Kalra Presents Spirit Awards at Native American Heritage Month Celebration

The month of November is nationally recognized as Native American Heritage Month, and Assemblymember Ash Kalra was proud to be a co-host with the American Indian Heritage Celebration (AIHC) Committee this year to celebrate the heritage month here in San José. On Sunday, November 5th, Assemblymember Kalra and AIHC hosted the 2017 American Indian Heritage Celebration, which included a first-ever Community Spirit Awards Ceremony at the ConXion Community Center. This annual celebration brought community members and organizations together to celebrate Native American Heritage Month through great performances from our local tribes, children’s activities, informational resource booths, and a community feed sponsored by Assemblymember Kalra, free for all guests to enjoy.

Residents from around the Bay Area were invited to experience the cultural traditions and heritage of Native Americans. In addition to the festivities, Assemblymember Kalra hosted the first annual Community Spirit Awards to recognize local tribes for their selfless dedication to continuing the Native American legacy and traditions, and for their continued advocacy and education. Kalra had the honor of recognizing the following local tribes: American Indian Alliance, Calpulli Tonalehque, Muwekma Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area, Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, and Ohlone Costanoan Esselen Nation.

“During these challenging times for our nation, it is as important as ever that we understand our history and work to advocate and educate our community on tribal heritage, contributions, and current issues, particularly in regards to protecting tribal lands,” said Assemblymember Kalra. “I want our local tribes and advocates for Native Americans to know that we appreciate the work they do to preserve and protect their heritage and that we are here to support them in that important responsibility.”

Families Fill Downtown Streets to Celebrate 99th Annual Veterans Day Parade

The United Veterans Council of Santa Clara County hosted their 99th Annual Veterans Day Parade in Downtown San José on Saturday, November 11th, with hundreds of onlookers lining the streets to thank veterans and their families for their service. This year, the parade’s Grand Marshal was Rear Admiral William W. Copeland Jr. USN, who retired from the United States Navy in 2000 after serving as the Commander of the Theodore Roosevelt Battlegroup. He has flown over 300 combat missions with over 1,300 carrier arrested landings, and more than 5,000 flight hours in 30 different types of aircraft.

“We should all be grateful for those who choose to serve in our Armed Forces, and taking a moment once a year to specifically show our appreciation is the least we can do for our veterans,” said Assemblymember Kalra. “San José has one of the oldest celebrations in the nation and I look forward to participating in next year’s Centennial celebration!”
MESSAGE FROM ASSEMBLYMEMBER ASH KALRA

In recent months, our nation has been facing the reality of a culture of pervasive sexual harassment and abuse that is being exposed across all facets of American life, from Silicon Valley and the media, to Hollywood and politics. Undoubtedly, the State Capitol has also been rocked by allegations brought forth by courageous women who had hesitated to speak up in the past because the environment was not conducive to protecting them and seeking a just outcome for the perpetrator. It is encouraging that after decades of sexual harassment and abuse being swept under the rug, ignored, encouraged, or settlements quietly disposed of, that we are finally seeing a cultural shift that protects victims as they speak up about the abuse they have suffered while demanding perpetrators to speak to their actions. Sexual harassment is something we as State legislators, and as employers, need to take seriously and need to be accountable for when complaints are made. With revelations that have led to the resignation of two Assemblymembers in recent weeks, we must ensure that no one ever feels afraid to come forward about sexual harassment. Assembly Member Anthony Rendon issued a statement condemning our colleagues’ actions, and I support our Speaker and the Legislative Women’s Caucus in the efforts taken to make sure we do the right thing to protect, support, and investigate claims as they are brought forward by courageous victims against any of my colleagues or others within the Capitol community.

