

POLICY WATCH – May 2019

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While May has brought lots of flowers, it also brought a stinkbomb when SB 50, More Homes for All, didn't get out of committee in the State Legislature. The marquee housing bill for the legislative session, SB 50 was what housing advocates were counting on to help address our housing crisis. NBLC went to Sacramento to fight for the bill to be heard THIS YEAR and will keep up the pressure for substantial new housing until the Legislature takes action to solve the housing crisis in a real way. Delaying action until 2020 is not acceptable

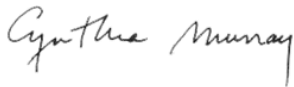
when we are in a crisis.

In this issue, we welcome new member, First 5 – Sonoma County, who will greatly contribute to our work on early child care and education, one of the key priorities of NBLC.

Our State of the North Bay conference is on June 13th. We only have a few tickets left so get your ticket today if you wish to attend. And please take a moment to consider nominating a Leader of the North Bay -- we want to hear who you think is deserving.

As many of us celebrate our college graduates, please check out the article on College Dropouts. Far too many students never complete their education. The study referenced in the article gives us good information on how we can change that. College and career readiness is something we all can do more to improve!

Best,



Cynthia

Housing Crisis Must Mean Something Different in Sacramento

North Bay Leadership Council sent a delegation to our State Capitol on May 22nd to advocate for more housing and the bills that would enable us to achieve that goal. It was very dismaying to see that our urgency about building new homes was not apparent in the Legislature. The Senate Appropriations chair killed the most important housing bill of the year, SB 50 (Wiener) More Homes for All, without even giving it a vote in the committee. Without even a vote in the committee, made up of senators who would have passed the bill out of that committee and moved it forward.



The response in the Capitol gives you a sense that the legislators don't feel there is a housing crisis. They say, "Let's just make SB 50 a two year bill and look at again in 2020." How could this be an acceptable response when our state is underhoused for decades, when we are generating lots of jobs without adding new housing, and when we are experiencing housing losses from fires? How could the Senators not do their part to enable more housing to be built THIS YEAR? Do they not care about the increase in greenhouse gases from more commuters having to commute greater distances to work? Or homelessness is growing throughout the state? Or companies are leaving because they can't hire workers who can afford to live here? Or the increase in poverty due to the high cost of living caused mostly by the high cost of housing?

NBLC members left Sacramento shaking our heads, but with renewed fervor to keep pushing our housing agenda. We are part of a large coalition pressing Senate Pro Tem Atkins to move some kind of major housing bill this year. We told the Governor's staff that we want him to push harder for action this year. All the elected officials and their staffs were given an earful about our housing concerns and urged to treat this housing crisis as the crisis it is.

NBLC will keep working with other housing advocates to keep the support we need at the state, regional and local levels so that new housing of all types is built at the earliest possible opportunity. SB 50, or a bill akin to it, needs to pass. The future of the North Bay depends on it.

State of the North Bay Conference Looks at Why There is So Much Poverty in a Booming Economy



On June 13th, NBLC's The State of the North Bay Conference will present Dr. Micah Weinberg, CEO, California Forward, speaking about the North Bay's economic ecosystem. The economic ecosystem consists of many parts: housing, transportation, jobs, education, workforce, health, economic competitiveness, regulatory environment, and overarching all of these parts, climate change. In the conference, we look at how each of these parts is connected. No longer can we tackle a challenge like housing and without also looking at the other parts of the ecosystem like jobs and transportation. We must approach each solution with an understanding that because of the intersectionality of the issues, the solutions must consider the entire ecosystem.

Dr. Weinberg will be weaving in some of the other factors effecting the lives of North Bay residents. How is it that, given the Bay Area's booming economy, we are seeing growth in poverty in our children and older adults?

Why is the purchasing power of people shrinking despite having decent jobs? Is the middle class an endangered species in the North Bay?

And for the employers who are struggling to fill job openings – what does the future hold for them? How can we better connect providing the right skills to workers that employers need now and in the future? Are we ready to tackle the need to reskill/upskill the current workforce whose skills are no longer in demand?

As David Rothkopf, author of [Great Questions of Tomorrow](#), said, "GDP can grow and so too can inequality, productivity can rise and wages stagnate, job numbers can increase but so too can the number of people out of the job market." We are living in complicated times and we hope this conference allows for a deeper dive into what the real state of the North Bay is, and what we can do collectively to make it better.

Following the keynote talk, a panel will look at three exciting moonshots: how to extend lifespan well beyond what it is today, the future of flying cars and how to fix climate change. Conference attendees will hear about some big ideas that could be game changers. The conference is at the Sheraton Hotel, Petaluma from 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Tickets must be purchased in advance. If you would like more information, please click [Here](#).

Do You Have a Favorite Leader? We Want to Know Who It Is!

NBLC wants to honor the people and organizations in the North Bay whose leadership on challenging issues have made a positive difference in the community. If someone or a group has touched your life in a memorable way, please nominate them for a Leaders of the North Bay Award.

