



By John Palminteri
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SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, Calif. – Assemblymember Gregg Hart (D)- 37th District, is getting input from his district residents in a one-on-one outreach.

All this week, Hart has been setting up sidewalk table hours.

He has been working in areas including Nipomo, Santa Maria, Buellton, Solvang and the last three stops today were Goleta, Santa Barbara and Carpinteria.

Topics included, housing challenges, inflation, medical costs and crime.

A postcard mailer went out to thousands of people in multiple cities within the last two weeks.

Santa Barbara resident Kathleen Banks said, "and I thought, I'm going to be there that day it's a wonderful idea."

During the mid day Hart was at the corner of De la Guerra St. and Anacapa St. surrounded by citizens with concerns. It was very similar in other areas. "We've had overflowing crowds from Nipomo to Guadalupe, Santa Maria, Solvang, Buellton, everywhere we've been. It is something I did with Assemblymember Jack O'Connell 40 years ago when I worked with him."

The recent souring insurance costs in high fire areas was one of the hot topics.

John Ahlman a former firefighter said, "it's a problem. If you're a renter in a home up in the hills your owner will up your rent by half."

Medical concerns were brought up on many levels, including overall care and housing for doctors.

Rikki Emory said, "because the cost of housing here is so high that doctors can't afford to stay here. They can't afford to buy houses which is ultimately what they want to do. "

Hart said there have certainly been some specific issues to the different locations where these events were held. "In Nipomo there is a concern about a housing development going in. Folks wanted to make sure the environmental review process was robust. We've had conversations about housing, it is very top of mind."

At these sessions, Hart's staff wrote down notes, and took information so they could stay in touch with those who had a concern.

"We get together after these meetings and debrief and talk about the issues and questions people have asked," said Hart. He wanted to "make sure they get the answers about the state programs or legislation they are interested in."

Even though there were many people gathered, Banks said, "I think it is terrific and everyone is so nice and no one is jumping ahead of each other. It's lovely. "

<https://keyt.com/news/local-politics/2023/07/19/in-person-assemblymember-gregg-hart-is-meeting-with-the-public-throughout-his-district-during-sidewalk-hours/>