

# Kalra Capitol Report



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## National Night Out Unites San José Communities



On the first Tuesday of August, Assemblymember Ash Kalra took part in National Night Out, an annual event designed to bring communities together and raise safety awareness. Kalra embarked on a whirlwind tour of seven vibrant locations, each designed to foster unity, connect the public with the SJPD, and forge invaluable connections within neighborhoods.



Spanning parks, community centers, elementary schools, and shopping centers, the events were organized by Hayes Neighborhood Association, Seven Trees Neighborhood Association, Roundtable, Mount Pleasant Neighborhood Association, Mayfair Neighborhood Association, ConXion to Community, and Guadalupe Washington Neighborhood Association. Each locale was infused with its own unique charm, reflecting the diverse tapestry of San José. At three of the locations, Assemblymember Kalra's dedicated staff distributed not only smiles, but also a thoughtful array of fruit, coloring books, and crayons, adding an extra layer of cheer to the block parties.

For Asm. Kalra, National Night Out holds a special place in his heart. "It was great to see so many folks enjoying the varied festivities throughout San José!" he shared. For him, this event offers a great opportunity to spend quality time with neighbors and to connect with constituents from every corner of Assembly District 25.



## A Message From Assemblymember Ash Kalra

Hello Friends and Constituents,

Mark your calendars for San José VeggieFest on Saturday, October 7th, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the iconic Plaza de Cesar Chavez in the heart of Downtown San José! This festival is not only a celebration of plant-based living; it's also an exploration of the diverse and rich world of plant-based diets and sustainable lifestyles, showing that they encompass a wide range beyond just salads and fries.

SJ VeggieFest proudly showcases the expansive range of vegan culinary delights, from mouth-watering burgers, asada tacos, corn dogs, and cold cuts to a variety of delectable vegan desserts ranging from ice cream and churros to pan dulce! These dishes challenge any misconceptions about the limitations of plant-based diets. Beyond food, the festival also highlights innovative products like cactus and avocado-based leathers, offering sustainable alternatives to traditional materials.

While you relish the diverse offerings, also take a moment to connect with community partners who play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable living. A standout partner, VeggieLution, a community-driven urban farm, has been co-hosting VeggieFest with us since 2018. Their involvement underscores the event's emphasis on community collaboration and shared learning.

Amidst the revelry, our city's cultural richness shines, especially with Las Cafeteras headlining the entertainment. Their music, infused with messages of community activism and engagement, promises to be both soul-stirring and energetic. Alongside them, other talented artists, vendors, and community partners contribute to the day's vibrancy.

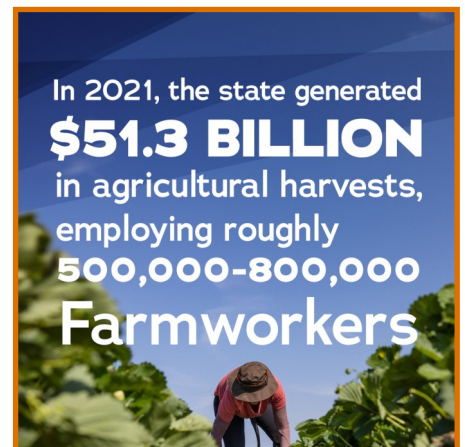
The Plaza de Cesar Chavez, named after the distinguished labor activist and civil rights pioneer, has been a beacon for unity and progress in our city. As a venue steeped in stories of diverse communities converging and sharing knowledge, it's the ideal backdrop for VeggieFest, which exemplifies San José's commitment to celebrating its multicultural heritage while championing a sustainable, inclusive future.

On October 7th, join us to dive deep into the vast world of plant-based living. Engage, bond, and leave invigorated, embracing a broader understanding of sustainable choices and their potential impact on our world.

Sincerely,



Assemblymember Ash Kalra



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PLAZA DE CESAR CHAVEZ  
11 AM - 5 PM**



**Scan the QR code to register for VeggieFest now!**





## Boba & Backpacks at AD 25 School Supply Drive



In July, Assemblymember Ash Kalra hosted another successful school supply drive in his district, this time in collaboration with Sacred Heart Community Service. He has been leading this initiative every year since his tenure on the City Council, with a dedicated focus on aiding the children of underserved families. Sacred Heart, this year's co-host, also conducted their own Back-to-School supply drive this summer.

