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## Congressman rips Donald Trump and his policies at Lafayette Town Hall

By Nick Marnell



Congressman Mark DeSaulnier Photo Nick Marnell

From his opening remarks through the questions he took from the audience, Democratic U.S. Congressman Mark DeSaulnier pounded President Donald Trump unmercifully at the Lafayette Town Hall April 12. "The most dangerous person in the world is not a terrorist, but the president of the United States," he said to the attendees who packed the Stanley Middle School gymnasium.

The congressman told the cheering crowd that Trump must remove Steve Bannon as his chief strategist, publicize his tax returns and halt what he termed a Muslim travel ban. DeSaulnier touted his efforts to extend federal conflict of interest laws to include the president and the vice president.

His response to a question about the proposed border wall evoked the biggest applause of the evening. "Never murder a political opponent who is committing suicide," said DeSaulnier, who has coauthored legislation to override the wall and safeguard sanctuary cities.

He told the crowd that he backs an independent investigation into Trump's Russian connections and he suggested that the crisis in Syria will not be solved solely by the military. "You need a mix of soft diplomacy," the congressman said.

A cancer survivor, DeSaulnier said that money for medical research must not be slashed out of the federal budget. "There's nothing like the National Institutes of Health in the world," he said. "It's crazy to suggest that we would cut this investment."

Trump's failed health care proposal was nothing more than "a tax cut for the top 1 percent of the country," DeSaulnier said, and the audience roared its approval when the congressman said that he favors universal health care.

DeSaulnier assured a questioner that he will vote against HR 610, a bill that calls for sending all federal education dollars to the states in the forms of federal grants so that the states can then distribute the money as vouchers.

The congressman has conducted two Town Halls in Orinda and one in Lafayette since he assumed office. "It's not a slight," he said about Moraga, where he said he will hold a future Town Hall but did not commit to a time frame.

"I am sure Congressman DeSaulnier knows that the people of Moraga are a very engaged segment of his constituency and all of us here would welcome his taking the time to engage with us," said Moraga Mayor Teresa Onoda.

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