



WHY LOCAL CONTROL IS IMPORTANT FOR COUNTIES



California state leadership is confused. Sacramento shut down schools and businesses for years while simultaneously granting early release to thousands of violent, repeat felons. With the State Legislature AWOL, Gov. Newsom demanded stricter, more isolating mandates beyond the CDC and WHO recommendations, while himself being a repeat offender in violating those very

mandates. Children who need the classroom environment and are least affected by Covid and the working class whose businesses and employers were severely limited shouldered the greatest burden. Meanwhile, big businesses like Target, Walmart, and Amazon saw record profits as government shuttered their competitors. This is upside-down policymaking.

And at what unfathomable cost?

Even the mainstream media can no longer ignore the obvious fact that our [government's Covid response](#) has been, at worst, [counterproductive](#) and, at best, in immediate [need of drastic change](#). Since May, 2020, – long after the failed "two weeks to flatten the curve" – I advocated for safe business practices and policies in alignment with CDC recommendations, which were often less restrictive than the state's plan. Responsible policymaking would have followed the science then that the mainstream media is only now recognizing but that was long obvious to me and many other advocates for liberty, limited government, and personal responsibility.

At this late date, it is past time for the State Legislature to reassert its proper legislative role. That is why I support Senator Melissa Melendez in her proposal of SCR-5: [ending the State of Emergency](#) and returning local control to the counties, as many states across the nation have already done. Orange County is a good case study on why local control is preferred. Throughout the pandemic, OC reported lower case counts and more hospital capacity than any other surrounding county, even when those counties had stricter mandates.

This is all the answer needed to those voices out in the community and on my social media pages advocating for more controls and arguing, against all the evidence, that if OC had only isolated just a little bit more or masked up more vigorously, we could have avoided the worst of the pandemic. No. We did better than our neighbors, in every meaningful metric. And nowhere on the planet was safe from the ravages of the virus. It is wishful thinking to claim otherwise.

Fortunately, Gov. Newsom is moving in the right direction, but much slower than necessary. He recently issued a news release acknowledging declining case rates and hospitalizations. Strangely, California, Oregon, and Washington jointly (because we are so alike?) are moving in lockstep to update their masking guidance. After 11:59 p.m. on March 11, California, Oregon and Washington will adopt new indoor mask policies and move from mask requirements to mask

recommendations in schools. What makes the 12th safer than the 10th? Or now?

But contrary to the beliefs of some in the community who have asked me, Orange County cannot just ignore the state rules or lift the mandates ourselves. (And all of the mandates are state-imposed; OC has not required anything itself and, as mentioned, is better for it.) If a school or business chooses to violate state mandates, the state can – and has – made visits to those establishments with threats of severe penalties. It would be no defense to state action that the county “allowed” it. We have no power at the county level to allow the violation of state law, even if that law is unwise, unfair, and harmful.

Make no mistake. In California, we are seeing the ill effects of unwise, unfair, and harmful laws.

As always, I wish our community health, unity, and prosperity as we move forward in a new direction.

Kind regards,



SUPERVISOR WAGNER HELPS LAUNCH NEW SAFETY POLICY



IRVINE – In an effort to ensure parents and caregivers have the most up-to-date information and training to install child car seats correctly, OCFA is now offering free car seat safety inspections and installations. Approximately twice a month, a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician will be available for one-on-one sessions to check and install car seats at OCFA headquarters in Irvine. The service is free and available to all residents in our service area. To request a car seat installation visit OCFA.org/CarSeatInstallation.

“I appreciate OCFA moving forward with this critical initiative,” said OCFA Director and Orange County Supervisor Don Wagner, who requested OCFA provide the program. “The data shows the need for this program, given the tragic risks of improper car seat installations. I am happy to spearhead it and thank my fellow Board members, and staff, for providing an important safety resource for our community.”

“Orange County Fire Authority is proud to offer this free, life-saving service,” said OCFA Fire Chief Brian Fennessy. “A properly installed car seat can reduce a child’s risk of death or injury by up to 71 percent, and yet more than half of all car

seats are installed incorrectly. Together with the parents and caregivers in our service region, we aim to change that, making Orange County a safer place for our children.”

OCFA Board Chair Michele Steggell stated on behalf of all Directors: “This life-saving program is provided with existing resources and personnel and highlights the value OCFA provides all our members. Inspections and installations are conducted by existing OCFA staff that currently provide fire and life safety education to the community.”

OUT AND ABOUT



Photo: Mobile One-Stop Unit with 12 work stations

NORTH IRVINE — It's tax season, and there's some extra resources available for our qualified Irvine residents. Team Wagner partnered with the [City of Irvine](#) and [Orange County United Way](#) to offer free tax preparation services for taxpayers earning less than \$60,000 in 2021. Qualifying taxpayers who live, work, or attend school in Irvine can receive help filing their taxes from IRS-trained and certified

volunteers. Eligible taxpayers may also apply for tax credits, including the state and federal Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC).

Through the support from Supervisor Don Wagner, Orange County United Way has been able to expand its reach in our community, namely, access to a mobile workstation bus for their [OC Free Tax Prep](#) service.

