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DAVIS DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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## *Providing Oversight on Twin Tunnels* by Senator Bill Dodd



Like virtually everyone in the Delta communities I represent, I have been **opposed to the twin tunnels** project known as California WaterFix on both environmental and economic grounds. **It bears closer scrutiny and a whole lot more local input.**

That's the goal of my new legislation, Senate Bill 204. It calls on the state Department of Water Resources to notify legislators of any major amendments to planning and construction contracts, prompting hearings on the changes that would allow everyone to have a closer look at its scope and costs.

It's the kind of light we need to shed on an ill-conceived project that poses drastic consequences for the Delta's fragile ecosystem, our state's water supply and the local economy. Because as lawmakers, we've been left largely in the dark so far. And, we can't ensure your interests are being protected if we don't know what changes are being made.

To be clear, I support smart water policy to help Southern California find solutions to its water problems. We must develop innovative strategies around water retention and being more efficient with our water use for the benefit of the entire state.

But the WaterFix plan as it is currently written is not the answer.

For background, California WaterFix is a proposal to build three large diversions on the Sacramento River and two tunnels under the Delta to directly convey water to State Water Project pumps near Tracy and the Central Valley Project. If constructed, the tunnels would be part of the State Water Project.

Department of Water Resources is handling development, maintenance and operation through contracts between the state and water contractors. The contracts cover matters such as amounts of deliverable water, allocation of costs, billing and supply issues unique to each contractor.

The problem is contract amendments keep coming. Some address financing. Others seek to extend contract periods up to 50 years. Both have raised concern about WaterFix exceeding its budget. At the same time, the project perpetuates reliance on Delta water contrary to state policy to reduce it. In addition, WaterFix does not offer sufficient investment in source watersheds.

Department of Water Resources and participating water contractors have established two new joint powers agencies to staff, design, contract, construct and finance the WaterFix project. The Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority was formed as a Joint Powers Authority by certain participating public water agencies

However, while the Delta Conveyance is overseen by the Department of Water Resources, there is no requirement in law for legislative oversight of its activities, almost all of which will have enormous impact on the Delta and the surrounding region. **And I have a big problem with that.**

The Delta is near and dear to me. Having grown up in our region, I value the Delta and want to protect it for future generations. As a state legislator, I'm making it a priority to bring **greater oversight** to WaterFix to **avoid costly mistakes.**

###

*Senator Bill Dodd represents California's 3rd Senate District, which includes all or portions of Napa, Solano, Sonoma, Yolo, Sacramento, and Contra Costa counties. You can learn more about Senator Dodd at [www.sen.ca.gov/dodd](http://www.sen.ca.gov/dodd).*

# Democratic News

## Calendar of Events & Campaign Activities

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**Sun., June 23, 11:00-2:00 pm. The Annual Champagne Brunch** features an ample buffet brunch served with beverages. (You are invited to share a favorite dish.) A **recently elected State Constitutional officer** is tentatively scheduled as the keynote speaker for a program that includes presentations by our local elected officials. Hosted by Bill Julian and Robin Kulakow at their home, 43556 Almond Lane. This is the DDC's principal annual fundraiser and the source of much political good. We therefore hope that you can join us for this important, fun event.

**Sat., Apr. 27, 9:00-12:00 pm. DDC Political Strategy Planning Meeting.** (See page 3.)

**Tues., May 7, 7:00-9:00 pm. Monthly Board Meeting, Blanchard Room in the Davis Library**  
The Board conducts routine business and plans future events. All members are invited.

### *Report from DJUSD Board of Education President Bob Poppenga*

Our elected representatives need to make difficult decisions about how best to allocate limited resources to address many important needs. The wisest use of our tax dollars is to invest in those areas with the greatest potential to have long-term benefits for our communities. In my view, providing a quality public education for every child is the best return on our tax dollar investment. Unfortunately, California is not meeting the challenge. As the fifth largest economy in the world and the State with the highest gross domestic product, where should we rank with regard to per pupil funding, percentage of taxable income spent on education, student-to-teacher ratio, and staff-to-student ratio? Certainly not where we are: 41<sup>st</sup>, 45<sup>th</sup>, 45<sup>th</sup> and 48<sup>th</sup>, respectfully! Historically, California public school funding was the same as the national average until 1985, but since then it has fallen far behind, largely as a result of the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978. Proposition 98, passed in 1988, was an attempt by the voters to remedy this situation. Prop 98 requires that a minimum percentage of the State budget be spent on K-12 education. Unfortunately, instead of being a "floor" for funding, it has proven to be a "ceiling". School funding through Prop 98 has no relationship to truly adequate funding; only a relationship to the State budget. Additionally, our schools were hit hard during the "great" recession of 2007-2009. It's sobering to think that current public school funding levels are equivalent to 2007-2008 dollars adjusted for inflation! At the same time our schools are asked to do more to meet the diverse needs of our students. Add to this a dramatically increased cost to school districts to fund pension shortfalls and rising health care costs for our teachers and staff, and you see the challenge. More recently, instead of investing in our classrooms, schools are spending limited resources to make sure that our schools are safe.