In the past two years following the pandemic, the Assemblymember and his office partnered with Happy Lemon on Coleman Avenue for the school supply drive. Each community member who dropped off a kind donation or eligible school supply items, such as new backpacks, unused notebooks, rulers, pens, pencils, etc., in person during the specified time window at the location, received a complimentary drink as a special thank-you from the Assemblymember.

"I am immensely proud of my community for consistently stepping up each year to donate crucial school supplies to my drives and others, ensuring our students and teachers are well-prepared for another academic year," shared Assemblymember Kalra immediately after the conclusion of the drive.

According to Sacred Heart's estimates, the organization was able to raise sufficient funds and supplies from all the school supply drives, including ours, to provide 760 transitional kindergarten and kindergarten children, 1,572 first to fifth graders, and 1,462 sixth to twelfth graders with free backpacks.

The Assemblymember and his District Office extend their heartfelt gratitude to Sacred Heart Community Service and the Happy Lemon store on Coleman Ave. for their generous support and collaboration.

## AD 25 Business Spotlight: Yoga Shala



The heart of Assembly District 25's downtown San Jose is once again adorned with the calming presence of Yoga Shala as it celebrated its grand re-opening in September. Founded in 2009 by a determined Filipino woman entrepreneur named Veronica, who is on a mission to raise awareness about the health and wellness of her Silicon Valley community, The studio has always been a symbol of mindfulness and unity. Their commitment to fostering a sense of community, even virtually, is truly commendable.

Assemblymember Kalra shared, "I'm thrilled to see Yoga Shala re-open its doors in my district. It is no secret that yoga, good mental health, and mindfulness are needed for our community's well-being, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic."

You can find Yoga Shala at 5 E. Reed Street @ S. 1st Street at SPARQ in the SoFA District or online at [downtownyogashala.com](http://downtownyogashala.com)! "At Downtown Yoga Shala, we believe in fostering a sense of belonging and inclusivity. "

# 13 KALRA BILLS HEAD TO THE GOVERNOR'S DESK!

**AB 57 - California Pocket Forests Initiative**

**AB 58 - Young Adult Deferred Entry (YADEJ) Program:**

**AB 96 - Transit Workers**

**AB 261 - CA State Mushroom - California Golden Chanterelle**

**AB 607 - Course Materials Cost Transparency**

**AB 636 - California Legal Rights Disclosure Act for H-2A  
Visa Farm Workers**

**AB 943 - Breaking Down the "Other" Act**

**AB 1118 - California Racial Justice Act Claims**

**AB 1210 - Sodium Nitrite Labeling**

**AB 1414 - Prohibiting Common Counts**

**AB 1469 - California Racial Justice Act Claims**

**AB 1649 - Santa Clara County - Change Orders**

**AB 1726 - Vacatur Relief**



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ANY OF THESE BILLS PLEASE VISIT  
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## Latino Heritage Celebration: Honoring Community Leaders

Assemblymember Ash Kalra's Annual Latino Heritage Month Celebration, held late September, honors the rich history and culture of the Latino community. The event not only highlights these cultural contributions, but also recognizes the invaluable commitment of Latino/Latinx leaders within Assembly District 25.

For seven consecutive years, this event has found its home at Mezcal, a restaurant nestled in the heart of Downtown San José. Mezcal's unique ambiance, blending brick exteriors, intricate metalwork, and indigenous Mexican motifs, provides an authentic cultural experience. What truly sets Mezcal apart is its dedication to preserving and sharing authentic Oaxacan regional cuisine, rooted in cherished family recipes passed down through generations. Every dish, from Estofado to Mole Negro, pays homage to these time-honored flavors and techniques.

Ysabel Duron, a pioneering and award-winning Latina journalist, received the longstanding Legacy Award for her outstanding contributions to the Latino community, as well as her tireless service to San José and beyond. Her journey into patient advocacy began in 1999 when she faced a cancer diagnosis, leading her to advocate for cancer patients and establish nonprofit agencies to support them. Her legacy extends to various boards and committees, including the National Cancer Advisory Board and the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine. Ysabel Duron's relentless dedication and contributions make her a true beacon of hope and a worthy Legacy Award recipient.

