

## FIRE VICTIM CALLS HOLLINGSWORTH A LIAR

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By Joseph Pena  
The East County Californian

Kathleen Huneke had no idea what was happening at home. Huneke, a Lakeside resident, was in Las Vegas selling her father's property when the Cedar fire destroyed her house in 2003. Her husband called to tell her that they had lost everything.

"I wanted to race back, go home, but he told me, 'You have no home,' and I just about died," Huneke said. "That's when it hit me. We didn't have a home. And we still don't."

Huneke is one of many East County residents who have yet to rebuild their homes after the fires swept through San Diego County.

She's run the gamut of emotions since her 4,000 square-foot home on five and one-quarter acres of property in Lakeside burned – but lately, she is angry. And her anger is directed at Dennis Hollingsworth, state senator for the 36th District, which represents a large number of East County residents.

Huneke said Hollingsworth lied in a story published in The San Diego Union-Tribune last week. Mark Hanson, a challenger to incumbent Hollingsworth, said the state senator sided with insurance companies, not victims, after the fires.

In the article, Hollingsworth denied the accusations. But the insurance industry is Hollingsworth's top campaign contributor, champing the Republican senator for \$29,300 so far.

And Hollingsworth voted no on Senate Bill 2, designed to help survivors of catastrophes recover by easing documentation requirements and expanding coverage so reconstruction can be accelerated. The bill would have allowed alternative living expenses (ALE) for up to 24 months after the loss of a home. Typically, insurance companies offer 12-18 months of ALE.

Very few of the people who lost homes in the fires completed their reconstruction in one year and more than 50 percent still haven't completed rebuilding. The extended ALE would have eased the burden of both the victims and government agencies and contractors who were overwhelmed with demands to rebuild, Huneke said.

The bill also would have required insurance companies to pay 85 percent of policy limits for personal property losses without requiring an inventory from the homeowner, in the state of emergencies and when total loss is declared.

Huneke, who tried to inventory all of her belongings, still hasn't finished a list of the things she owned. The process of creating an inventory of her things has been devastating, at times too much for her to handle. She reviewed home videos to try and document the family's possessions, but it brought back terrible memories.

"It's just horrible, you can't imagine how horrible it is," she said.

Hanson maintained his position that Hollingsworth sided with insurance companies, not victims.

"It's not debatable," Hanson said. "It's right there in black and white, in the voting records and in The San Diego Union [Tribune] story. It's not something we should be at all confused about."

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