The expanded California Earned Income Tax Credit (CalEITC), along with a similar federal credit, can provide additional funds back to workers when they file their taxes. Additionally, workers with children under age 6 may qualify for the Young Child Tax Credit, if they are working and their household income is less than \$57,000.

The OC Free Tax Prep service is available at Cypress Community Park, 255 Visions in Irvine, from February 2 through April 6, Wednesdays 12-7 p.m. An appointment is required; no walk-ins will be accepted. Call Orange County United Way at 888-434-8248 for more information on EITC eligibility, and to schedule an appointment.





DONALD P. WAGNER
gov.com

FREE TAX FILING

If you live, work, or attend school in Irvine and your household income was less than \$60,000, you may be eligible to file your taxes for free and access valuable tax credits.

Service Dates

Wednesdays, February 2 through April 6
12 PM to 7 PM



Cypress Community Park

255 Visions, Irvine, CA 92620

Call 888-434-8248 for more information about EITC cash-back credits or to schedule a free tax preparation appointment.



Connecting job seekers and businesses to no-cost services.

Free tax site cannot prepare returns with all types of income or expenses. Please verify with the appointment representative or site greeter that your return can be prepared. An appointment is not a guarantee of service.



SOUTH COUNTY — Supervisor Wagner visited the Rancho Santa Margarita City Council and Lake Forest City Council meetings to express his enthusiasm and partnership in serving a shared constituency. He also urged both city councils to adopt resolutions to join in OC's fight against fentanyl; [Supervisor Wagner previously brought forward a similar resolution](#) to the County at the January 25, 2022 Board meeting, where it passed with full support from his colleagues. From the dais, Supervisor Wagner also pledged to rally support from all Third District

cities regarding fentanyl.

The effort has been a success so far. Lake Forest passed its fentanyl resolution on February 15 and Rancho Santa Margarita passed theirs on February 23, joining a handful of Third District cities that recently passed similar resolutions. We thank all of our cities for taking a stand on this critical public safety issue and will provide an update on the progress of this effort.



LAKE FOREST —Major League Baseball Third Baseman for the Oakland Athletics, Matt Chapman, had his #6 high school jersey retired at the El Toro Alumni Baseball game. Matt was a Lake Forest resident who played baseball at El Toro High School.

Supervisor Wagner joined Matt at home plate to [present a proclamation](#) for Matt's leadership in baseball, serving as a role model for Orange County youth. The event helped support the local baseball boosters club.

Hundreds of families and kids came out to get an autograph from their hometown hero. The message that day was clear: young people can accomplish their dreams


with hard work, faith, determination, and teamwork. We are excited to see the next generation of athletes rise up in Orange County.

WHAT'S HAPPENING


GET THE LATEST UPDATES AND YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

HOSTED BY
DONALD P. WAGNER
ocgov.com

SPEAKERS FROM
ORANGE COUNTY
OC Public Works



CANYON COMMUNITY TOWN HALL
EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND PREPAREDNESS



LIBRARY OF THE CANYONS
7531 E SANTIAGO CANYON RD, SILVERADO, CA 92676

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2022
7 PM TO 8 PM



ORANGE COUNTY MICROBUSINESS GRANTS

GRANT AWARD
\$2,500

APPLICATION PERIOD

Opens: February 14, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. PST
Closes: March 15, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. PST

Small businesses owned by women, veterans, minorities, individuals without documentation, and individuals with limited English proficiency are encouraged to apply.

TO APPLY, SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT
www.oconestop.com/grant-relief-programs

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

To view the full list of eligibility requirements, please visit www.oconestop.com/grant-relief-programs



Fewer than 5 full-time equivalent employees and fewer than 5 full-time equivalent employees in the 2019 and 2020 taxable years.



Began operation prior to December 31, 2019.



Currently active and operating, or has a clear plan to reopen when the state permits reopening of the business.

#OCWORKSTOGETHER



For questions, email BusinessServices@ocworkforcesolutions.com or call the Orange County Business & Economic Recovery Call Center at 714-480-6500



Orange County is allocating \$3 million to help small businesses. [Apply today.](#)



Recruitment Open:

COMMISSION TO END HOMELESSNESS

Thinking about getting involved in local government? Supervisor Wagner serves on the Commission to End Homelessness and invites you to learn about the opportunity. Apply [here](#); applications are due March 18, 2022.

RECOGNITIONS



IRVINE, CA — In February, we celebrated Black History Month and remembered the career and accomplishments of longtime Irvine resident Lt. Col. Robert Friend. He was a retired U.S. Air Force pilot who participated in 142 combat missions during World War II and was one of the last surviving members of the distinguished Tuskegee Airmen before he died in 2019 at the age of 99.

Col. Friend shared his story years ago with the City of Irvine in a special [broadcast](#). We are grateful for Col. Friend's legendary service and dedication; he will always be remembered as a great American hero.

Let's make all of 2022, not just February, a time when we remember the unique history and challenges experienced by the Black community and make sure this country's commitment to equal rights is always respected.

Thanks for reading!

Supervisor Don Wagner is proud to represent over 630,000 diverse residents in the communities of Anaheim Hills, Irvine, Lake Forest, Mission Viejo, North Tustin and Tustin, Orange, Rancho Santa Margarita, the unincorporated canyons, Villa Park, and Yorba Linda.

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Let's Connect