Flor Martinez, a prominent speaker, social media influencer, and advocate for human, labor, and immigrant rights, was honored with the Leadership in Community Service Award. Her unwavering commitment to activism, both online and offline, has made her a symbol of resilience and determination. In 2020, Martinez took her dedication to the next level by establishing The Celebration Nation Foundation, a California-based nonprofit focused on serving, educating, and empowering Indigenous and Latino communities.

Jonathan Borca, Deputy Director for the School of Arts and Culture at the Mexican Heritage Plaza, received the Leadership in Art and Culture Award for his significant impact on Silicon Valley's arts and cultural scene. Hailing from Albuquerque, New Mexico, Borca's journey reflects his deep commitment to enriching cultural heritage. With over a decade of experience in program development, he played a pivotal role in directing the "California Arts Council Administrators of Color Fellowship," a statewide initiative nurturing an inclusive arts workforce. Beyond his professional achievements, Borca actively contributes to local art and music projects, solidifying his status as a cultural ambassador.

Connie Alvarez, a community leader and businesswoman, was honored with the Leadership in Business Award. Her entrepreneurial journey began while working alongside her family at their Downtown San José jewelry store. Alvarez ventured into the culinary world, founding Plaza Garibaldi Restaurant, which has since evolved into a thriving catering service. She further diversified her business portfolio with Friendship Hall. Serving

as the President of the Alum Rock-Santa Clara Street Business Association, Alvarez has championed local businesses and played a pivotal role in creating a vibrant community in San José.

The Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network (SIREN) received the Leadership in Advocacy Award for their unwavering commitment to empowering low-income immigrants and refugees. SIREN's mission encompasses community education, leadership development, policy advocacy, civic engagement, and legal services. Their dedication to inclusivity and justice has made them a leading force in advocating for immigrant and refugee rights.

Already looking forward to next year's celebration!



## The Moon Festivals Delivers Joy (and Lanterns) to Children in AD25!

September is the month of the mid-autumn season according to the lunar calendar. For many Asian American communities, including Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, and beyond, it is an auspicious occasion to celebrate the Moon Festival, or Full Moon Festival. In Vietnamese culture, it is known as “Tết Trung Thu,” in Chinese, it is called 中秋节, and in South Korean culture, it is honored as 추석. While there are different versions of the festival in each respective culture, they all share common features and meanings, aside from being celebrated annually in the same month. The festival derives its name from the perception of a full moon symbolizing wholeness, unity, and togetherness, values highly prioritized in the AAPI community. These two images figuratively and harmoniously resemble one another.



Additionally, the festival is also famously known as the Children's Moon Festival, a tradition encouraging parents and adults to gift children beautifully decorated lanterns adorned with creative patterns, colors, and designs, such as fish, stars, or even superheroes from popular culture. Families and children also come together to share tasty mooncakes.

This year, Assemblymember Ash Kalra is participating in three meaningful community events that celebrate the spirit of the Moon Festival. The International Children Assistance Network of Silicon Valley, a nonprofit organization, hosted the festival at the Vietnamese American Cultural Center with a "Back to School" theme, aiming to provide assistance and support for children at the start of the school year. The annual Children's Moon Festival at Yerba Buena High School marks its 32nd year, and Assemblymember Kalra sponsored both Moon Festivals. He also felt honored to attend the Full Moon Festival (Chu-Seok) hosted by Korean American Community Services, a lively celebration featuring a health and wellness fair.

"I'm truly grateful for the numerous wonderful Moon Festivals for our children and families. It's always heartwarming to see so many families enjoying the festivities," Assemblymember Kalra shared. He added that as a child growing up in a diverse city like San Jose, he sometimes found inspiration and joy in the meaning of this festival during difficult days whenever he received a beautiful lantern from a community event.



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## Rose, White & Blue Parade Delights Year After Year!



