Inventory of the Dominic Cortese Papers

Processed by Sven Kennedy
California State Archives
1020 "O" Street
Sacramento, California 95814
Phone: (916) 653-2246
Fax: (916) 653-7363
Email: ArchivesWeb@sos.ca.gov
URL: http://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/
© 2007
California Secretary of State. All rights reserved.
Inventory of the Dominic Cortese Papers

Collection number: LP365

California State Archives
Office of the Secretary of State
Sacramento, California

Processed by:
Sven Kennedy

Date Completed:
February 2007

Encoded by:
Debbie Bahn

© 2007 California Secretary of State. All rights reserved.

Descriptive Summary

Title: Dominic Cortese Papers
Dates: 1981-1996
Collection number: LP365
Creator: Dominic Cortese, California Legislator
Collection Size: 22.5 cubic feet
Repository: California State Archives
Sacramento, California

Abstract: Dominic Cortese, Democrat, served the California Legislature as a State Assembly Member from 1981-1996. The Dominic Cortese Papers consist of 22.5 cubic feet of records reflecting Cortese's legislative activities during his 16-year legislative career. The records consist of Bill Files, Correspondence, Hearing Files, Press Releases, special Interest Letters, Subject Files, and Committee Files.

Physical location: California State Archives
Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access
Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights
For permission to reproduce or publish, please contact the California State Archives. Permission for reproduction or publication is given on behalf of the California State Archives as the owner of the physical items. The researcher assumes all responsibility for possible infringement which may arise from reproduction or publication of materials from the California State Archives collections.

Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Dominic Cortese Papers, LP365:[folder number], California State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Sacramento, California.

Acquisition and Custodial History
The California State Archives acquired the Dominic Cortese Papers following his final term in the State Legislature.

Biography
Dominic Cortese, Democrat, was a California State Assembly Member from 1981-1996. In November 1980, Cortese was elected to represent California's 24th Assembly District, which covered the southern and eastern regions of Santa Clara County and downtown San Jose. Following redistricting in 1992 the 24th Assembly District encompassed the eastern half of Santa Clara County and greater San Jose while the downtown portion of the city was incorporated into the 23rd Assembly District. In November 1992, Cortese ran for the 23rd Assembly District seat, which he held through 1996.

Dominic Cortese was born September 27, 1932 in San Jose, California. He was one of five children of an Italian immigrant farm laborer. Growing up during the Great Depression, he picked apricots and cherries with his siblings while his father worked for the Works Progress Administration. In 1950, Cortese graduated from Bellarmine College Preparatory High
School. He went on to receive a Bachelor of Science degree in political science from the University of Santa Clara in 1954. Between 1954 and 1956, Cortese served as a First Lieutenant in the United States Army. He and his wife Suzanne had five children: David, Rosanne, Mary Elizabeth, Thomas, and James. Dominic Cortese established himself as a successful farmer and businessman before pursuing a career in public office. Cortese began his political career in local government, serving on the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors from 1968 to 1980. In addition, Cortese served as chairman for the Santa Clara County Transit District, the Regional Criminal Justice Planning Board, and the Santa Clara County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). He also chaired the Executive Board of the California Association of LAFCOs from 1972-1973.

Cortese's peers recognized his accomplishments in public service on many occasions. In 1982, Cortese received the Center for Employment Training Award for his leadership in job training and welfare reform. The League of California Cities selected him Legislator of the Year in 1983 for his "ability in solving complex problems facing local governments." The American Planning Association named Cortese Legislator of the Year in 1984. Cortese also received the El Matador Fellowship Award from the California Contract Cities Association and the President's Award from Counties in 1984. In 1986, he received the Santa Clara County Fair Association Blue Ribbon Award. The California Chapter of American Planning Associations named him Legislator of the Year in 1989, as did the California Council of the American Institute of Architects in 1990. In 1991, Cortese received the Mountain Lion Federation Outstanding Service Award, and in 1992 he received the Safari Club Recognition Award and the Sierra Club Commendation for Environmental Leadership.

