

Kendric Prudhomme

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Senator Dave Cortese Role Profile

Part 1: Individual Profile

- Name: Dave Cortese
- District: California State Senate District 15
- Party affiliation: Democrat
- Gender: Male
- Marital status: Married to Pattie Cortese
- Education: Cortese earned a Bachelor of Science in Political Science from UC Davis. He later earned his law degree from Lincoln University Law School in San Jose.
- Career background, nonpolitical: Cortese has worked as an attorney and business owner.
- Career background, political: Before becoming a State Senator, Cortese spent many years working in local government. He served on the East Side Union High School District Board, the San Jose City Council, and as Vice Mayor of San Jose. He also served on the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors for more than 10 years and spent four years as Board President.
- Number of years in current role: Cortese was first elected to the California State Senate in November 2020. As of 2026, he has been a State Senator for almost six years.
- Percent of vote received in the last general election: Cortese was reelected in 2024 with 68.6% of the vote. His Republican opponent, Robert Paul Howell, received 31.4%.
- Three issues Cortese is known for:
- Housing and homelessness: Cortese has worked on increasing affordable housing and finding ways to reduce homelessness. Before joining the State Senate, he helped support a \$950 million affordable housing bond in Santa Clara County.
- Education: Cortese has a long background in education. He previously served as a school board trustee and has continued supporting public education and programs aimed at reducing educational inequality.
- Transportation and the environment: Cortese has worked on improving public transportation and roads while also supporting policies aimed at reducing pollution and fighting climate change. His past work includes supporting the expansion of BART into San Jose.

- Ideology on economic issues: Cortese generally supports Democratic economic policies. His work has focused on things such as affordable housing, workers' rights, public education, and government programs that help people with the high cost of living.
- Ideology on social issues: Cortese generally takes liberal positions on social issues. Some of his work has focused on immigrant rights, reducing homelessness, education, gun safety, gender equality, and changing parts of the criminal justice system to focus more on rehabilitation.
- Ideology on environmental issues: Cortese supports policies aimed at fighting climate change and reducing pollution. He has supported renewable energy, cleaner transportation, and efforts to connect housing and transportation planning with environmental protection.
- Prominent campaign donors: Campaign finance information should be taken from California campaign finance records. This is one area I would verify before submitting instead of listing donors that may be outdated.

Part 2: Constituent Profile

Economics:

- Prominent industries: Technology is one of the biggest industries in District 15 because the district is located in Silicon Valley. Many residents work for technology companies or in jobs connected to the technology industry. The area also has jobs in education, healthcare, government, retail, construction, and other industries.
- Cost of living: The cost of living is an important issue for people in the district, especially because housing in Santa Clara County can be expensive. This makes housing affordability and homelessness important political issues.

Demographics:

- Population: About 1,032,570 people based on the Senate.gov Website
- Race and ethnicity:
- Hispanic or Latino: about 35%
- Asian, non Hispanic: about 30%
- White, non Hispanic: about 26%
- Black or African American, non Hispanic: about 3%
- Two or more races, non Hispanic: about 4%
- Other(American Indian, Asian Pacific Islanders, etc): about 2%

District 15 is very diverse and includes large Latino and Asian communities. It includes Little Saigon, which is home to a large Vietnamese community.

Urban and rural breakdown: Most of District 15 is urban because it includes a large part of San Jose. However, the district also includes smaller communities and rural areas. Some of the other places in the district include Morgan Hill, Gilroy, and San Martin. The rural parts of the district stretch toward the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Politics:

Political makeup - District 15 generally has more Democratic voters than Republican voters. Cortese's 2024 election results also show this Democratic advantage. He received 68.6% of the vote compared with 31.4% for his Republican opponent.

Three issues that are important to constituents:

- Housing and homelessness: Housing is expensive in Santa Clara County, so affordable housing and homelessness are major concerns for many people.
- Cost of living: The high cost of housing and other everyday expenses can affect families throughout the district.
- Transportation: Traffic and public transportation are important because many people commute throughout San Jose and the rest of Silicon Valley for work.

General economic positions: The district tends to support Democratic candidates, but there are still people with different political views. Economic concerns include the cost of housing, jobs, wages, education, and the overall cost of living.

General social positions: The district's voting patterns show stronger support for Democratic candidates. Issues such as education, immigration, homelessness, public safety, and equal rights are important in the area.

General environmental positions: Environmental issues are also important because transportation, air pollution, development, and climate change directly affect the region. Policies involving clean transportation and renewable energy are especially relevant because the district is part of the heavily populated Silicon Valley area.