Assemblymember Ash Kalra proudly participated in this year's Rose, White, and Blue Parade. Accompanied by his father and a group of friends and constituents, Kalra continued a tradition of celebrating diversity and civic pride on a route through the Shasta/Hanchett and Rose Garden neighborhoods. In a move towards a more eco-friendly celebration, Kalra's team distributed red, white, and blue carnations to onlookers, replacing the traditional beads of years past.

The parade featured a diverse group of participants, including elected officials, classic cars, bands, dance groups, and community organizations, reflecting the varied tapestry of the greater Bay Area. The lively procession was expertly announced by local drag queen, Ms. Sweet Nothing, who added

her signature witty flair for the second year in a row. Grand Marshals were Tricia Creason-Valencia, a visual storyteller & documentary filmmaker, and Chairwoman of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area, Charlene Nijmeh. As the parade concluded, the festivities continued with a festival, providing an opportunity for neighbors and friends to connect over shared interests and yummy treats.

The Rose, White & Blue Parade holds a special place in the hearts of San José residents, embodying a celebration of patriotism and the area's vibrant floral and agricultural heritage. "I look forward to the parade each year! It's a beautiful celebration of our community's diversity, values, and spirit, and I'm honored to be a part of it."





## \$1.5 Million Secured in State Budget for Lake Cunningham Restoration



On July 31st, Assemblymember Ash Kalra stood before press and an excited crowd to present a \$1.5 million check to the City of San José. This funding, secured in the state budget, marked the long overdue start of the Lake Cunningham restoration project.

For more than four decades, the 50-acre Lake Cunningham has been a cherished landmark for locals. Beyond its role as an urban oasis, it has offered vital opportunities for outdoor recreation, catering to the diverse community that calls this area home. Unfortunately, the

water quality of the lake has been in gradual decline, reaching a point where it now poses a threat to visitors. Fishing, boating, swimming, and even simple contact with the water had become perilous activities.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, Asm. Kalra championed this significant investment, the majority of which will be directed towards creating wetlands around the lake. These wetlands will act as natural filters to remove contaminants. Additionally, part of the budget will replace existing turf with native plants, promoting biodiversity and discouraging non-native geese that contribute to water quality problems.

"I would like to thank the City of San José, Councilmember Candelas, and Councilmember Ortiz for all the work they have done to advocate for the restoration of Lake Cunningham. Lake Cunningham presents a unique opportunity to restore both crucial wetland habitat and important outdoor recreation infrastructure. I am extremely proud to initiate this key investment in our environmental and community health."

## Resilience & Unity: Reflecting on the 22nd Anniversary of 9/11

On September 10th, 2023, Assemblymember Ash Kalra had the honor of attending and speaking at Senator Dave Cortese's 22nd-anniversary commemoration of the fateful events of September 11, 2001. In his speech, he eloquently highlighted the enduring impact of these sorrowful events, emphasizing that the memory of that day continues to resonate across the nation. This Day of Remembrance ceremony and reception brought together community members to pay tribute to the victims, heroes, and their families. State Senator Dave Cortese and Santa Clara County Sheriff Robert Jonsen led this poignant event, creating a space for reflection and unity.

Kalra expressed gratitude for the event's organizers, Senator Dave Cortese and his team, and for those who gathered to pay tribute. He celebrated the diverse crowd, emphasizing that America's true beauty lies in its citizens' solidarity and readiness to help one another.

The Assemblymember reflected on the heroism displayed by first responders and ordinary individuals who risked their own safety to assist others on 9/11. He stressed the importance of honoring lives lost and the profound impact on families, communities, and the world.

Kalra's speech concluded with a call to action, encouraging attendees to carry the spirit of unity, resilience, and empathy into their daily lives. He expressed hope for a future where Americans continue to learn from the past, work together, and offer support when it is needed most.



With Asm. Gail Pellerin of AD28

## San José Community Joins Honorees & Trailblazers at AD 25 Pride Month

In August, Assemblymember Ash Kalra's Pride Celebration 2023 honored distinguished community leaders for their tireless advocacy for love, equity, inclusivity, and diversity. The Assemblymember was honored to partner with Project MORE to host a public, in-person celebration at Qmunity District on Post Street. Qmunity District, championed by the Project MORE Foundation, is a welcoming, inclusive, unique business district and an affirming place that celebrates the art, culture, and history of the LGBTQ+ community.

