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Homeland Security Consultant Jeff Oshins announces run for Congress

Santa Barbara

Jeff Oshins, a longtime Central Coast resident, entered the growing field of candidates seeking to replace the retiring Representative Lois Capps.

“I am entering the race because I believe my background as a senior staff member of the U.S. Congress and a grant writer qualifies me to be an effective representative of the people of the Central Coast.

“My top priorities are constituent services, bringing federal dollars into the district, security and emergency services, job creation, and the environment.

“During my time working in the Congress, I helped write major pieces of environmental, economic, and security legislation. I know how to take laws from concept through hearings, passage through the House and Senate to the President’s desk to law.

“As a grant writer, I’ve brought millions of dollars of federal funding into California for homeland security, crime prevention, veterans, housing, social and health services.”

Constituent Services

“I had the privilege of seeing firsthand how the best Representatives, including former Central Coast Congressman Bob Lagomarsino, took care of their constituents. They made it their number one priority to be responsive to the people of their district’s needs and help them solve problems or issues they might have with the federal government.

“With me in Washington, the people, businesses, county and city agencies of the Central Coast will have someone they can call who knows how the federal government works, where the levers are, and how to solve their problems with the IRS, Social Security, Veterans Affairs, and myriad other federal agencies

“As an experienced grant writer, I intend to hire and train staff to search the federal budget for discretionary spending and assist Central Coast city and county agencies and non-profits apply for funding they might not ordinarily receive.”

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Security and Emergency Services

“I want to use my background in homeland security and work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to make sure that the Central Coast first responders – police and fire – have everything they need to respond to man-made and natural disaster. This includes prepositioning relief supplies so if we’re cut off we have everything we need to survive until outside help arrives.

“Having conducted a 2015 waterside security assessment for the Port of San Luis at the foot of the **Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant**, I want to continue to do everything I can to make sure that the site is secure and that the 20-year relicensing application thoroughly examines the issues of newly discovered seismic faults. I’m not at this time in favor of closing the plant. Diablo Canyon plays too important a role in the local economy both for low-carbon emitting energy and jobs. The plant also has a desalination facility that may well play a crucial role in providing water for the Central Coast.”

Promote Middle Class Income and Buying Power

“There is general agreement that federal tax and spending policies should do more to promote middle class income and spending ability. The more the middle class has to spend the more goods and services they will be able to purchase. This is how you grow the economy. I want to legislate a program to **refinance both government guaranteed and private student loans** so that they are a manageable part of people’s incomes. This is sound fiscal policy that will create jobs as people have more money to spend on housing, goods and services.

“Right now student debt is a drag on the economy with a disproportionate amount of unpayable debt falling on lower income individuals who rightfully see education as the way out of poverty. According to an August 2015 Federal Reserve report student loan debt stands at historically high levels and defaulted loans represent a significant share of outstanding student loans that are guaranteed by the government. A recent Brookings Institute Report found that most of the increase in default is associated with non-traditional borrowers drawn from lower income families. The Wall Street Journal reported that the average student debt in 2015 was \$35,051. By some estimates 11.8% of the 40 million Americans who owe \$1.2 trillion dollars are either not paying back their loans, are behind, or are spending most of their income on repaying loans they took when they were in school. Ten years after graduation many are still paying just the interest on the principal of their loans. There is no truth in lending. The federal government and banks dish out money to teenagers, and then when they graduate and can’t

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find a job turn their debt over to collection agencies that hound them wherever they go. With their credit ruined, they can't start businesses buy houses, get married or do much for themselves or the economy."

Environment

"I've a proven track record and direct experience in defending the environment on the Central Coast. I was the staff director of the congressional committee with oversight of offshore oil drilling. I know the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. I know how offshore oil leases are done, when and how you can get rid of them. I worked on major pieces of environmental legislation including the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Superfund bill. I've been part of the environmental movement since taking some of the earliest environmental science classes taught anywhere at UCSB in early 1970's.

"The Central Coast has a long and soiled history of oil pollution dating back to the earliest "There Will Be Blood" days of the California petroleum industry and lately with the 2015 Refugio Oil Spill. Government regulations are only as good as their enforcement. I've worked with both sides of the argument and understand the economic and environmental impacts of over and under-regulation. My job in Congress will be to see that we are doing everything we can to protect the oceans and environment from pollution, overfishing, and safe marine transportation while at the same time not costing people their jobs."

Healthcare

Many know Jeff as the one passing out Obamacare signup postcards at the farmers market. When the Affordable Care Act passed in 2010, Jeff and his Washington business partner Joe Johnson, the former Secretary of Health of New Mexico, set up a website www.obamacare-enrollment.com with information and links to help people understand the ACA and get help enrolling in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Jeff went so far as to take the training and become a licensed California insurance agent and has helped sign up hundreds of people for healthcare.

"Of all I've ever done nothing can compare to the woman who came up to me and told me that I'd saved her life because I'd helped her get insurance and she'd been to the doctor for the first time in years and found out that she had cancer for which she was now getting treatment.

"The ACA is not the final answer but it's a start. We all pay for those who go untreated because they lack health insurance."

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Limiting the Role of the Federal Government

“After finishing law school at Santa Barbara College of Law in 1995, I worked mostly on social programs and community organizing in over 25 communities around the country. Having worked at both ends of the federal funding pipeline from the torrent coming out of Congress to the trickle that reaches the community-based non-profits I helped form, I am convinced that the most effective and efficient funding is at the local level. For this reason I believe the role of the federal government should be limited and states rights preserved unless there is an overriding national interest such as defense, homeland security, interstate commerce, monetary and fiscal policy.

Campaign Fundraising

“I will be funding my own campaign and will accept no contributions until I believe that there is sufficient popular support for me to win. “

Student Activism

“I plan on spending much of my time campaigning on college campuses talking to students about my ideas on student debt reform. I hope to see students take an interest in my campaign as a means of achieving their own goals and self-interests.

“I’m hosting a Student-Debt Reform Meetup on January 28 at noon behind the bookstore at the UU Center at Cal Poly. And I’ll be scheduling other Meetups at campuses throughout the Central Coast in the coming weeks.”

Biography

Jeff’s family has been in California since the 1880’s and on the Central Coast permanently since early 1970’s when his father owned the iconic beach house atop the bluff between Hendrey’s Beach and Hope Ranch. Jeff is a graduate of the American International School of Vienna, the University of California Santa Barbara, and the Colleges of Law.

In his spare time, Jeff composes and records music under the name Apokafu. He is the author of four published novels and one non-fiction about a trip he took overland from Santa Barbara to Chile and back. He is the founder of the online literary sharing services site betareader.us.

Jeff has one son, Leland, a middle-school science teacher in the Bay Area.