

Democrats' FREE BBQ Campaign Rally: Friendly, Positive Energy

By LINDA SUTTER Triplicate News Reporter September 9, 2026



This past weekend felt like Crescent City itself decided to roll out the welcome mat: sunshine, warm air, barely a whisper of wind — the kind of weather that makes Front Street Park feel like what it will soon become: the heart of our community.

It was the perfect backdrop for the local Democrats' FREE campaign BBQ rally. Next up will be the \$100 a plate dinner sponsored by many of the same old, local Republicans we all know. As an older Republican, myself, I'll admit, as I walked up to the Democrat's information table, I felt a little like a fish out of water. But that didn't last long.

The ladies at the booth greeted me with such genuine warmth that my nerves melted away.

Moments later, I ran into Kevin Hendrick, President of the Democratic Central Committee, who wrapped me in a welcoming hug and immediately and graciously pulled me into the swirl of introductions.

First up was Damon Connolly, running for the State Senate seat currently held by the termed-out Honorable Mike McGuire;

Then came Cody Frietus, the powerhouse supported by construction unions;

Later I was introduced to Sally Lieber — affectionately known as the “taxing woman” — who’s vying for a seat on the State Board of Equalization, District 2.

Then local favorite David Sedwick, running for a seat on the Crescent City Council, with his youthful, positive, energy and musical charm.

And finally, Steve Schamlin, also seeking a Crescent City Council seat. He surprised me with his deep analytical background in finance and aerospace.

What struck me most was how each candidate wasn’t just shaking hands — they were having real conversations, making real promises, and showing real interest in the people and voters gathered at the BBQ feast.

Damon Connolly for State Senate

Senate Candidate with 25 Years of Public Service, Connolly, currently serving in the California State Assembly for District 12, is stepping away from re-election to pursue the State Senate.

Connolly’s résumé reads like a roadmap of public service: Marin County Supervisor, San Rafael City Councilmember and Vice-Mayor, Dixie School Board President, and Supervising Deputy California Attorney General.

Connollys priorities include:

- Climate Action: Wildfire prevention, drought mitigation, and clean-air initiatives.
- Home Insurance Reform: Tackling California’s fire insurance crisis with practical policy solutions.
- Tax Reform: Including bills like AB 1790 aimed at improving corporate tax structures.
- Affordable Housing: Securing local investments to expand housing options.

Connolly spoke with the kind of steady confidence that comes from decades of experience — but also with a down-to-earth sincerity that made people lean in and listen.

Sally Lieber Candidate for State Board of Equalization, Dist. 2

Lieber’s district stretches across 19 coastal counties — from Del Norte all the way south to Ventura — including the Bay Area and Silicon Valley.

The Board of Equalization may not be the flashiest office, but its work is essential: overseeing property tax administration, alcoholic beverage taxes, and taxes on insurers.

Lieber's public service history is extensive:

- California State Assemblymember (and later Speaker Pro Tempore)
- Mayor and City Councilmember of Mountain View
- Member of multiple local commissions

The BOE ensures uniform property tax practices statewide, assesses railroad and utility properties, and administers several statewide tax programs.

Lieber explained these responsibilities with clarity and humor — proving that even tax policy can be engaging when delivered by someone who truly understands it.

Steve Schamlin: Crescent City Council

Schamlin was the unexpected standout for me. With 25 years in aerospace and an MBA specializing in budgetary finance and analysis, he brings a level of fiscal expertise that Crescent City and all agencies of Del Norte County could genuinely benefit from.

Schamlin's calm, analytical demeanor balanced nicely with the lively energy of the rally.

David Sedwick: The Newcomer with Heart

Sedwick may be new to politics, but you wouldn't know it from his speech. A popular local musician with intelligence, curiosity, and a clear desire to serve.

Sedwick has brought a refreshing spark to the event. His enthusiasm was contagious — the kind that makes you root for someone simply because they care.

A Political Rally Filled with Laughter, Food, and Community Spirit. The whole event felt like a big neighborhood gathering here hooting, hollering, and laughter echoing across the park, with delicious food provided by SEIU. People mingled, swapped stories, and enjoyed the sunshine while talking about the future of their city, county, and state.

It wasn't just politics — it was camaraderie. It was community. It was democracy in its most human form: people showing up, talking face-to-face, and sharing hopes for a better tomorrow. A perfect day for down to earth politicking.