

# NORTH COUNTY

## ..... News .....



### Advocating for Mental Health Infrastructure at NACo Conference

As San Joaquin County's representative on the National Association of Counties (NACo), I recently traveled to Washington, D.C., with Genevieve Valentine, San Joaquin County Behavioral Health Director, to advocate for a commonsense solution to address the real reason so many with mental illness are on the streets harming not only themselves but threatening the safety of our community as a whole.

I introduced an interim resolution that was passed by the NACo Board of Directors urging Congress to Clarify Treatment of Certain Facilities Located on the Same Campus under Federal IMD Law. My resolution urges the federal government to grant flexibility under the federal Institutes for Mental Disease (IMD) policy that would apply the 16-bed limit separately to up to 10 hospitals, nursing facilities, or other institutions located on the same campus. You can read my resolution in the NACo platform [here](#).

San Joaquin County is planning a new mental health campus near San Joaquin General Hospital. This change would allow us to place additional treatment beds on that campus while ensuring full reimbursement. It means more residents can receive care locally, reducing the need to send foster children—an average of 56 to 77 each year—to out-of-county facilities. I am proud to lead this effort.



### SJ CARES

If you see someone who needs assistance or an encampment that needs clearing, contact Probation's SJ CARES team at: [sjcares@sjgov.org](mailto:sjcares@sjgov.org)



### MySanJoaquin App

Report a pothole, illegal dumping, streetlight outages and more by downloading the MySanJoaquin app and connecting directly with Public Works.

Available at the Apple Store or Google Play for Android.



## Why This Matters: Fixing the 16-Bed Limit for Better Mental Health Care

Right now, federal rules prevent Medicaid from covering mental health care in facilities with more than 16 beds. This outdated policy, in place since 1965, limits access to treatment and strains local resources.

- **More Flexibility, Better Care:** If funding rules allowed multiple 16-bed units on the same campus, counties could expand services without forcing patients to seek care far from home.
- **Impact on San Joaquin County:** With its growing population, the county is working to build larger facilities. Rural areas also suffer, with patients stuck in emergency rooms waiting for limited mental health beds.
- **Missed Opportunities for Funding & Care:** In the 2023-24 fiscal year, San Joaquin County's 16-bed psychiatric facility brought in \$4.5 million in Medi-Cal funding. If capacity doubled to 32 beds (or added another 16-bed unit), funding would increase to \$9 million—money that could be reinvested into community mental health programs, keeping families together, and reducing costly out-of-county patient transfers.
- **Foster Youth at Risk:** A local facility had to reduce its beds from 34 to 16 due to these rules, meaning 18 fewer spots for San Joaquin County foster youth. This issue is happening statewide, forcing vulnerable children out of their local communities, where they have friends and family.

**Bottom line:** Changing the 16-bed limit would improve care, keep funding local, and provide more treatment options for those in need.

Advocating for better mental health care access and stronger protections for our local wine industry reflect my priorities because they are essential to maintaining a thriving, healthy, and economically robust San Joaquin County, a goal we can all share.



Supervisor Ding & U.S. Senator Alex Padilla

Supervisor Steve Ding met with U.S. Senator Alex Padilla to discuss a shared goal: tackling America's growing mental health crisis. Senator Padilla is working on new legislation, and Supervisor Ding's resolution supports his efforts. At NACo on March 4, Senator Padilla highlighted the urgent need for a common-sense, bipartisan approach and acknowledged that Central Valley Supervisors were there to push for real solutions.

## Funding Local Priorities



*Thornton Basketball Courts*  
Supervisor Ding's use of District Funds for the recent construction of two basketball courts in Thornton next to the Thornton Community Center supports the Board of Supervisors Strategic Board Priority 3 to Support a Healthy Community.



*Supervisor Ding with Cheryl Francis, Founder of Grace & Mercy Foundation upon receipt of \$10,000 from San Joaquin County for essential food supplies to support family and senior food ministries for those experiencing troubled times.*



*Supervisor Ding joined Ms. Veldhuizen's 3rd-grade class from John Muir at the 2025 Lodi AgVenture, where thousands of students got hands-on farm education. His support helped cover transportation costs for schools in need!*

## Advocating for our Growers

In addition to my work on mental health, my trip to D.C. focused on protecting our local wineries and agricultural economy. I was able to set up a meeting for the California Association of Wine Grape Growers with Congressman Frank Lucas (R-OK 3rd District), a senior member of the House Agriculture Committee, to discuss the “duty drawback” policy, which allows cheap foreign grape juice imports while undercutting local wineries. This loophole harms small, family-owned vineyards in and around Lodi, which rely on fair market conditions to thrive.

Agriculture is San Joaquin County’s economic backbone, and the wine industry drives tourism, commerce, and cultural vibrancy. I am committed to standing up for our local growers and ensuring policies support their success.



Supervisor Ding, Nicole Goehring and Amy Blagg in California Association of Winegrape Growers Meeting with Congressman Frank Lucas



Ben Kolber, Supervisor Ding and Amy Blagg, Executive Director Lodi District Grape Growers Association

The San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors approved \$6,000 for spay and neuter vouchers to help reduce pet overpopulation. This program, in partnership with APL and the SF SPCA, supports responsible pet ownership. For details, call 209-468-3113.



