Del Norte Triplicate

OPINION

Opinion: What Happens When Your Local Governing Board Doesn’t Listen

August 21, 2025



I can’t remember a time when a governing board in Del Norte County actually addressed the needs of a majority of its citizens. It has almost come to a point where I find little of value in being represented by an elected supervisor to look after the needs of the citizens they are supposed to represent. Too often the very concept of representative government seems to elude even the most active of representatives and they become enmeshed in the minutia of irrelevance when and if the few times the board is faced with making a decision.

Sure, the public gets the obligatory public comment period of three minutes, when the chair remembers to ask, to hopefully signal what is important and what is not to the board. Sure, the public can write, phone, email, text, or speak in person to their representative. Yet, how often does the public get the attention from those governing bodies when their actions are not in the best interests of the public. Good luck public as it is clearly not happening.

It is a regular complaint by the public the reason the attendance at meetings locally is not the public has little to say, but the unmistakable feeling they are not being heard. Over several years of attendance at County Board of Supervisor meetings, speaking on multiple subjects of concern which are not mine alone, I have

found several boards in succession, the most recent version being the worst, assume because the room is not full of citizens voicing the same concerns, the concerns are not worthy of consideration.

Individual supervisors giving board reports about topics which concern them individually, but do not necessarily resonate in the community at large and no venue to voice opposition. The consent agenda which consists of a majority of the County's business passed unanimously at each meeting with little to no discussion. Few items in the remainder of the agenda continue to elicit little discussion followed by a near one hundred percent vote to approve: Rubber stamping at its finest.

It is bewildering when what appear to be regular, normal people get themselves elected will quickly forget everything they promised and become mindless, rubber-stamping robots with little concern for the welfare of those electing them to office. Worse yet are elected officials on the board clearly acting above their ability. Representative government at its finest moments.

It is true, elections have consequences. If the electorate choses dysfunctional representatives the electorate suffers. While there are options to remove those who are not up to the task set by the electorate few are ultimately removed, and the governing body continues to stumble. What happens to the electorate when the entire board no longer listens to their public? The public suffers! Are you listening now Del Norte Board of Supervisors? Probably not. At least I have never found the current BOS amenable to listening to the public. Shameful!

While I realize there are as many reasons as there are people for not getting involved in our political process, it only works if people are engaged. The culture of politics needs the kind of change currently happening on the Federal level for to country to remain serving its citizens to their benefit. The same can be said for our county government. This has not happened for a very long time, and it is past due. Del Norte County government must not be for the few, as it is now, but for everyone.

This County desperately needs better elected leadership. People who can think, make good decisions, eliminate government waste, and stop perpetuating government funded poverty and dysfunction. Are you listening Supervisor Wilson? Are you listening Supervisor Howard? Are you listening Supervisor Short? Are you listening Supervisor Starkey? Are you listening Chair of the Board Borges? Poverty, Homelessness, High Crime, Drug Use, Illegal immigration, government program dependency are not a good look. What you have been doing is making those problems for the community far worse. Time to change the trajectory. Time to join the community.