There are five categories:

- From Red Tape to Red Carpet (Leadership in Government)



- United We Stand (Community Building)
- Paint the Community Green (Environmental Stewardship)
- The Light Bulb Went On (Innovative/Entrepreneurial Spirit)
- Empowering the Latino Community (Leadership within the Latino Community)

The deadline to submit a nomination is June 21st. To download a nomination form, please click [here](#). The

honorees will be recognized at an Awards Luncheon at the DoubleTree Hotel, Rohnert Park, on November 1st.

NBLC Welcomes First 5 – Sonoma County as a New Member

North Bay Leadership Council (NBLC) is pleased to announce that the First 5 Sonoma County Commission is its newest member. First 5 invests in Sonoma County's youngest children by funding programs and services that promote, support, and improve the early development of children from the prenatal stage through age five.



NBLC's chair, Craig Nelson, Nelson Family of Companies, said "if we want a vibrant economy, prepared workforce, healthy community and strong civic leadership, there is no better investment than in our youngest children. First 5 Sonoma will add to the depth and breadth of our public policy work on education, workforce preparation, childcare, and community resiliency."

First 5 is funded by [Proposition 10](#), a statewide ballot initiative passed in 1998 that added fifty cents per pack to cigarettes and other tobacco products. The resulting revenues are allocated statewide to First 5 California (20%) and to a First 5 Children and Families Commission in every California county (based on birth rate). First 5 – Sonoma County is transitioning to become an independent public agency as of July 1, 2019. Heretofore, it has been under the County of Sonoma.

The First 5 Sonoma County Commission is the governance body that oversees local First 5 activities. With broad community participation, the Commission has created a Strategic Plan that outlines the needs of young children and their families in the county, the Commission's goals, and its priority outcomes.

In its [Strategic Plan](#), First 5 Sonoma County established School Readiness as its overarching outcome and identified six priority outcomes that support School Readiness. Together, these desired outcomes guide First 5's investments in programs and system change.

- Increase the availability of high quality, accessible health care for children
- Increase early detection of, and intervention for, developmental concerns
- Increase support for parents to strengthen their parenting capacity
- Increase support for parents to strengthen their family's literacy skills

- Increase the availability of high quality early care and education
- Increase the capacity of early care and education providers to link their client families to appropriate health, mental health, substance abuse, and developmental services

Angie Dillon-Shore is the executive director of First 5 Sonoma County and will be the member representative. She previously led the Upstream Investments initiative at the County of Sonoma Human Services Department and earlier served as the director of the Healthy Communities department at Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County.

Dillon-Shore said, “At First 5 Sonoma County, we know that investing in our youngest children *now* ensures a bright future for all Sonoma County residents. The Commission invests more than \$4 million annually in systems and programs that promote family resiliency, children’s health and high-quality early learning programs. We look forward to working with NBLC members to make the lives of our children even more promising.”

About Those College Students Who Dropped Out and Aren’t Graduating in May

David Leonhardt and Sahil Chinoy’s article, [The College Dropout Crisis](#), (New York Times, May 23, 2019 [Link](#)), offer a provocative idea: “American higher education has a dropout problem. About one in three students who enroll in college never earn a degree. But a promising solution is staring us in the face: Schools with similar students often have very different graduation rates. This suggests that the problem isn’t the students — it’s the schools.”

The authors say, “The New York Times and the Urban Institute’s Center on Education Data and Policy undertook a research project because the college-dropout crisis is a major contributor to [American inequality](#). Many lower-income and middle-class students excel in high school only to falter in college. They then struggle to get good jobs.”

The study found, “For too long, high-school students, parents and guidance counselors have hardly thought about graduation rates when choosing a college. And for a long time on many campuses, administrators and faculty members didn’t even know what their college’s graduation rate was.” Fortunately, that is changing. Colleges are zeroing in on their graduation rates and high school counselors are now taking graduation rates into consideration as they steer students towards colleges.

To predict graduation rates, researchers “looked at the characteristics of a college’s students, including income, race, gender, age and test scores. On average, colleges have lower graduation rates when they enroll more lower-income students, more black and Latino students, more men, more older students and more students with low SAT or ACT scores.”

The study “found that the list of top-performing colleges — those that exceed their expected six-year graduation rate — is diverse in almost every way. It spans colleges with expected graduation rates from 18 percent to 80 percent. It includes private colleges, like the University of La Verne, in Southern California, as well as historically black colleges like North Carolina Central and Fayetteville State. It also includes big public universities like San Diego State, New Hampshire, Virginia Tech and several branches of the State University of New York.”

