

# Assembly forum focuses on senior issues



From left, Davis Mayor Pro Tem Dan Wolk and Davis Mayor Joe Krovoza listen as Napa County Supervisor Bill Dodd address the crowd at Saturday's District 4 Assembly candidate forum at the Davis Senior Center. Wayne Tilcock/Enterprise photo

**By Dave Ryan**

From page A3 | February 23, 2014 | [Leave Comment](#)

The status quo was a ready punching bag Saturday morning as all three District 4 Assembly candidates made their case to a gathering at the Davis Senior Center sponsored by Yolo Healthy Aging Alliance.

Davis Mayor Joe Krovoza, Davis Mayor Pro Tem Dan Wolk and longtime Napa County Supervisor Bill Dodd explained their positions on various senior topics for two hours. Though competitors for the Assembly job, the men focused their energy on solutions to issues, rather than scoring points against one another.

In the process, the way things are got a pretty bad beating. That seemed popular with the gathering, for good reason.

Federal, state and county demographic statistics point to a so-called "Silver Tsunami," a wave of the population fed by Baby Boomers that will age past 65 in the next several years. The UCLA Center for Health Policy Research said the number of Americans aged 65 and up will double from the year 2010 to 2030 to 72.1 million people.

Plus, as life expectancy grows longer the number of very old Americans — age 85 and beyond — will grow and present different challenges.

Those challenges cover a range of difficulties. They include getting adequate affordable housing, law enforcement protection, transportation, health care and nutritional services like Meals on Wheels and food stamps.

All this in a federal and state budget environment during the last few years that delivered cuts to senior social services across the board, so that many of today's seniors are without the services they need.

Each candidate had family experience with senior issues. Wolk said his grandmother moved to Davis from Florida and had difficulties in an assisted living situation.

Krovoza told the story of his mother-in-law, who had difficulty moving from the Bay Area to an assisted living situation in Davis, ultimately moving back to the Bay Area.

Dodd told the story of his late mother who fell ill and due to a series of medical errors ended up in the hospital so long that her insurance coverage expired and she had to be placed in a nursing home.

Each candidate criticized the lack of funding for In-Home Supportive Services, widely seen as a cost-effective way to avoid the expense of having seniors in nursing homes. Currently the state does not permit IHSS workers to work overtime.

"There has been an immense amount of disinvestment in our state," Wolk said, launching a theme of his at the gathering. "Years of disinvestment predating the Great Recession have caused some of these problems."

Krovoza said IHSS was "absolutely critical" and soured on cuts to it in the governor's budget.

"One of my concerns about this governor's budget is we haven't looked back and figured out what hasn't been funded," he said.

Dodd said because of cuts to programs like IHSS, services to seniors have been slashed to the bone.

"It's more efficient for seniors to stay in their homes, yet those (IHSS) services are being cut," he said. "To provide effective care oversight, it must be restored."

Wolk and Krovoza touted The Cannery project's mix of home styles as a model for other developments in the state to include homes that seniors can afford to live in.

While Wolk voted for final passage of The Cannery project in November 2013, Krovoza was one of two no votes. Krovoza explained he withheld his support at the final vote because of safety concerns with bicycle routes.

Dodd, in turn, showed off one of Napa County's achievements: ensuring greater licensing requirements for caregivers in that county.

"It shouldn't just be people from Napa County that have those protections, everyone should have those protections," he said.

— *Reach Dave Ryan at 530-747-8057. Follow him on Twitter at @davewritesnews*