

2018 Bizfed Central Valley Leadership Roundtable Series with Congressman Kevin McCarthy

Bakersfield – October 18



At its heart, America is an idea - one of liberty that allows its people to thrive.

And that is how we should tackle the future, by leading with ideas, according to House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy who met with BizFed Central Valley members Thursday over lunch.

"No other country was created in liberty," he said. "We go into battle to create liberty, not destroy it."

That liberty allows Americans to be wildly innovative, something politicians need to find ways to protect and encourage.

The free-flowing conversation with McCarthy ranged from water policy to emerging technology and the biggest issues facing the country today.

He outlined five issues that need to be addressed to take us into the next century.

1. Energy - the country can't focus on a single form but must adopt an "all of the above" policy to maintain independence and provide the country with cheap, reliable energy.
2. Immigration - separate out the emotion by acknowledging that people brought here before age 18 should be able to stay, secure the border and fix the system for those seeking entrance by, among other things, tying the number allowed in to the real economic needs of the nation.
3. Workforce development - challenge our educational system to prepare future workers for a rapidly changing employment landscape dominated by technology such as artificial intelligence.
4. Rebuild the military - the U.S. can't negotiate from a position of weakness and fear.
5. Stop the divisiveness - both parties need to learn to compromise.

McCarthy defended President Trump's policies noting that the results have been positive, including no more nuke testing by North Korea, extremely low unemployment and a better North American Free Trade Act.

He said China remains one of our biggest challenges, including unfair trade policies and massive intellectual property theft.

Members asked McCarthy about a wide variety of issues.

Will there be any changes to the Clean Air Act? (McCarthy carried a bill to harmonize ozone standards rather than have three different standards running concurrently, which has led to a confusing patchwork regulatory environment)

"I got it through the House, but can't get past the Senate," he said.



He suggested BizFed CV members work to create a relationship with Sen. Feinstein (assuming she wins reelection) to educate her on the issue and what the real effects are for businesses in the Central Valley. (Be on the look out for a possible Leadership Roundtable with Ms. Feinstein!)

Another member asked about McCarthy's thoughts on how members could impact energy policy in California.

"Don't argue about the micro impacts," he said. "Explain the macro story, how higher energy prices make California unaffordable. Shift the conversation away from the Central Valley and tell the story about how this affects people's ability to live in other parts of California."

Another member noted a Univision poll found that 62 percent of Hispanic parents believe their children's future will be better outside of California.

McCarthy indicated that health care and Social Security will be on his plate in the upcoming Congress (assuming Republicans keep the House).

As for water and the Endangered Species Act, McCarthy said the trick will be to force regulatory agencies to operate the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta on the upper ranges, delivering more water, to downstream users.

The ESA is essentially a religion to many activists and it's hard to break that grasp, he said. But there are legislative ways to work around the edges and keep at least some water flowing.

