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Civil discourse at DeSaulnier's Moraga town hall

By *Cathy Dausman*

Neither sinkhole nor bridge failure, not even the presence of Moraga's mayor and city manager was enough to steer the conversation away from national issues during a May 30 town hall meeting at Saint Mary's College hosted by Congressman Mark DeSaulnier.

The only local question was really a regional one, concerning the state of California's educational system. Although DeSaulnier didn't mince words, as town hall meetings go it was a very civil discourse.

"We really try to be bipartisan in these times," DeSaulnier said, but he calls President Trump "very unusual" and says bluntly "Congress is not working right now."

DeSaulnier drew applause explaining why he chose not to attend the presidential inauguration. The sympathetic audience applauded again hearing their Congressman's stance against defense spending. (DeSaulnier says the Department of Defense has wasted \$125 billion dollars in spending.) He called the administration's new medical aid bill, passed by the U.S. House of Representatives May 4, "one of the worst pieces of legislation I've ever seen."

With his own preexisting medical condition related to a blood cancer diagnosis, DeSaulnier himself has reason to be concerned about what changes Trumpcare might bring. "You can't change (health care) in one year," he said, but he expects to see bipartisan support to prevent benefit cutbacks to low- and middle-income wage-earners.

Civility and passion should coexist even in disagreement, DeSaulnier said, but he admits getting information with civility today is "a real challenge." His Moraga-based audience of 200 might beg to differ.

DeSaulnier's town hall presentation is available online at <https://desaulnier.house.gov/newsroom/power-point-presentations>

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