Prior to recent revelations, I am happy to say that the State Assembly Rules Committee, led by Assemblymember Laura Friedman, had already created a sub-committee --- the Subcommittee on Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation Prevention and Response, to address current sexual harassment policies and how to stop the Capitol culture of harassment and abuse. On Tuesday, November 28th, they held their first hearing. One of the most revealing takeaways from the first hearing is the lack of record-keeping of past allegations. Other revelations included the poor quality of mandatory sexual harassment training and the lack of an easy way to file a complaint. These are all issues I look forward to working on and efforts I will wholeheartedly support. Additionally, I plan on supporting a proposed bill authored by my colleague Assemblymember Kevin McCarty, which would require perpetrators of sexual harassment and abuse to pay out settlements from their own pocket rather than having the taxpayers foot the bill.

In the weeks and months ahead, I am sure more will be revealed. And, I am confident that progress will be made. For my part, I will do whatever I can to support efforts to create a safer environment for all workers, visitors and guests to the State Capitol or in dealing with State agencies and offices. At my recent staff retreat, I made it a point to my employees that we take all complaints very seriously and will protect any staff members who face sexual harassment of any kind, in or out of the office environment. Any form of retaliation, either from alleged perpetrators or others in the Capitol community, against women who speak up about abuse, will not be tolerated. Also, the idea that is being whispered about that some men will simply not take meetings with or hire women is absolutely unacceptable as it further punishes women for the failings and insecurities of men unwilling to face this important moment in history by being a part of the positive cultural change necessary to finally take on the prevalence of sexual harassment and abuse. Thank you for your compassion for those who are victims to a culture that we all hold a responsibility to change.

On a lighter note, as the year comes to an end, I am thankful for the kind support I have received from my constituents as I complete my first official year as your State Assemblymember. I look forward to the start of the next legislative session, and working with my colleagues in creating policies that help our local community and all Californians. I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season with their loved ones!

Sincerely,

Ash Kalra

Support the Autonomous Brown Berets of San Jose’s First Annual Toy Drive

The Brown Berets of San Jose will be holding their first annual toy drive that will be benefitting the children of the San José community. They are asking for toys and gifts for all ages, gift cards for Toys R Us, Babies R Us, Target, and/or any major or local retailer. Toys will be for children ages 0–17, with an emphasis on toys for teens. The Brown Berets are also accepting gift wrapping materials, such as wrapping paper and tape. For more information on the toy drive, and where to drop off your donations, please contact Angelina Rodriguez with the Brown Berets of San Jose at (408) 726-9473. Your donations are tax-deductible! Tax ID/EIN: 82-3304414
Kalra and Staff Hit the Streets to Promote Pedestrian Safety on Halloween Night

Halloween is a fun tradition for children and families to walk around the neighborhood at night to collect treats and show off their costumes. But it also increases the risk for pedestrians as they wonder through busy streets and intersections. Assemblymember Ash Kalra knows how important it is to keep our trick-or-treaters safe from oncoming traffic, so, once again, he joined the Safe from the Start campaign to promote pedestrian safety. Healthier Kids Foundation hosts this Halloween program in Santa Clara County to bring together local agencies and organizations to hand out free glow necklaces to make trick-or-treaters visible on Halloween night. This year Assemblymember Kalra hosted four different glow necklace distribution sites throughout Assembly District 27, and handed out one thousand glow necklaces. The locations included downtown San José, East San José, and a couple in South San José, including Kalra’s own home.

Children flooded over to the various locations when they learned the Assemblymember was giving out free glow necklaces. As many of us know, public safety has been a growing issue in our community, and has always been a priority for the Assemblymember. He was honored to be one of the sponsors in promoting Safe from the Start, along with other supporters—First 5 of Santa Clara County, Honorable County Supervisor Cindy Chavez, UA Local 393 Plumbers, Steamfitters, HVACR Service Technicians, and Working Partnerships USA. The Assemblymember thanks Healthier Kids Foundation for continuously advocating for the care and safety of our children, and for hosting a successful campaign to promote pedestrian safety. We look forward to participating again next Halloween!