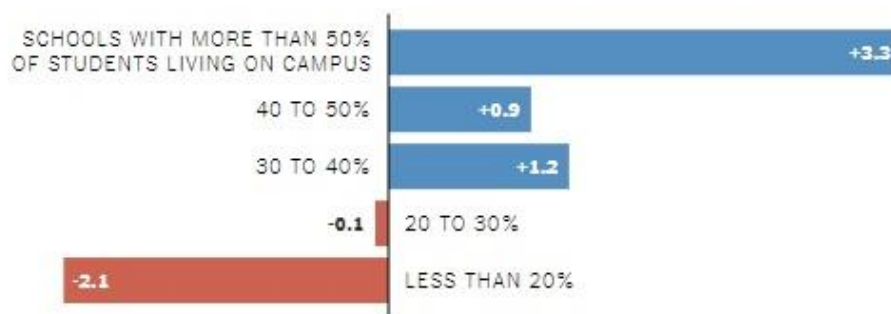
Why do some colleges do so much better than others? “Part of the answer involves structure. Students tend to do better when they are following defined academic paths, rather than ‘aimlessly signing up for classes,’ as Pamela Jackson, the provost of Fayetteville State, said. Her university, for instance, no longer allows students to be classified as undeclared, instead assigning everyone a ‘pre-major’ based on the interests they listed on their application.”

“But perhaps the biggest lesson,” say the authors, “is that the colleges with higher rates of student success simply seem to have been trying harder for longer. They collect data on their students, study that data and use it to remove hurdles for students. They deepen students’ connections to other people on campus, including their classmates (through extracurriculars), professors and advisers. La Verne’s president, Devorah Lieberman, said, ‘The bottom line is connection — feeling like somebody cares.’”

Another important factor involves student living. “At colleges where more students live on campus, graduation rates tend to be higher. After SUNY Brockport, which is near Rochester, began encouraging sophomores to remain in campus housing, for example, graduation rates rose.”

Schools with more students living on campus did better

Average gap between actual and expected graduation rate in percentage points



Note: Averages weighted by enrollment.

Another factor is how student aid is provided. “The most effective way for colleges to spend money may simply be to give it to students — not just to pay for tuition but also to cover living expenses. Research has repeatedly found that financial aid tends to lift graduation rates, said Ben Castleman, an education professor at the University of Virginia. Affordability is ‘probably the biggest factor’ prompting dropouts, he said.”

The study reveals, “student success is not just about money. Some colleges have figured out how to succeed despite modest budgets. The secret, administrators say, is to teach students how to be college students. Virtually every step on a student’s path from application to the final semester presents challenges. And the best colleges often have a plan for each step. The strongest advising programs don’t only tell students what they want to hear; they also remind students of the stakes. Felecia Nave, the provost at North Carolina Central, said that faculty members try to help students ‘understand what they will face in the labor market, understand what their chances are, if they don’t get a college degree.’”

Leonhardt says, “There is much cause for worry in our findings. But there are also many colleges that deserve praise. They’re some of the most impressive schools in the country, because they enroll a diverse mix of students and graduate them in greater numbers than peer schools do. These standouts include

public colleges like Towson, in Maryland; Troy University, in Alabama; and colleges across Pennsylvania, North Carolina and the Pacific Northwest. They also include private colleges like Bethel University in Tennessee and the University of La Verne, in Southern California.”

Leonhardt asks, “Why does all of this matter? Because Catherine Suitor, an administrator at Alliance, a network of Los Angeles high schools, told me, ‘A bachelor’s degree is the single most influential determinant in multigenerational change and ending the cycle of poverty,’”

This information is important if we are going to ensure that North Bay students are college and career ready. Our future workforce depends on their success!

Members in the News

SolarCraft Completes Solar Power Systems at Holy Spirit Church & School

Novato and Sonoma based SolarCraft, a leading North Bay solar installer for over 35 years, recently completed the installation of a 68.6 kW DC solar system at Holy Spirit Church and an 89.6 kW DC solar system on the adjoining Holy Spirit School in Fremont, CA.

Kaiser Permanente in Top 50 Hall of Fame

For the second year in a row, Kaiser Permanente was named to the DiversityInc Top 50 Hall of Fame.

Midstate Construction Completes Hana Gardens Project

Midstate Construction Corporation recently completed construction of Hana Gardens, a new affordable housing community for Eden Housing in El Cerrito, CA.

North Bay Students Participate in STEM Race Car Challenge During NASCAR in Sonoma

More than 900 North Bay students from 45 classrooms and clubs will take part in the 6th annual STEM Race Car Challenge, presented by Friedman’s Home Improvement.

College Of Marin Unveils \$3M Bolinas Marine Lab Rebuild Plan

After more than a dozen years of uncertainty and bureaucratic roadblocks, College of Marin officials this week unveiled its first actual conceptual plans to rebuild the shuttered Bolinas Marine Lab along the Bolinas Lagoon in West Marin.

Midstate Construction Completes NanaWall Production Facility

Midstate Construction Corporation recently completed construction of the NanaWall Production Facility, a new assembly/production facility for NanaWall in North Richmond, CA.

Read more online at www.northbayleadership.org/news



Who We Are

Over twenty five years ago, business leaders founded the North Bay Leadership Council on a simple premise: We can accomplish more by working together. Today, the Council includes 54 leading employers in the North Bay. Our members represent a wide variety of businesses, non-profits and educational institutions, with a workforce in excess of 25,000. As business and civic leaders, our goal is to promote sound public policy, innovation and sustainability to make our region a better place to live and work. For more information: Call 707.283.0028 / E-mail info@northbayleadership.org

www.northbayleadership.org