

# Gaines, Bigelow bring no new taxes message to Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

A unified anti-tax voice permeated the room as state Sen. Ted Gaines and Assemblyman Frank Bigelow spoke Friday to their constituents in South Lake Tahoe.

The two Republican legislators meandered through the crowd at Riva Grill before each addressed the assembled guests.

“We don’t need additional taxes, what we need is to streamline government,” Gaines said March 1 in response to a question by South Lake Tahoe City Councilwoman Angela Swanson.



State Sen. Ted Gaines and Assemblyman Frank Bigelow talk March 1 in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

She asked about whether the two men favored changing the current two-thirds requirement to raise taxes to be lowered to 55 percent.

“We have a problem in the system. There are a number of items that are bloated. We need to fix that before we ask anyone to step up and pay more,” Bigelow said.

Gaines touched on a few bills he is working on. From the get-go Gaines opposed the governor's fire fee; instead calling it a tax. Senate Bill 17 would repeal the \$150 fee CalFire levies on buildings in State Responsibility Areas (SRA). Senate Bill 125 exempts a property owner of a structure that is located both within an SRA and within the boundaries of a local fire protection district from paying the \$150 tax. Senate Bill 147 exempts any property owner located within an SRA who has an income of less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level from paying the \$150 fire tax.

He also talked about the state Board of Equalization on Feb. 28 voting to raise the excise tax on gasoline by 3.5 cents per gallon, which will be effective July 1.

Gaines also said he is working with Lake Tahoe Community College on a bill that would allow Nevada residents to attend the two-year institution at the rate Californians pay.

He tiptoed around the loop road controversy, saying it's a "local decision." While that is true, it is also a state issue because it involves a state highway.

This was Bigelow's first public meeting on the South Shore since he was elected in November.

While the legislators said they are not anti-regulation, they agree it needs to be logical and reasonable. Considering the Lake Tahoe Basin is often touted as one of the most regulated regions in the country, the people listening are constantly facing layers of rules not often found elsewhere.

Both men represent a large swath of the state.

Gaines, who is from the Roseville area, is in a district that goes from Alpine County to the Oregon border. The 11 counties it encompasses is larger than 10 U.S. states. Bigelow's Fifth District, which is newly realigned, takes in nine counties from El Dorado to Madera, where he is from.

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**Note:**

Gaines is hosting a March 12 open house at his El Dorado Hills office that opened last month. It is from 6-8pm at 4359 Town Center Blvd., Ste. 112, El Dorado Hills.