Want to learn more about Healthier Kids Foundation? Visit www.hkidsf.org

Select Committee on the Status of Boys and Men of Color Comes to San José

In conjunction with Mayor Sam Liccardo, and the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, the California Assembly Select Committee on the Status of Boys & Men of Color held their briefing for the first time in San José on Wednesday, November 1st at San José City Hall. The 11-member committee, chaired by Assemblymember Reginald B. Jones-Sawyer, Sr., was created to look at comprehensive policies and legislation to reduce barriers to opportunity and build pathways to education and employment for boys and men of color. Assemblymember Ash Kalra is one of the sitting members of the select committee, and urged the Chair to come to the City of San José, who is highly involved with the My Brothers’ Keeper Education Policy Initiative, to learn firsthand the work that is being done in the tenth largest city in the United States.

The briefing included testimonials from non-profit organizations and city agencies, including Silicon Valley De-Bug, City of San José’s Library, Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, and Police Departments, as well as the Alum Rock Unified School District. This event was a part of a state-wide initiative of the California State Assembly Select Committee on the Status of Boys and Men of Color to learn what cities are doing to improve the outcomes for boys and men of color. Coming to San José provided an opportunity for committee members, advocates, and City leaders to sit down to hear what has been done, and what still needs to be done, for the educational advancement of our young students of color. Through library programs, work opportunities, and other partnerships, the City of San José demonstrated the importance of multi-agency collaboration to help youth of color succeed in our community.

“I was grateful that Committee Chair Jones-Sawyer saw the importance of bringing the Committee to San José, to hear first-hand about the work being done by local stakeholders to build strong pathways for the boys and men of color in our community,” said Assemblymember Kalra. “Being my home town for almost 40 years, having worked in criminal justice, and for eight years as a Councilmember, and now as a member of the Select Committee up at the Capitol, I know how important it is for us to work with cities in a joint effort to break down barriers to ensure equal access to tools necessary for academic and professional success.”
Overview of New Laws Going into Effect in January 2018

Since our October newsletter, in which Assemblymember Kalra mentioned three of his bills that were signed into law (AB 1398, AB 1440, and AB 1541), we are happy to announce that four more of Kalra’s bills were signed by Governor Brown, which will go into effect in 2018. Some of his bills that were passed include:

**AB 646 – Rental Unit Disclosure on Flood Hazards:** In response to the devastating flooding along Coyote Creek in February 2017, this bill requires all tenant lease agreements to contain a notice that the property is located in a special flood hazard area or an area of potential flooding.

**AB 21 – Access to Higher Education for Every Student:** The bill seeks to mitigate the impacts of potential federal changes to immigration enforcement policies, including the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, to ensure these students have access to their financial aid, legal representation and their constitutional right to due process.

**AB 20 – Dakota Access Pipeline:** Requires, by April 1, 2018, CalPERS and CalSTRS to file a report with the Legislature and the Governor that reviews investments in, and engagement of, companies constructing, or funding the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

**AB 830 – Repeal of the California High School Exit Exam:** Repeals the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) and the requirement to pass the CAHSEE as a condition of graduation.

Some other laws that go into effect on January 1, 2018 that the Governor passed that residents should pay attention to are:

**Minimum Wage:** Minimum wage will be growing to $11 per hour for businesses with 26 or more employees. That number will increase annually until California reaches the goal of a $15 per hour living wage.

**Equal Pay for Equal Work:** Employers cannot use an individual’s prior earnings to justify compensation, since prior earnings can be based on a widespread, historical gender, race, or ethnicity based salary. If wage discrepancies exist, employers must demonstrate the factors that went into that decision.

**Worker Protections:** Starting January 1, general contractors who employ subcontractors will be held jointly liable for these wages and benefits. For too long, the worker has paid the price when a contractor negligently hires a disreputable subcontractor.

**Paid Leave:** Currently, most workers contribute into the State Disability Insurance Fund and are eligible for partial wage replacement, if they are unable to work due to their own injury or illness or while caring for a seriously ill family member or bonding with a new child. Beginning January 1, these workers will receive a higher wage replacement rate and they will have access to that money right away.