In 1995, Dominic Cortese switched political party affiliation, leaving the Democratic Party in favor of the then newly established Reform Party. Due to term limits imposed in 1990 allowing for a maximum service of three, two-year terms in the State Assembly, Cortese was required to run for a different political office. By switching to the Reform Party, Cortese avoided a primary contest against Democrat John Vasconcellos in the 1996 campaign for the 13th Senate District. However, he did lose the general election to Vasconcellos and left public office at the end of the 1995-1996 legislative session. In August 1996, Assembly Speaker Curt Pringle, Republican introduced House Resolution 79 to honor Dominic Cortese for diligent work in public service and for his faithful representation of his constituents, district, and the State. Dominic Cortese was an integral figure in the creation of the Santa Clara County Transit District. He also contributed to the formation of county commissions on Alcoholism, Consumer Affairs, Drug Abuse, Human Relations, Status of Women, and the Mobile Home Owners Task Force.

Throughout his legislative career, Cortese served on the following committees:

**Standing Committees**
- Elections, Reapportionment, and Constitutional Amendments, 1996
- Health, 1989-1990
- Intergovernmental Relations, 1985-1986
  *Chair, 1983-1990
  *Vice Chair, 1981-1982
- Public Employees, Retirement, and Social Security, 1995-1996
- Public Investments, Finance, and Bonded Indebtedness, 1985-1986
- Transportation, 1995
- Utilities and Commerce, 1996
  *Chair, 1991-1996

**Subcommittees**
- (Agriculture) Fairs and Expositions, 1989
- (Health) Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, 1990
- (Local Government) State-Local Relations, 1990
Select Committees (General Research Committees)
Auburn Dam, 1984-1985
Aviation, 1984
California Wine Production and Economy, 1988-1996
*Chair, 1989-1996
Child Care, 1987-1989
Child Care and Child Abuse, 1990
Common Interest Subdivisions, 1990
Earthquake Preparedness, 1990
Regional Government, 1990
Small Business, 1990

Joint Committees
California 1992 Joint Legislative Committee on the Quincentennial of the Voyages of Columbus, 1989-1992
Legislative Audit, 1983-1993
Refugee Resettlement and Immigration, 1984-1988

Scope and Content

The bill files document his legislative activity during his term as a member of the California State Assembly. The bills introduced by Dominic Cortese include a wide array of subjects. He regularly introduced and supported legislation dealing with the functions of local governments. In 1984, he authored legislation to stabilize local government finances (AB2468, AB2469, ACA54-ACA56). Cortese also played an active role in supporting legislation geared towards water and the environment. In 1986, he authored AB3750 (Chapter 1048) that culminated in Government Code section 65962.5, commonly referred to as the Cortese List. The Cortese List mandates the public availability of documents relating to all waste facilities subject to corrective action, all hazardous waste property or border zone property designations, all information received on hazardous waste disposals on public land, all hazardous substance release sites listed pursuant to section 25356, and all sites that were included in the former Abandoned Site Assessment Program.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.
Cortese, Dominic
Environmental policy
Santa Clara County (Calif.)
Series 1 Bill Files 1981-1996

Physical Description: 294 file folders

Arrangement

Bill files are arranged chronologically by legislative session and then numerically by bill number.

Scope and Content Note

Bill files created by Dominic Cortese document legislation he authored while serving as a member of the State Assembly. Files generally include drafts of bills, analyses by committees and state agencies, comments by constituents or interested parties, notes by Cortese and his staff, relevant background reports or newspaper articles, correspondence in support of or opposed to the legislation, veto messages, notices from the legislative counsel about related bills, and other miscellaneous materials. Depending on the extent of the bill file, they may help reveal the legislator's intent for the measure.

One example of the many significant initiatives sponsored by Dominic Cortese is AB2641 (Chapter 944, Statutes of 1982), which sought to extend the California's Peace Officers' Bill of Rights to all persons in the State with law enforcement powers, including park rangers, school security officers, airport police, and Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) police. In 1981, Cortese introduced AB1183 (Chapter 127, Statutes of 1982), aimed at securing a 24-hour dispatching system for all game wardens and state park rangers. In 1983, he submitted AB91 to include firefighters in the Peace Officers' Bill of Rights, although this bill was vetoed. Dominic Cortese actively worked to introduce bills that sought to bolster advancements and learning in California's high-technology business sector. In a press release from August, 1982 Cortese stated, "Almost half of all the new jobs in the next ten years will come from the high-technology industry...we cannot afford to let other countries take jobs away from our citizens." Cortese also introduced legislation (AB1078, Chapter 1491, Statutes of 1984) aimed at preventing and prosecuting thefts of high-technology equipment and intellectual property. Following the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, Cortese authored several bills aimed at dealing with problems associated with seismic events. AB200 (Chapter 699, Statutes of 1991) sought to disclose potential earthquake hazards, while AB204 (Chapter 173, Statutes of 1991) dealt with rewriting the Health and Safety Code to require seismic retrofitting on structures deemed unsafe.

