

2016

FEDERAL Legislative Program and Policy Guidelines



SOLANO
COUNTY

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Supervisors on November 10, 2015
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SOLANO COUNTY 2016 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

PRIORITY ISSUES

The ability of the County to serve its residents and provide for a thriving and sustainable community requires support from all levels of government. Federal legislative policy and funding decisions affect the County's ability to deliver services. In order to fulfill the County's commitment to the community, Federal resources should be sought to support the County's mission to enrich the quality of life in the County. To this end, the County Board of Supervisors supports the priorities and the legislative principles set forth below.

Priority issues are those that have a significant impact on County business and on which County staff, including the County's Federal legislative advocates, will concentrate their legislative efforts during the 2016 Legislative Session. The County's top priorities (Listed Alphabetically) include:

1. **Funding for Key Water Infrastructure Projects** - Support efforts to authorize and fund key water infrastructure projects in Solano County, including dredging, water reuse and recycling, and flood control projects.
2. **Health and Human Services** - Support increased federal funding for services and income support needed by parents seeking to reunify with children who are in foster care. Support increased financial support for programs that assist foster youth in the transition to self-sufficiency, including post-emancipation assistance such as secondary education, job training, and access to health care. Support retaining the entitlement nature of the Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance programs and elimination of outdated rules that base the child's eligibility for funds on parental income and circumstances. Support federal funding to address the service needs of youth who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Support reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program with a particular emphasis on restoring state and county flexibility to tailor work and family stabilization activities to families' individual needs. Support ongoing Social Security benefits.
3. **Housing, Economic Development, and Transportation Programs** - Support the highest possible funding level for key federal housing and economic development programs. Support efforts to restore and revitalize property impacted by prior realignment or closure of military installations. In the area of transportation, support efforts to protect the Highway Trust Fund and support programs that provide funding for local roads, bridges, transit initiatives, and aviation.
4. **Military Presence** - Support efforts to protect Travis Air Force Base from budget reductions, downsizing, as well as advocate for new and/or alternative missions to be directed to the base. Support additional assets/missions such as C-17, KC-46 squadrons, modernization of existing aircraft, and gaining other aviation and non-aviation missions. Support infrastructure investments, including military construction projects and housing upgrades and enhance use of underutilized property on base. Support efforts to implement and maintain public-public/public-private partnerships with Travis Air Force Base and other community organizations/agencies.
5. **Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness** - Support funding for programs that assist Solano County with efforts aimed at reducing crime and enhancing public safety through community partnerships and multi-jurisdictional efforts. In addition, support funding for programs that assist the County with disaster response and preparedness and homeland security-related needs, including efforts aimed at achieving communications interoperability.
6. **Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh** - Support legislative and administrative efforts to protect the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and the County's interests relative to land use, agricultural stability, economic development, police or emergency response mandates, environmental preservation, flood protection, levee stability, habitat conservation, recreation, water supply, water quality, water rights, and dredging activities. Support governance structures that give local government a strong and equal voice with other stakeholders in setting Delta policy.

Furthermore, the Board of Supervisors adopts the following principles (Listed Alphabetically by Policy Area):

Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Water

Solano County supports federal legislative and regulatory actions that protect and enhance the County's significant agricultural, water, and natural resources. The County opposes any efforts to cut funding streams for critically important federal resource programs. Specific principles include:

1. Support efforts to strengthen inspections at borders and ports of entry to safeguard against invasive pests and diseases.
2. Support funding for USDA's Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program and similar efforts to eradicate invasive pests; support increases for specialty crop support and adequate financial support for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
3. Support efforts to facilitate/expedite inspection of US Postal packages profiled by detector dogs to contain fruit or plant material.
4. Support legislation to indemnify growers for losses due to Plant Quarantine.
5. Support legislation reducing redundant enforcement of aquatic herbicide/pesticide use under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and the Clean Water Act.
6. Support a more equitable distribution of USDA funds for Wildlife Services provided to California counties.
7. Support efforts to protect the County's Farm Gate, including, but not limited to, full mitigation of agricultural and other economic impacts associated with habitat restoration efforts.
8. Support funding for local mapping of flood hazard areas and advocate for the US Army Corps of Engineers and other federal agencies to protect the County from these hazards.
9. Support legislation to establish the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area to protect and promote the economic vitality and cultural, historical, and natural assets of the region.

General Government

Solano County supports federal legislative and regulatory actions that protect and enhance the general welfare and quality of life of the County's residents. The County opposes unfunded Federal mandates and Federal actions that would preempt local decision-making authority. Specific principles include:

1. Support efforts to realign government services with necessary funding in order to improve the delivery of services, including technology acquisitions, training, and upgrades.
2. Support efforts that protect and/or enhance local governments' revenues, maximize the County's access to Federal funding sources, and/or increases local funding flexibility.
3. Support legislation that provides tax and funding formulas and regulations for the equitable distribution of Federal monies while opposing attempts to decrease, restrict, or eliminate County revenue sources.
4. Support funding for domestic infrastructure, public safety, community development, and environmental programs.
5. Support any expansion, continuation, and/or increased flexibility in the bidding/procurement, delivery, and management of construction projects.
6. Support legislation that provides grants and funding programs for the preservation, rehabilitation, and maintenance of historically and/or architecturally significant buildings and structures.
7. Support funding for the Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILT) program.
8. Support legislation and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) efforts to influence reform of the U. S. Department of the Interior's fee-to-trust process.
9. Support funding and regulatory efforts to expand broadband services to all County residents.