**Free Community College:** Will allow community colleges to waive fees for first time, full time community college students for one year, and expand the number of students eligible for a community college fee waiver – boosting enrollment and graduation rates, expanding access to financial aid while decreasing student debt.

Kalra Continues Tradition of Giving Back to the Community on Black Friday

For the eighth year in a row, Assemblymember Kalra gathered close friends and volunteers to put a spin on Black Friday by turning the sale-frenzy, post-Thanksgiving tradition to one of charity and giving — the way it should be! On the Friday after Thanksgiving, around fifty volunteers gathered in Kalra’s home to assemble around 500 bagged lunches for the homeless. Not only were meals distributed, but other generous donations were made, with one volunteer bringing supplies to make personal hygiene kits, as well as warm clothing, blankets, and rain ponchos for the coming winter.

“There is nothing inherently wrong about people wanting to shop for loved ones and seek out good deals. But, I believe we should also take the time to truly reflect on the holidays and focus on the gratitude we have for living in this amazing community and being afforded opportunities most people could only dream of,” said Kalra. “This is my way of giving back by bringing together families who are showing their holiday spirit through their actions by spreading their love to the homeless community. It is quite humbling, while at the same time uplifting, to be able to connect with our unhoused neighbors during what is typically a very emotional time for them.”
Meet a New Friend at the San José Animal Care Center,
and Make a Best Friend for Life!

December Feature: Baxter - ID#A1060354
I am a neutered male, brown and white Pit Bull Terrier. The shelter staff think I am about 1
year and 2 months old, and I have been at the shelter since October 24, 2017.

Baxter is our handsome oversized puppy. He would do best with someone who is seeking
a true companion, not just a dog. He will need some work, such as leash and obedience
training. Baxter is interested in other dogs but he is a bit rude, so other dogs usually do not
like his paws in their face. If you have another dog at home, bring her/him to the shelter so
they can meet. Baxter likes to fetch and appreciates tasty treats. He is a good boy, and
just needs someone who will lead him in the right direction.

Want to learn more about Baxter, or make yourself a new best friend for life? Then please
visit the San José Animal Care Center located at 2750 Monterey Road, San José, 95111, or call (408) 794-PAWS (7297)
or visit www.sanjoseanimals.com. Hours of operation are on Tuesday to Saturday from 11:00 am—7:00 pm, and on
Sun-day from 11:00 am—5:00 pm.
Fight the Flu with Healthy Habits

The holidays are upon us, and in addition to all of the fun festivities, it's the cold and flu season as well. How can you protect yourself and your family? The best defense is a year-round offense. Focus on these 5 steps to help build a strong immune system:

- **Eat smart:** Choose a variety of wholesome foods daily such as colorful fruits and vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds, lean protein, and dairy. A well-balanced diet provides important nutrients needed for improving immune function, including protein, vitamins A, C and E, and zinc to name a few. Fermented foods like sauerkraut, kefir and kimchi deliver gut-friendly probiotics that play a role in a healthy immune system.

- **Get enough sleep:** With busy holiday schedules it is even more important to make healthy sleep patterns a priority. Try for eight hours daily, on average.

- **Move more:** Aim for 60 minutes of physical activity daily. A family walk following a meal is one great way to spend time with loved ones while being active.

- **Reduce stress:** The holidays can be chaotic, so try to make time for stress-relieving activities such as meditation or yoga.

- **Wash your hands:** Proper handwashing can prevent food poisoning and reduce the spread of the common cold and flu. Before and after preparing or handling food, wash hands with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds.

Good nutrition, as well as the healthy lifestyle habits above, is essential in building a strong immune system. Check with your medical provider about other protective health measures to prevent the flu, such as scheduling a flu shot. Visit [EatRight.org](http://EatRight.org) and contact a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist for a personalized healthy eating plan that supports immune function and beyond.