

Bill McEwen: Why I changed my mind about leaving journalism for politics

By Bill
McEwen

When a politician changes his mind on an issue, some smart-aleck like me inevitably calls him a flip-flopper.

I am the flip-flopper this time.

On Monday, I told my bosses at The Bee that I was retiring from journalism and would join the political world as Rep. Jim Costa's district director.

My hope was to leave The Bee's building as quietly as I had entered it for the first time in July 1980.

But an hour later, I was being interviewed by colleague John Ellis for a story on my departure. That afternoon, Ellis' story was posted on [fresnobee.com](http://www.fresnobee.com), and immediately I began receiving kind words from journalists I had worked with over 35 years and from community members.

Oh, the magic of the digital age and social media.

I didn't sleep well that night. Or Tuesday night. Amid the tossing and turning, I came to realize that I still wanted to report and write and offer my opinions – and that there are many great stories begging to be written in the San Joaquin Valley.

So, I am staying at The Bee as an opinion columnist and editor of the Editorial Page.

Some of you will cheer. Some of you will jeer. And it's all good.

I apologized to Rep. Costa and his top staff Wednesday. He has worked hard to make the San Joaquin Valley a better place throughout his career in the California Legislature and the U.S. House of Representatives. He offered me an incredible opportunity. One that I accepted. And then turned down because I am a newspaper guy at heart.

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