers of those on the streets has become a statewide crisis. There will be difficult discussions and decisions that have to be made, the senator said. It is important we learn from past practices, he added, and come together as communities to address the core of these problems.

“Let’s be real, they’re killing themselves on our streets and no other country would allow that to happen,” he said. “The ideas we have now are not working and we can’t just sit around. Allowing people to die on our streets is inhumane and I hope we can come up with a solution.”