

## Political opposites Stoker, Hart facing off for 37th Assembly seat in Nov. 8 election

By Mike Hodgson [mhodgson@santamariatimes.com](mailto:mhodgson@santamariatimes.com)  
October 3, 2022

Current and former Santa Barbara County supervisors, one a liberal and the other a conservative, are each hoping to capture the seat for the new 37th Assembly District in the Nov. 8 General Election.

Gregg Hart, a Democrat and 2nd District supervisor, and Mike Stoker, a Republican and former 2nd and 5th districts supervisor, are seeking the seat that has no incumbent, as the 2021 redistricting left first-time legislator Steve Bennett of Ventura outside the new district.

The 37th Assembly District now encompasses all of Santa Barbara County plus a little sliver of the southwestern corner of San Luis Obispo County.

While Stoker has longtime name recognition from his previous extensive public service, he still faces an uphill battle in a district where registered

Democrats are nearly double the number of registered Republicans.

The key will be winning over voters with no party preference, who account for only about 5% less than registered Republicans.

### Here's a brief look at Gregg Hart:

The owner and operator of the family-owned Transitions Preschool for more than 20 years, Hart said he supports early childhood education and believes training a secure workforce for the state is a key component to strengthening the economy.



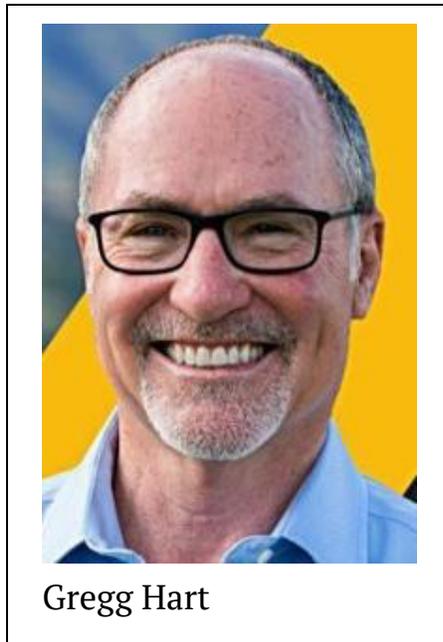
Santa Barbara County 2nd District Supervisor Gregg Hart speaks to the media during a March 16, 2020, press conference updating the public on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The economy has certainly become a major issue,” Hart said during the June primary campaign, and he sees multiple ways to support and grow the economy.

He said he supports policies that will help farmers produce, because the agriculture industry is an important part of both the local and state economies.

Hart, a Santa Barbara native, said investing in infrastructure, including green and sustainable transportation options, is another important aspect of the economy, which he said he’s familiar with after serving as the first manager of Santa Barbara County Association of Government’s Traffic Solutions program.

He subsequently served as deputy executive director of SBCAG.



Gregg Hart

As a former member of the California Coastal Commission, Hart is also strong on protecting the environment, and serving as a Santa Barbara planning commissioner stoked his interest in addressing the lack of affordable housing.

He said he also supports finding innovative solutions to homelessness, having served as chair of the Elected Leaders Forum on Homelessness.

Hart also has a focus on equity and inclusion, along with reforming the criminal justice system.

Hart began his political career as a legislative assistant for Assemblyman Jack O’Connell, working on his successful 1982 campaign for the 35th Assembly District seat.

After serving four terms on the Santa Barbara City Council, starting in 1995, Hart was elected to the Board of Supervisors in 2018.

### **Election Basics**

The 2022 General Election will take place Tuesday, Nov. 8, with polls in Santa Barbara County open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

But voters can cast their ballots as soon as they receive them either by mailing them through the U.S. Postal Service, depositing them in one of the county's secure drop boxes or delivering them to a County Elections Office in Santa Maria, Lompoc and Santa Barbara.

For complete information on the election, visit [www.countyofsb.org/222/Clerk-Recorder-Assessor-Elections-CRAE](http://www.countyofsb.org/222/Clerk-Recorder-Assessor-Elections-CRAE).

### **Party registration**

The latest information from the California Secretary of State's Office for the 37th Assembly District shows 117,205 voters, or 46.2%, registered as Democrats; 65,595, or 25.9%, registered as Republicans; and 52,709, or 20.8%, registered with no party preference.

The rest of the district's 253,768 registered voters are divided up among American Independent (3.7%), Green (0.5%), Libertarian (1.1%) Peace and Freedom (0.5%) and other and unknown party affiliations.

[https://santamariatimes.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/political-opposites-stoker-hart-facing-off-for-37th-assembly-seat-in-nov-8-election/article\\_2498793d-6a58-5ef0-ae6a-4971ab8cd1be.html](https://santamariatimes.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/political-opposites-stoker-hart-facing-off-for-37th-assembly-seat-in-nov-8-election/article_2498793d-6a58-5ef0-ae6a-4971ab8cd1be.html)