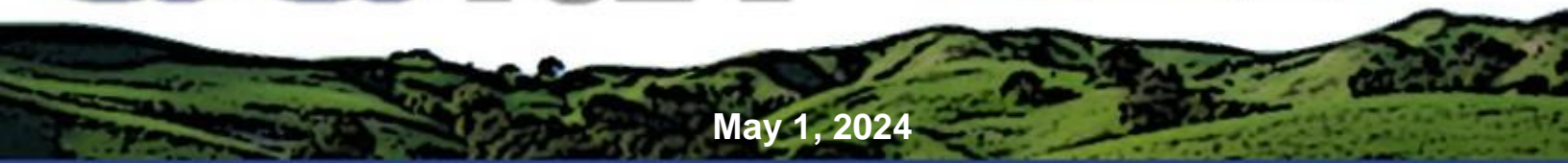




Promoting accountable, cost-effective and efficient government and opposing unnecessary taxes and spending



May 1, 2024

Speaker Presentation

CoCoTax Officers

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2nd Vice President

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Treasurer/Secretary

Honorable Mike McGill
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Summary of CoCoTax Breakfast Board Meeting 4-26-24 Speaker Presentation

Mary Knox, long time Contra Costa County Prosecutor

The DA’s office investigations reveal that a wide array of crimes and victims occur in situations where there is a lack of accountability. For example, victims of 1) Government grants 2) non-profit programs and 3) measures approved by the voters. Many of these grants and programs provide duplicate services causing waste. It took a supervisor nearly 10 minutes just to list the programs available in Contra Costa County addressing mental health programs. It has the appearance of waste or abuse in expenditures.

There are “community-based” organizations receiving funding which is fraudulently obtained with little to no oversight. There was a community-based program in Richmond, “All Hands on Deck”, that was paid by the CDCR to provide housing and services to state prison parolees and represented that it had 81 employees. The program was actually run by a convicted felon who was the only employee. Following a criminal investigation, it was discovered that he defrauded the state and federal government out of \$35 million.

Elder abuse is now a major problem with “romance” with “investment” swindlers. Elders are the fastest growing segment of our population and control seventy percent of wealth in the United States. The senior citizens have become a target of scammers and lose literally billions of dollars every year. There are romance scams, financial frauds, and online fishing of money from seniors. They entice seniors to send money online with marketing about how much money they can make and then the site and money disappears. Even reputable sites are “copied”. About 30% of those on Match.com are scammers. It is imperative for seniors to shut off any financial discussion or action online.

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September 1, 2023

Speaker Presentation, Continued

Elder care homes have little regulation and oversight, resulting in many complaints and even deaths. Worse and more harm is done by a lack of regulation of elder care residences. An example of this was a 93-year-old with dementia who wandered and had access to caustic cleaning solution in an unlocked kitchen who died after he drank the cleaning solution causing chemical burns to his mouth and esophagus. Very little regulation exists for protecting seniors in domestic care. There are no requirements for alarms that alert caregivers when a dementia care resident leaves his apartment, or automatic closures or locks on doors that automatically lock when closed. Even firearms are not prohibited. The facilities argue it is too stressful to have these regulations. If a senior is looking at facilities ask 1) what regulations are required, 2) what safety protections are in place. We are in need of effective regulations of elder care facilities.

The “homeless” problem has resulted in increasing levels of crime and deaths due to addiction, especially from fentanyl. The true effects of addiction from cocaine and fentanyl are life threatening. People live in boxes on sidewalks, and have lost jobs, their families and friends as a consequence of their addiction. You can purchase a pill of fentanyl for only \$10.00. Drugs are so accessible. In 2017 we stopped prosecuting misdemeanor drug possession. Formerly, we had an effective drug diversion program. Charging them with possession was a good way to get them into treatment. There were 52 drug related deaths in 2017. It rose to 183 drug deaths in 2022. They do not go voluntarily. Now we administer NARCAN to those who have overdosed to bring them back to life. More than half the homeless are drug addicts and half have mental health issues. It is degrading society if we don’t do something about it.

Seniors must be careful in parking lots. We have had 5 armed robberies in a month. Using outside ATM’s can be dangerous. Go into your bank whenever you can. Never leave a purse on a car seat. You are a target when you enter the trunk of your car. Forget about using your trunk. Get in your car and lock the door before using your cell phone for messages. As victims you have no representation in court and volunteers must step up to help you.

There is a ballot measure circulating to fix Proposition 47, which set the \$950 limit as a threshold for charging a felony. Felony charging for smaller amounts was eliminated, as was “petty with a prior” which was eliminated as a basis for charging a felony. Proposition 57 released 77,000 inmates from prison. Many crimes were not treated as serious crimes, including domestic violence and human sex trafficking offenses. Of those released, in one case a prison term was reduced from to 19 years to 4, then a second offense was reduced from 12 years to 5, and then he was being prosecuted for murder for a third time. The District Attorney in Santa Clara is proposing to commute all death penalties sentences to life sentences.

How do we get the word out? What publications can we rely on to tell us the true facts? Contra Costa News and News24/680 are on-line news resources that report the crime that is occurring in our county. What organizations are trustworthy to follow? United Contra Costa is a 501(c)(4) with the goal of educating Contra Costa residents about the true impact of prosecutorial policy and proposed new laws on crime and public safety.

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