

Assemblyman Gregg Hart Reflects on His First 100 Days in Office

Former Santa Barbara County supervisor serves in the same position for which he volunteered four decades ago

by Grace Kitayama
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Forty years ago, as a college student attending [UCSB](#), [Gregg Hart](#) volunteered to campaign for then-[Assemblyman Jack O’Connell](#).

Now, after four decades in local politics, Hart has completed his first 100 days in office as the Assembly member representing California’s 37th District.

“It was the 35th Assembly District in those days, and it’s the 37th now,” Hart said.

As a volunteer, he and other college students knocked on thousands of doors to campaign for O’Connell, an unlikely winner for the Assembly.

“There’s nothing better than talking directly to people, and they’re in the home, about the issues that matter to them,” Hart said. “You really understand what it is people want to see government doing.”

Despite being brand new to the Assembly, Hart has been appointed as the assistant majority leader and has been appointed to the Assembly Transportation Committee, the Water Parks and Wildlife Committee, the Appropriations Committee, the Public Safety Budget Committee, and the Arts, Sports, Entertainment, and Tourism Committee.



Splitting his time between Santa Barbara and Sacramento, Hart flies to the state’s Capitol on Monday to be there when meetings start at 1 p.m.

He works in Sacramento through Thursday, while district director Ethan Bertrand and his staff team work throughout the district. On Thursday afternoon, Hart flies home to meet with constituents, work with his team and attend events over the weekend.

“It’s very fast paced, and I’m working extremely hard, but I love every minute,” Hart said. “I feel like this is an incredible responsibility that I take very seriously. And I’m honored to have the opportunity to represent our community in the Capitol.”

Hart introduced his first bill on Feb. 6, aimed at getting public transit services to remain operable during emergencies in order to assist with evacuations. Hart said this will be necessary since storms such as the ones in January will only be more frequent because of climate change.

“We have to prepare for both situations, long droughts and big floods,” Hart said. “So, I’m going to be working a lot in that space.”

Looking into the near future, Hart said he hopes to aid nonprofit community organizations that have helped with emergency response and try to provide more advanced planning to use those resources effectively in disasters.

“We want to take advantage of community members and organizations that are ready to help assist local governments and make that a more uniform capability throughout the state,” Hart said. “It’s a little bit of an untapped resource that needs to be better organized to be most effective.”

Before assuming his role in the State Assembly, Hart served as the Second District Santa Barbara County supervisor and, before that, as a member of the Santa Barbara City Council and staff member for the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments.

Hart said he was proud of the work he was able to do in working with the other four members of the county Board of Supervisors despite coming from vastly different backgrounds.

“Despite really widely varying ideological views and life experiences, we all worked extraordinarily well together, because we listened carefully to each other and we’re respectful and civil,” Hart said. “We weren’t trying to take credit for things, we were just trying to accomplish things.”

Hart said he brings the same ethics to the Capitol, but instead of five members on the Board of Supervisors, there are 80 members in the State Assembly.

“So, it’s just taking awhile to get to know people,” Hart said. “Going into coffees and having conversations with people to understand their district and understand their perspective on issues so that there’s trust and respect.”

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