The failure to invest in our schools has several significant negative effects in Davis. We are not able to pay our teachers the kind of salaries that they deserve. Not too long ago, I was shown the monthly pay stub of a young third year Davis elementary school teacher and was shocked to see take home pay of \$2400! Many of our young teachers also carry significant college debts. Combine the two and it's no wonder that teachers often can't afford to live in communities like Davis, due to high housing costs. We are not training enough teachers to replace those nearing retirement. There is a tremendous shortage of teachers trained to teach math, science, special education and who are bilingual, which greatly impacts our efforts to improve STEM education and serve some of our students furthest from opportunity.

Another underfunded area is our school infrastructure. In Davis, many of our schools are 40 to 50 years old and totally inadequate to meet the demands of a 21<sup>st</sup> century education. We lack modern science labs for our middle and high schools and "maker spaces" for our elementary schools. We are not able to invest in keeping up with rapidly changing technology. Lastly, but perhaps most significantly, we are not investing enough in a large segment of our student population to close what many refer to the "achievement" and "opportunity" gaps. (continued p. 3)

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(*cont'd. p2*) In Davis, approximately one in four of our students who are English language learners, low socio-economic students, or foster and homeless youth historically perform poorly in school compared with their peers. We need to increase our investment in our at-risk students early to enhance their long-term success. In recent years, the State has targeted more funding to close the achievement and opportunity gaps through the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), but because Davis has fewer at-risk students, we receive fewer dollars per student than most neighboring school districts, e.g. Vacaville, Dixon, Woodland.

As a District, we benefit tremendously from the generosity of our community. We are supported through our Measure H parcel tax that helps to maintain so many of our programs (e.g., music, athletics, language, elementary science and more). Recently, voters stepped-up again to pass our Measure M facilities bond, the first step in addressing almost \$450 million of identified school facilities' needs. Our programs would not be what they are without countless hours of parent volunteering and fundraising. Having had the opportunity to serve on the School Board for over two years and to examine how we spend taxpayer dollars, I am confident that we, as a District governing team, are doing everything that we can to spend those dollars wisely. Of course, there are always ways to improve, but there aren't many ways to save substantial money when 84% of the District's budget is for people. The bottom line is that without increased State support we are unlikely to be able to continue to provide the quality education for every student that a Davis education promises. I would urge everyone to support, (<http://www.fullandfairfunding.org>), the California School Boards Association's Full and Fair Funding petition calling on the State Legislature to raise school funding to the national average by 2020 and to the average of the top 10 states by 2025. There is no better return on our tax dollar investment than quality public education.

***DDC Political Strategy Planning Meeting***

by Bob Bockwinkel

To prepare for the crucial 2020 election cycle, I invite you to a strategy session for the Davis Democratic Club, where each of us will have a voice in setting priorities and identifying key goals. four waters, a former State Party strategic organizer will facilitate this initial process.

The coming election year is certain to be really exciting, and we are all looking for the best ways that we can get our country back on track. Attractive options will pull us in various directions, but if we work together cooperatively, supportively, and strategically, we have the best chance to make the biggest impact -- locally, statewide and nationally.

Please mark your calendars and come share your priorities, experience and opinion and, together. Let us set collective goals and build a plan that ensures that we will make the difference, which we hope to achieve.

**Saturday, April 27, 2019, 9 a.m. to 12 noon**

**1401 Halyard Drive, West Sacramento CA 95691**

(Light snacks will be served.) Please RSVP to Bob Bockwinkel:  
<[bbockwinkelrn@gmail.com](mailto:bbockwinkelrn@gmail.com)> or phone (530) 219-1896.

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**Democratic Newsletter**

**Champagne Brunch**  
**Sunday, June 23**  
**11:00-2:00 pm**

Davis Democratic Club

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**Bob Bockwinkel**  
CalBRE#01056521  
Mobile: (530) 219-1896  
Fax: (530) 746-2077  
Email: [bbockwinkelLRN@golyon.com](mailto:bbockwinkelLRN@golyon.com)

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