



Assembly Speaker Designate Robert Rivas was first elected to serve as a State Assemblymember in 2018.

While still in his first term, in the Fall of 2020, he was appointed as Chairman of the Assembly Agriculture Committee and elected as Vice-Chair of the influential Latino Legislative Caucus. A lifelong resident of the district, Rivas served two terms on the San Benito County Board of Supervisors prior to becoming an Assemblymember.

Rivas was raised in Paicines, California, where his grandfather was a farmworker at Almaden Vineyards. Rivas and his brother Rick grew up in farmworker housing, cared for by their single mother and beloved grandparents, who emigrated from Mexico in the 1960s. Rivas' grandfather was known for his passionate advocacy on behalf of his fellow workers, but also for his ability to work with owners to negotiate contracts acceptable to both sides.

Through his grandfather, Rivas learned that you could fight fiercely for your beliefs, while respecting those with whom you disagreed. Still, it seemed unlikely that Rivas would become a community leader, at least not if doing so required public speaking. For much of his childhood he struggled to overcome a severe stutter that rendered him almost speechless. It was only after years of speech therapy that Rivas was able to overcome the disability.

Rivas' childhood experiences – growing up in a farmworker community, struggling to overcome a disability – gave him a direct understanding of the challenges faced by many in our community as they struggle to build better lives for themselves and their families.

As an Assemblymember, Rivas' first-term legislative achievements include securing enactment of the first-in-the-nation COVID-19 Farmworker Relief Package, which included critical efforts related to agricultural workplace safety, access to PPE and testing, temporary housing, and access to healthcare and the courts. He also championed the Farmworker Housing Act, which streamlines the process to build quality housing for farmworkers and their families. He knows that safe and decent housing is essential for every Californian, and he continues to lead efforts to address the state's housing crisis.

Rivas also won passage of the \$89 million Golden State Teacher Grant Program, which provides \$20,000 scholarships to teachers who commit to teach high-need subjects – like STEM, special education, and bilingual education – in schools facing a shortage of qualified teachers. The bill helps ensure that every student can get a high-quality education, regardless of which school they attend.

A long-time champion of the environment, Rivas won bipartisan support for the Oil Transportation Safety Act, which improves the state's preparedness to protect coastal regions after a potential spill of nonfloating oil. The bill updates safety standards and ensures the state is ready to protect public health and marine life from this unique threat.

Rivas also authored and won passage of other significant legislation, including bills to improve bike safety, promote affordable housing on surplus state land, and ensure that the voices of low-income and minority communities are heard in key decisions.

Rivas attended local public schools in San Juan Bautista and Hollister. He graduated with a Bachelor's in Government from CSU- Sacramento and later earned a Master's in Public Administration from San Jose State University. Assemblymember Rivas and his wife Christen are raising their family in Hollister, California.

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