1983-1984 AB91-AB3901, ACA10-ACAB56 (46ff) LP365:33-78
1985-1986 AB115-AB4417, ACA44, ACR46-ACAB143, AJR52, HR16 (60ff) LP365:79-138
1987-1988 AB195-AB4644, ACA24, ACR4-ACAB211, AJR62 (45ff) LP365:139-183
1995-1996 AB86-AB3184, ACR44, AJR30, HR23-HR84 (19ff) LP365:276-294

Series 2 Chronological Correspondence 1982-1986, 1990-1996

Physical Description: 48 file folders

Arrangement

Chronological Correspondence is arranged chronologically by date of letter.

Scope and Content Note

The correspondence series represents a sampling of his office's active communication with his constituents. For every letter or group of letters that Assembly Member Cortese's Sacramento or San Jose office received, he would send a response. These letters range from displeased constituents with certain needs to thank you letters from constituents who were pleased with Cortese's representation.
Series 3 Hearing Files 1988-1996

Physical Description: 7 file folders

Arrangement
Hearing files are arranged chronologically by date of hearing.

Scope and Content Note
Hearing files can contain hearing agendas, audiocassettes, proceeding summaries, transcripts, testimony, background reports, and working files for regular session hearings, interim hearings, and some joint session hearings.

10/20/1988 Local Government Committee hearing on Growth and Development Issues (1ff) LP365:343

03/11/1991 California Drought/Water Plan (1ff, 2 audiocassettes) LP365:344

1991 Health Care/Mental Health, Direction of health care in California; Analysis of budget dynamics (1ff) LP365:345

07/08/1992 Rules Committee hearing on rules (1ff, 5 audiocassettes) LP365:346

12/9/1993 East Side Union High School District, Hearing on at risk youth (1ff, 3 audiocassettes) LP365:347

02/22/1994 California Transportation Commission, Hearing on funding of federal transportation enhancement activities (1ff) LP365:348

1996 Mobile Home/AB622/Proposition 199 (1ff) LP365:349


Physical Description: 3 file folders

Arrangement
Press releases are arranged chronologically.

Scope and Content Note
Press releases can include topics relating to the status of proposed, pending, and newly enacted legislation, committee hearings and actions, and legislative agendas. The specific topics covered in the press releases vary broadly. However, the documents from 1988-1995 deal exclusively with the Select Committee on California Wine Production and the Economy.

Series 5 Special Interest Letters 1981-1985

Physical Description: 3 file folders

Arrangement
Special interest letters are arranged chronologically.

Scope and Content Note
Special interest letter files can include letters sent to, and in some cases letters received from constituents. Topics generally cover legislative updates, public events, greetings, and legislative positions. Some special interest letters cover legislative updates on bills that would appeal to specific constituents. Pending handgun and firearm legislation is one topic covered in the special interest letter series. The letters may also cover topics such as: crime, corrections, health care, taxes, transportation, toxic spills, libraries, labor unions, and government funding.
Series 6 Subject Files 1981-1992  
Physical Description: 53 file folders  
Arrangement  
Subject files are arranged alphabetically by subject heading.  
Scope and Content Note  
Subject files can contain newspaper clippings, press releases, correspondence, reports, notes, memorandums, and other materials. Several files contain information related to committee proceedings and actions, as well as topics that garnered special attention from Cortese during his legislative career.  
A list of subject headings is available in Appendix A in the master finding aid at the California State Archives.

Series 7 Select Committee on California Wine Production and Economy Files 1988-1996  
Physical Description: 18 file folders  
Arrangement  
The Select Committee files are arranged chronologically.  
Scope and Content Note  
Select Committee files may contain hearing agendas, audiocassettes, correspondence, reports, memorandums, news clippings, notes, press releases, testimony, and other materials. The series contains several hearing audio recordings that highlight some committee actions.