Health and Human Services

Solano County supports federal legislative and regulatory actions that promote the health and welfare of the County's most vulnerable residents. The County opposes any efforts to cut funding streams for critically important health and human services-related programs, such as Medicaid and Medicare, and opposes efforts to reduce local flexibility in the implementation of such programs. Specific principles include:

1. Support reauthorization of TANF with a primary focus on restoring state and county administrative flexibility.
2. Support increased funding for the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF), the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Community Mental Health Services (CMHS), the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grants, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the Title IV-D Child Support program.
3. Support eliminating the Federal health benefits "inmate exception" for persons in County jails and detention centers who are in custody pending disposition of charges.
4. Support eliminating the cutoff of funding for individuals that are incarcerated but not convicted, as the cost of medical care for these inmates' defaults to the County.
5. Support efforts to ensure competitive equity for suburban areas (on par with urban and rural areas) for Federal grant opportunities.
6. Support funding for subsidized child care services and child development programs, including school readiness for all children.
7. Support funding for programs and activities that support the special needs of elderly and persons with disabilities, including increases to Supplemental Security Income (SSI); support reauthorization of the Older Americans Act.
8. Support efforts to allow for utilizing billing codes for brief intervention services for alcohol and drugs and for two different services on the same day in a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC).
9. Support legislation that increases taxes on combustible tobacco products, tobacco-based inhalation devices, and electronic cigarettes, and uses the revenue for children and family programs, including smoking cessation programs.
10. Support legislation that requires specific bills to undergo a health impact assessment of current and predicted effects, possibly completed by a nonpartisan body.
11. Support all health equity efforts at various institutional and sectorial levels, and ensuring a broader equity strategy within institutions and sectors. Applying metrics to identify equity gaps and measuring gains in intervention areas is a key priority.
12. Expand the current list of billable medical expenses to include valuable services (Promotoras, chronic disease self-management programs, healthy food purchasing, etc.) which are part of a broader menu of efforts to combat chronic disease.
13. Support efforts to reduce intake of high fat, sugar, sodium foods and beverages which may contribute to higher risk for developing specific chronic diseases, and to regulate the distribution and sale of powdered alcohol.
14. Support policy for evidenced-based home visiting services as a preventive service, therefore eligible for Medi-Cal reimbursement such as California's Medicaid 1115 Waiver.
15. Support legislation and efforts to promote and implement "whole person care" and to address social determinants of health.
16. Support legislation and efforts to solidify and expand healthcare coverage and insurance implemented with the Affordable Care Act.

Housing, Community and Economic Development, and Workforce Investment

Solano County supports federal legislative and regulatory actions that promote local housing and community development programs and activities, workforce development programs, and programs aimed at encouraging local job and business growth. The County opposes efforts to cut funding for these critically important programs, as well as efforts to restrict local flexibility in the administration of such programs. Specific principles include:

1. Support increased funding for existing programs including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), and

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 8, permanent, transitional housing, and Rental Assistance Programs, and HUD Section 202 funding for supportive housing for the elderly.

2. Support legislation that enhances a public/private, performance-driven block grant program that provides investments in the nation's workforce, including the unemployed and those in need of skills training.
3. Support or seek federal grant funding opportunities that advance and improve housing, community and economic development, and workforce investment opportunities and legislative principles for disadvantages individuals and families including the homeless.
4. Support efforts to connect health care and housing options for elderly and persons with disabilities to ensure Affordable Care Act home and community based services are effective.
5. Oppose efforts to reduce U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) funds and support expanded eligibility and access to these funds.

Public Safety and Emergency Disaster Preparedness

Solano County supports federal legislative and regulatory actions that promote funding for key justice, public safety, and emergency preparedness programs. The County opposes efforts to cut funding for such programs, as well as efforts to restrict local flexibility in program administration. Specific principles include:

1. Support funding for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne/JAG) Program, the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP), the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG), and Title IV-E Juvenile Probation Services funding.
2. Support funding for emergency disaster preparedness programs, such as FEMA - Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG), the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI), and emergency disaster preparedness and infrastructure damage recovery programs.
3. Support funding for prevention, intervention, victim support and services for families experiencing domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, dating violence, stalking, elder abuse and human trafficking.
4. Support funding for the prevention and enforcement of financial exploitation of vulnerable populations.
5. Support legislation to provide Federal offset to recover outstanding restitution ordered to the victims of crimes and other delinquent court ordered fines, penalty assessments, and fees associated with criminal or juvenile justice proceedings. Support new legislation that would increase the collection term from three years to between 10 and 20 years, thereby avoiding having to seek civil judgments against clients.
6. Support funding to implement supervision strategies and evidence-based practices that consider the treatment and service needs of targeted probationers such as sexual offenders, domestic violence offenders, and/or those with mental illness.
7. Support funding for flood protection, particularly as it pertains to areas where governmental and municipal buildings play a role in local emergency response.
8. Support efforts to extend high urban threat areas delineation to include rural locations and sensitive areas adjacent to rail.
9. Support legislation that improves the availability, affordability and coverage for earthquake and flood insurance.
10. Support efforts to enhance capacity of local emergency responders to respond to potential emergency events resulting from hazardous materials releases from rail cars.

