Jose Cornejo

Biography

Jose Cornejo has served as Chief of Staff for Councilman Tony Cardenas for eight years, two on the Los Angeles City Council and six in the California State Assembly.

Jose Cornejo is a first generation American born to parents who emigrated from Mexico. As a teenager Jose worked in the fields during the summer and in the potato packing sheds after school during the school year. After graduating high school he attended community college and then transferred to California State University, Sacramento where he majored in Government and minored in Economics. While at CSUS, Jose got involved with several community organizations.

For five years, Jose volunteered as Executive Director and Program Coordinator for a program that exposed "at-risk" ninth and tenth graders to positive role model and career opportunities. Jose also served as a member of the Board of Director for the Center for Employment Training, a nonprofit organization that retrains low skill, low income workers for better jobs.

Before joining Mr. Cardenas' staff in the State Legislature, Jose Cornejo worked for the Latino Legislative Caucus of the State Legislature which was chaired by Senator Richard Polanco. Prior to that, he also worked for Assemblyman Phil Isenberg.

As Chief of Staff to then Assemblyman Cardenas, Jose Cornejo was responsible for the general management of the staff and assisting the Assemblyman in his duties including helping him set his legislative priorities. When Assemblyman Cardenas became the Chairman of the Assembly Budget Committee and Chairman of the Legislature's Budget Conference Committee, Jose became responsible for managing both personal staff and committee staff who analyzed and reviewed the State's $104 Billion expenditures.

Many individuals have credited Jose for being the "behind-the-scenes" of the strategy that broke the state budget impasse by identifying the members' needs and creating ways to help them achieve them. Jose was also intricately involved in drafting and negotiating legislation on juvenile crime prevention, securing funds for new school construction, before and after school programs, earmarking lottery funds for textbooks, and developing playgrounds for disabled children.

Jose Cornejo has been recognized by many for having an ability to analyze complex problems, identifying workable solutions and working to build consensus.