

My name is John Doherty and I am the Los Rios Student Trustee. Taking on this role to represent four colleges in the Sacramento area has integrated me with the region, giving me the perspective and capability to address the problems that affect us most.

When I was a student body officer at American River College, I had serious concerns about the lack of food on campus for students. With only 12 vending machines schoolwide and no option to use food stipends, I knew we all needed an advocate. I took on a role in a district-wide committee to search for vendors that would provide healthy, affordable, and sustainable fresh food. After several months, we found two bidders to bring restaurant services back on campus. I held the district accountable and ensured that they didn't prioritize the easiest or cheapest contract, but the one that would provide quality food at a fair price. Once we selected the right company, I continued to advocate while we finalized the terms of service. I demanded that the food needed to be locally sourced, served with compostable silverware, and offered in gluten-free, vegan, and halal options. We achieved all of this and students are now able to get a full plate of food for under \$8.

After this experience, I wanted to continue my commitment to the students in my district. I believe that relentless dedication to listening to the needs of those you represent is the most essential part of serving constituents. This is why my ardent passion for public service manifests itself in the way I relate to the people I represent. I started my journey in student government as a tour guide at my school and an employee in the American River College student center. This led to conversations with hundreds of incoming students and thousands of existing ones, opening my eyes to a crisis. Over 1 in 5 community college students in our region are experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity and over half can't afford balanced or consistent meals.

Feeling a need to combat those numbers, I ran for student trustee and added the issue of student housing security to my focus. In my role as trustee, I rapidly took action to start initiatives for student housing programs and to provide emergency stipends to guide students to temporary housing. While I'm honored to have a platform to prioritize the basic needs of my peers, every student in California deserves the same opportunity for academic success; and housing is a crucial building block in that process. A student cannot learn to their full potential or dive into a subject they love when they're concerned with having a place to stay at night.

As a representative in Region II, I have a deep understanding of the threat this poses to our student body. As the housing crisis radiates out of the Bay Area, things will only get worse. Action is required now. Focus and comprehension of the problem are a necessity. The Legislative Affairs Director is the lead policy advocate for the students of Region II, in the powerful statewide organization that is the SSSCC. With the knowledge and experience I've gained through driving an initiative like providing affordable food service, I am prepared to cut through the state level red tape and bring results to our students.

Students of Region II, I would be humbled to be your legislative affairs representative, and I hope we can work together to address the most fundamental issues stifling academic success.