## Critical Resources

24/7 Mental Health  
Crisis Phone Line  
209-468-8686

24/7 Peer Support  
Warmline  
209-468-3585

Suicide Hotline  
1-800-SUICIDE  
(784-2433)

Institute for Aging  
Friendship Line  
1-800-971-0016

Veterans’ Crisis Line  
1-800-273-8255

Local Resources  
211

SJREADY  
Sign up for  
emergency alerts  
at [www.sjready.org](http://www.sjready.org)





## Protecting the Delta

In a meeting with Ricky Gill, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for South and Central Asian Affairs I was able to send a message to the Trump Administration that a cheaper, faster, and more effective way to deliver water to Southern California—one that avoids a multi-billion-dollar bureaucratic nightmare while protecting the Delta and Valley farmers is through the Delta, not around the Delta.

The Through Delta Conveyance gets water to the same destination without the harmful impacts. As San Joaquin County's voice on the Delta Counties Coalition, I will work to make sure it gets the attention it deserves.

*Supervisor Ding and Ricky Gill, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for South and Central Asian Affairs*



*Supervisor Ding celebrates the County's 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with the City of Lodi.*



## Upcoming MAC Meetings

Lockeford MAC

April 17, 2025

7 pm

*Lockeford Community Center*

Woodbridge MAC

April 24, 2025

6:30 pm

*Woodbridge Fire Department*

Thornton MAC

May 7, 2025

6:30 pm

*Thornton Community Center*

Waterloo-Morada MAC

May 8, 2025

5:30 pm

*Waterloo-Morada Fire District*

Linden - Peters MAC

May 21, 2025

7 pm

*Linden-Peters Fire District  
Classroom*



*Discussing wildfire prevention! At a recent OES Roundtable, Supervisor Ding highlighted the similarities between Congressman Harder's Fix Our Forest Act and the 2003 Healthy Forests Restoration Act, emphasizing the need for strong land management policies.*

# Supervisor Ding Leads Effort for Voter ID and End of Same-Day Registration

On February 11, the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors approved letters to state and federal leaders urging changes to election laws to require voter identification for all elections and eliminate same-day voter registration. These measures aim to enhance election integrity, control costs, and bolster public confidence in the electoral process.

Currently, 36 states have laws that request or require voters to present identification at the polls. Additionally, more than half of U.S. states do not allow same-day voter registration. While same-day registration was originally implemented to increase voter accessibility, it has presented administrative challenges and contributed to delays in election certification. California law allows people to register and vote with a provisional ballot up to 14 days before an election, including Election Day. However, processing provisional ballots requires additional staff time, resources, and costs, as each ballot must be verified before it is counted. Both the California Secretary of State and the San Joaquin County Registrar of Voters websites say the registration deadline is 14 days before the election. This discrepancy needs to be fixed to make the rules clear, consistent, and more efficient.

I was happy to lead this effort by bringing this item to the Board. "Requiring ID to vote is simply common sense—it's needed for everyday tasks, so why not for something as important as voting? Same-day registration only adds confusion and costs more to verify voters. Enforcing registration deadlines helps save taxpayer money."

On January 9, 2025 the San Joaquin County Election Advisory Committee (EAC) unanimously approved a recommendation supporting these election law changes.

On March 25, 2025 President Trump signed an Executive Order to Preserve and Protect the Integrity of American Elections.

## Youth Leadership

Read Vince's essay here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/SinigagliaEssay>



On February 25, I invited Vince Sinigaglia and Kanaan Taha, two winners of this year's Martin Luther King Jr. Breakthrough Art Project to read their inspiring essays that reflected on Dr. King's powerful words: "We must accept finite disappointment but never lose infinite hope." Their insight on hope through struggle and loss is a reminder of the bright future ahead.



Read Kanaan's essay here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/TahaEssay>

## Board Approves New Staff to Improve Customer Service and Permit Processing

Thanks to Supervisor Ding's efforts, the Board of Supervisors approved three new positions in the Community Development Department to enhance customer service and speed up permit processing.

- Business Analyst II – Improves Accela system efficiency.
- Development Services Senior Technician – Provides customer support and streamlines permit applications.
- Plan Check Engineer II – Reviews plans to expedite approvals.

These roles will make the permitting process faster and easier for the public.

"Computers are great tools, but in customer service, nothing beats a human being," added District Four Supervisor Steve Ding. "These changes strengthen communication and put the customer first."



Supervisor Ding was recognized by SJCERA Chairman Mike Restuccia for his significant contributions as a trustee of the SJCERA Board during which time SJCERA's assets grew from \$3.8B to \$4.6B.



District Four has an opening for a Civil Service Commissioner. The Civil Service Commission deals with county personnel matters and aims to bring the best qualified persons into county service. More details can be found [here](#). You can apply [here](#).

## Contact Information

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On Facebook and Instagram  
Supervisor Steve Ding

