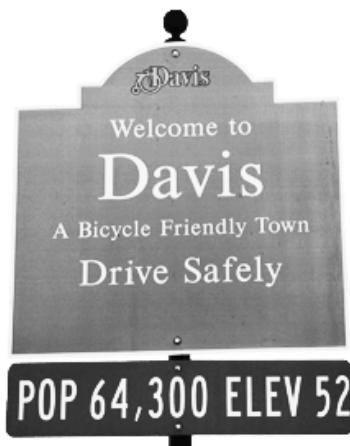


# Saving California Communities

[www.SavingCA.org](http://www.SavingCA.org)

## A New Level of Advocacy



The dysfunction of the state budget process has reached crisis proportions.

The expectation that advocates for one vital service will fight against another local service for scarce dollars is

unacceptable. The choice is not whether to fund schools or police, health care or fire protection.

The choice is whether California develops and implements a fair system of financing and decision making that will ensure the stability of all critical core services needed for a healthy community or continues the unfair, unstable, dysfunctional state finance system that we currently have.

A group of Davis community members have joined forces as Saving California Communities to advocate for permanent structural budget reform at the state level. This group brings together county, city and school elected representatives, educators, parents, students, health professionals, educators, senior citizens, government employees and business owners.

**Our mission is to advocate for the resources necessary to support healthy California communities.**

### ▪ Healthy Communities

Healthy communities rely on an array of local services – education, safety, health, and public works – that address the needs of the whole community.

### ▪ Responsive Government

While key regional and state services are essential, local government agencies are best placed to respond to the needs of their communities.

### ▪ Stable Revenue

California's communities must be supported through stable revenue streams for basic, essential services.

### ▪ Alignment of Resources, Responsibility and Accountability

State-level reform is necessary to support functional government that aligns authority, responsibility, resources and accountability.

### ▪ United Voices

United community voices carry a powerful message for structural reform of the state system of governance. Combined efforts best serve the common good; pitting the interests of one essential service against another essential service is harmful to the entire community.

### ▪ Public Engagement

Public participation and advocacy are essential in mobilizing for reform.

# A New Era of Responsibility: Saving California Communities

*The Davis Enterprise, March 22, 2009*

*What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility – a recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character than giving our all to a difficult task.*

*This is the price and the promise of citizenship.*

*–President Barack Obama, January 20, 2009*

The great French political thinker and historian Alexis de Tocqueville once wrote, "In a democracy, the people get the government they deserve." Reflecting on California state government, there is little to extol. Basic policy decisions have not been reached on the most pressing matters of our day. We are in the middle of an economic crisis of vast proportion; a drought threatens our communities, agriculture and habitat; and transportation and land use planning concerns increasingly demand our attention. Fiscally responsible policy that adequately serves the needs of all Californians seems an almost unattainable goal.

As members of the Davis community, we join in saying, "We deserve better." There is not a person among us – young or old, sick or healthy, prosperous or struggling – who will not be directly affected by this dysfunction.

When facing challenges like these in the past, constituent groups in our community and elsewhere took pen in hand or marched on the Capitol to demand resources for their cause. As the recent budget discord illustrates, this approach no longer serves us well, forcing equally worthy causes to fight for adequate funding as resources shrink. Do we cut mental health programs, street maintenance, or public schools to fund home health services for the aged? Reduce higher education funding to protect public safety? Pit business concerns against those of the environment? The trade-offs are unacceptable. We deserve better.

Born out of these false choices, we have formed an action group, Saving California Communities, to advocate for permanent structural reform of state government. We bring together county, city, and school elected representatives and a wide cross section of community members.

We are united voices for strong, healthy communities in Davis and throughout California. We support clear alignment of resources, authority and accountability. We seek stable revenue for services that respond to public needs. We believe local and regional agencies are best situated to allocate resources on behalf of their residents, and to be accountable for those decisions.

There is strong momentum building for change in California state government. A January 2009 survey conducted by the Public Policy Institute of California found that 75% of Californians believe the state is heading in the wrong direction. Significant efforts are underway to address this fundamental and widely held concern. We are actively engaged with each of these efforts:

- California Forward ([www.caforward.org](http://www.caforward.org)) intends to transform our state government "through citizen-driven solutions to provide better representation, smarter budgeting and fiscal management, and high quality public services."
- The Bay Area Council, a consortium of business groups in the San Francisco Bay Area, is calling for a California Constitutional Convention to "repair our system of governance." ([www.repaircalifornia.org](http://www.repaircalifornia.org))
- The Cities, Counties, Schools Partnership ([www.ccspartnership.org](http://www.ccspartnership.org)) has formed a Joint Task Force on State Budget and Fiscal Reform sponsored by the California League of Cities, the California State Association of Counties, and the California School Boards Association.

It has taken decades to create the intractable situation in which we find ourselves today. Solutions are not simple, but we believe true reform is possible only when whole communities accept President Obama's challenge to take responsibility, "seize gladly" those duties to ourselves and others, and become a force for change.

We invite you to join us in this new Era of Responsibility to obtain the government we deserve.

*Bob Agee, Jan Agee, Sheila Allen, Ruth Asmundson, Davis Campbell, Delaine Eastin, Lucas Frerichs, Jackie Hausman, Barbara Hills, John Hills, Michael Hulsizer, Sara Husby, Hiram Jackson, Charlotte Krovoza, Susan Lovenburg, Karen Mo, Don Palm, Gavin Payne, Jim Provenza, Richard Reed, Don Saylor, Helen Thomson, Kirk Trost, Jay Ziegler*