

37th State Assembly District Candidate Gregg Hart Talks Housing and Homelessness

The hopeful outlines priorities for addressing some of the biggest issues affecting Santa Barbara County and southern San Luis Obispo County

By Serena Guentz
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After the 2020 Census and the subsequent redistricting in California, a new [37th State Assembly District](#) was created — encompassing all of Santa Barbara County and part of southern San Luis Obispo County — and on Nov. 8, voters will elect an [Assembly](#) member to represent the district.

Candidates for California’s 37th State Assembly District include Gregg Hart, currently representing the Second District on the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, and Mike Stoker, who served on the county Board of Supervisors from 1986 to 1994.

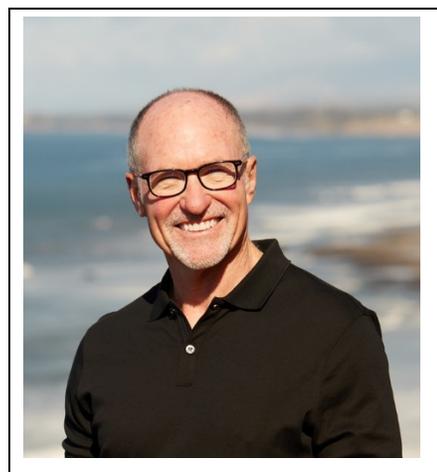
Gregg Hart

Hart, who grew up in Santa Barbara and graduated from both Santa Barbara City College and UC Santa Barbara, has been serving Santa Barbara for more than 30 years, beginning in 1987 when he was appointed to the Santa Barbara Planning Commission.

Hart was then elected to the Santa Barbara City Council in 1995 and 1999, and again in 2013 and 2017. From 2000 to 2004, Hart served on the California Coastal Commission, and most recently, he was elected to the county’s Board of Supervisors in 2018.

“I have been a local government official for many years and really value public service. This opportunity was unique because there’s a brand-new district that represents all of Santa Barbara County

and part of south San Luis Obispo County, and that description matches my life experience really well,” Hart said. “I feel like I have a lot to add to the work in Sacramento that will help the residents of our district.”



Some of Hart's main goals, if elected to the Assembly, involve housing, climate and education.

"I hear from employers every day that they have jobs, but they are having a very hard time getting people to fill those jobs because the cost of housing has become so high, so that is a priority," Hart said. "There's an interesting success story here in the city of Santa Barbara when the [Housing Authority](#) had a local, reliable funding stream to build affordable housing. They were able to build 5,000 units for about 30 years.

"Now, they have to rely on grants — they're sporadic and unreliable, and it has really affected their ability to deliver affordable housing units. I'd like to see us restore that as a regular, dependable source of revenue for local governments to build affordable housing."

With homelessness, Hart said he is supportive of approaches such as the recent [DignityMoves projects](#) — small, individual cabin homes with onsite wrap-around services. He added that DignityMoves representatives have expressed that they see Santa Barbara County as a good pilot program.

Hart said education is another key topic he is focusing on, with schools preparing students for the workforce.

"We're really lucky to have tremendous community colleges here — both Santa Barbara City College and [Allan Hancock College](#) — and they are a great bridge between the K-12 system and higher education, and they serve such a critical role," Hart said. "We need to support them and give them the tools they need to do even more work."

Hart emphasized his experience in local government and how important it is to collaborate with people to figure out together how to achieve goals.

"One of the things I'm most proud about is our work on the Board of Supervisors. We have very divergent ideologic views, and yet we work really respectfully and civilly together. I think that's rare these days in government," Hart said. "I think that my style and leadership values that I bring to the conversation will help support that kind of work in Sacramento, too."

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