For the first time since before the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Assemblymember was pleased to invite the public to join him in celebrating the advocacy and stellar accomplishments of the following honorees at Assembly District 25's Pride Celebration 2023:

**Legacy Award:** Reverend Lindi Ramsden (she/her) helped create a culture of allyship and acceptance in the congregation. Despite a lack of openly LGBTQ+ ministers being called to serve California congregations, in 1985, the First Unitarian Church of San José invited Rev. Ramsden to serve as their minister, and during her 18-year tenure and leadership as Senior Minister, the congregation grew rapidly, becoming deeply involved in justice ministries.

**Community Spirit Award:** WooWoo Monroe (she/her) has dedicated 11 years to becoming Silicon Valley's beloved Queen of Camp. As the first drag queen to perform at the San José City Council meeting, she has emerged as a strong advocate for historically marginalized communities and has raised over \$80,000 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society through her Cancer's a Drag fundraisers.

**Leader in Advocacy:** Drew Lloyd (he/him) serves as the Board President of the Bay Area Municipal Elections Committee and has been actively involved in nonprofit work, including volunteering on the board of the Billy DeFrank Center. With extensive experience from over 100 jury trials and a successful career, he offers a distinctive perspective and executive management expertise to the board.

**Leader in Community Empowerment:** Crystal Haney (she/they), the current Community Outreach Specialist for the County of Santa Clara, has over a decade of experience in supporting diverse communities, making a positive impact in the Bay Area. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Crystal took on the noble role of a Disaster Service Worker to assist mass testing sites for almost two years, effectively saving many lives.

**Leader in Education:** The PRIDE Center at San José State University offers educational outreach and continues advocacy for the safety and well-being of LGBTQ+ students. Furthermore, the PRIDE Center's tireless advocacy inspires each student's leadership development and equity-centered approach to connect with their peers and create new inclusive communities.

Assemblymember Kalra shared after the celebration, "AD 25 Pride Celebration continues overflowing with gratitude and joy! Thank you to our incredible honorees for empowering our San José community and beyond."



The Assemblymember expressed his special thank-you note to Qmunity District and Project MORE for co-hosting AD 25 Pride Celebration 2023. We also thank ConXion for chairs and United Wholesale Flower for special floral decorations.

For more information about our annual Pride celebration, please contact Tuan Nguyen at [Tuan.Nguyen@asm.ca.gov](mailto:Tuan.Nguyen@asm.ca.gov)



## Photos from Around the Capitol, the District & Beyond





## Make a Friend for Life at San José Animal Care Center!



Introducing Luna (A1215596), a sweet three-year-old Pit Bull Terrier with a striking brindle brown and white coat. Luna has been a cherished member of the SJCC community since mid-July, and she's already spayed and ready to find her forever home! She is high energy and shows interest in other dogs.

Adopting a Pit Bull Terrier can be a wonderful decision for several reasons. These dogs are known for their loyalty, affection, and intelligence, making them excellent companions for families and individuals alike. With proper training and socialization, Pit Bulls can be gentle and loving pets. Additionally, they are often highly adaptable, thriving in various living situations. By adopting a Pit Bull Terrier, you're not only giving a deserving animal a second chance at a happy life, but you're also dispelling misconceptions and stereotypes surrounding this breed, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and compassionate community for all dogs.

Want to learn more about Luna? Excite to learn about the many other adoptable pets and make yourself a new best friend for life? For adoption inquiries and more information about this sweet pup, please call 408-794-PAWS (7297) and leave a message. Or visit the San José Animal Care Center website at [www.sanjoseanimals.com](http://www.sanjoseanimals.com). Adoptions are conducted Tuesday through Sunday between 9am and 4pm, on a FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED BASIS. If you are interested in adopting, please write down the I.D. number of the pet you would like to meet.



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# Contact Us!

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**We've moved!**

## State Agencies Contact Information

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Controller's Office	(916) 445-3028
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With Speaker Robert Rivas