Resource Management, Environmental Health, and Sustainability

Solano County supports federal legislative and regulatory actions that promote the environmental health and sustainability of the County, including funding for key programs. The County opposes efforts to cut funding for such programs, as well as efforts to restrict local flexibility in program administration. Specific principles include:

1. Support Federal funding for green road maintenance and other enhancements to the transportation network that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
2. Support funding and incentives for smart growth and sustainable development.

3. Support measures that further the goals of the County's climate protection and sustainability efforts as referenced in the Board-adopted Climate Action Plan.
4. Support actions that improve environmental health regulatory program implementation, which improves the County's ability to provide a responsive, efficient and effective County Environmental Health program.
5. Support funding for County programs and projects that address sustainability issues such as air quality improvement, energy efficiency, water conservation, renewable energy, fuel efficiency, energy adequacy, and security while balancing the reduction of emissions with impacts on business.
6. Support legislation that modifies existing law to improve implementation of environmental health regulatory programs.
7. Support funding for implementation of environmental health programs such as food protection, recreational health, solid waste, liquid waste, water supply and hazardous materials programs.
8. Support legislation that reduces or simplifies reporting requirements for local environmental health programs to the state.
9. Oppose FEMA proposals to require local jurisdictions to purchase repetitive loss properties.
10. Support funding that improves land use planning for major economic drivers and infrastructure projects in the County.
11. Support legislation that fosters, establishes or expands regional purchasing capabilities and inter-jurisdictional infrastructure development to achieve local environmental and sustainability goals/requirements.

Transportation

Solano County supports federal legislative and regulatory actions that promote and protect the transportation needs of our community. The County opposes efforts to cut funding for key transportation programs, as well as efforts to restrict local flexibility in the administration of such programs. Specific principles include:

1. Support efforts to protect and increase funding for transportation programs and projects within the County.
2. Support a robust Federal transportation reauthorization measure that provides the highest possible funding level for key local transportation programs and projects, including local roads, bridges, and transit priorities.
3. Support consideration of an increase or the indexing of the Federal gasoline tax and alternative sources of funding.
4. Support continued funding of the FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) for airport capital improvement projects.
5. Support efforts to improve rail and rail car safety, including positive train control (PTC) technologies, for transportation of hazardous materials including crude oil.
6. Support legislative efforts to that establish reciprocity between the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Veterans and Veterans Affairs

Solano County supports federal legislative and regulatory actions that promote and protect the health and general welfare of veterans in our community. The County opposes efforts to cut funding for key veterans programs, as well as efforts to restrict local flexibility in the administration of such programs. Specific principles include:

1. Support efforts that provide enhanced benefits for veterans and active duty, reserve and National Guard members that are cost-neutral to counties, including expanded mental health services.
2. Support efforts that would provide increased access for County Veterans Service Offices (CVSO) to VA information systems for use in developing and monitoring claims submitted on behalf of veterans, including but not limited to the federal Public Assistance and Reporting Information System (PARIS).
3. Support efforts to create a federal/state/local government partnership to reduce the VA veteran's claims backlog and expand outreach services to veterans.
4. Support legislation that would make it a criminal offense to intentionally misdirect or mislead a veteran, or anyone acting on the veterans behalf, concerning benefits or entitlements.

5. Support efforts to expand/increase VA responsibility to educate veterans on their entitlements.
6. Support legislation that would establish priority enrollment and registration for veterans in community colleges, state colleges, and universities.
7. Support legislation and funding to improve existing and construct new local veteran's facilities.
8. Oppose legislative efforts to reduce, cap or otherwise negatively impact veterans, active duty, reserve and National Guard members' pay and compensation packages.
9. Support legislation that would eliminate the Means Test (Income limits) for veterans to qualify for VA medical care.
10. Support legislation that would authorize VA pharmacies to honor prescriptions written by non-VA physicians.
11. Support legislation that would expand the eligibility criteria for VA Dental Services for veterans eligible for VA Healthcare.
12. Support legislation that would provide CVSO's to send veteran claims electronically to the Veteran's Administration using D to D technology and the County's Vet Pro platform.

Other Agency Legislative Priorities

1. Delta County Coalition - Support the principles developed collectively by the Delta Counties Coalition.
2. Solano Transportation Authority – Support the 2016 federal legislative priorities and programs as outlined and adopted by the Solano Transportation Authority.
3. Travis Community Consortium – Support the mission of all military organizations located within the County. Support the 2016 federal legislative priorities adopted by the Travis Community Consortium.