



A Socially Just Local Economy

As Democrats, we believe that economic policy should be driven by the principle of solidarity- the understanding that **we are all in the same boat**. We believe that economic policy should be driven by the understanding that we have a shared responsibility and interest in protecting and increasing the economic well being and vitality of all segments of our society. While Santa Barbara is famous for its high-profile wealth, we know that ours is a middle-class community, and is dependent on the hard work of thousands of low-wage workers who are grossly underrepresented in policy and government. Local economic policy should reflect this reality, and focus on supporting the economy from the ground up.

This means adopting policies which promote decent wages, rights on the job, investment in public services, a strong social safety net and high employment rates. For too long we have suffered under the orthodoxy of low wages, artificially low taxes and a fiscal and tax policy which shelters the ultra-wealthy and overburdens the middle class. We believe fundamentally that prosperity begets prosperity, but only when it is broadly shared. This idea is good for working people and good for business. We believe in a **diverse local economy** that encourages economic growth in all sectors-including agriculture and industry, aerospace and information technology, entertainment and education, in addition to the traditionally strong service and hospitality industries. A diverse economy is more secure and sustainable over the long run, and attracts and retains a more vibrant and varied population.

Together with sound economic policy, **unions are the most effective tools for ensuring a fair share for working people**, and for democratizing the workplace. We support the right of any worker to organize and join unions, and view the labor movement and its allies as crucial partners in building the just local economy we envision. Contrary to decades of anti-union rhetoric, the labor movement is not a “special interest”, and we reject cynical attempts to pit one group of workers against another.

This shared vision of a high-road economy includes the following:

- Tax and zoning policy that spurs the creation of high-wage, environmentally responsible jobs.
- Living wage laws at the city and county levels.
- Efficient, affordable public transportation, and well maintained infrastructure.
- Education and social policy that opens doors of opportunity to marginalized youth to gain skills and access to jobs.
- Elected officials who work in good faith with public employee unions to secure fair contracts.
- The broad use of Project Labor Agreements on construction projects.
- Policies and practices that favor local businesses and good employers over low-wage, corporate chains.
- Ongoing dialog and cooperation with partners like the Tri-Counties Central Labor Council, PUEBLO and SBCAN to advocate for working people.
- Policies that attract and support members of the “creative class”, a crucial economic and cultural engine.
- The elimination of exploitation of immigrant workers, and an end to the use of local agencies in Federal immigration law enforcement.
- Balanced budgets and fiscal responsibility via progressive revenue enhancement and increased efficiency, not regressive taxation or recessionary job cuts.