

Question - Equal access to healthcare

California is considered a national leader in protecting reproductive rights and the rights of transgender people, yet Californians are nevertheless denied access to reproductive healthcare and treatments for transgender people in health care facilities. Do you support measures to ensure that hospitals and other health care entities that receive public funding and hold themselves out as serving the general public cannot prevent doctors from providing health care to their patients that meets the standard of care?

YES NO OTHER

Explain (200 words maximum):

This should not even be considered an issue in our society. There is no questions that it is both immoral and egregious to deny anyone reproductive healthcare and treatments because of their gender identity. When elected I would like to formally work with the ACLU and other organizations such as Equality California to address this matter. We need measures in place to ensure this type of discrimination does not happen in California.

Question – Sex education in charter schools

Sex education helps young people have the information and skills they need to make healthy, informed decisions about relationships and behaviors. Current California law mandates comprehensive, accurate, and inclusive sex education be provided in public middle and high schools. Do you believe that charter schools should be required to provide students with the same comprehensive, accurate, and inclusive sex education that public school students must receive?

YES NO OTHER

Explain (200 words maximum):

I believe that all schools should be maintained to the same standard of education proficiency levels and services. Students should have the availability to these services as they are deemed as a positive source of information and skills. There is no reason why some schools would deny students a cafeteria program, or an afterschool program, or access to a library (when available, but that is another discussion altogether), so therefore why would we deny this particular type of service?

Question – Transgender rights in jails and prisons

Transgender people are at enormous risk of sexual assault, physical abuse, and harassment behind bars. These gender segregated facilities can be a place where transgender people are frequently and consistently misgendered. The vast majority of transgender people who are incarcerated in California are placed in gender segregated housing based not on their gender identity but their sex assigned at birth, which means, for example, that most transgender women are housed in men's facilities. Do you think that incarcerated transgender people in California should be housed based on their gender identity unless they prefer a different type of placement?

YES NO OTHER

Explain (200 words maximum):

It is my opinion, based on my limited knowledge, that California is still behind on adequately ensuring that all LGBTI incarcerated individuals are given due process and provided with necessary programs, in facilities that are supposed to be compliant with mandates such as the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). Research has clearly demonstrated that transgender individuals face a high disproportionate rate of sexual abuse amongst a myriad of lack of compliance with PREA. We need to ensure that our legislation takes a look at these prisons lack of compliance and begin to show proper diligence on how we manage the prison processes. Assembly Bill 382 from 2009 (Ammiano) is an example of how we need to continue to look at this issue and not only pass legislation but put some teeth on its implementation, evaluation, compliance and oversight. It is shocking and unnerving that we are still running these facilities with such moral decay and compassion.

Question - Extension statute of limitations on harassment and discrimination

California employers must create workplaces that allow people to do their job without harassment or discrimination. People who experience workplace harassment and discrimination have a very short window in which to file administrative complaints to address their situation, leaving many people without legal recourse if they miss the window. Do you support policy proposals that would extend the statute of limitations from one year to three years for filing an administrative complaint about workplace harassment and discrimination with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing?

YES NO OTHER

Explain (200 words maximum):

Absolutely YES! Our State Assembly is currently a prime example of how we need to kick the doors open and yell loudly that we live in a society that will not tolerate sexual harassment. I will support and if needed champion a proposal to extend the statute of limitations from one year to three years for filing a workplace harassment and discrimination complaint. In our District 39 we are seeing it at all levels of government including the Assembly and the local City Council representing the same District.

Question - Police transparency

California is among the most secretive states in the nation when it comes to information about police shootings and officer misconduct. California law gives police officers secrecy around their records far beyond that given to any other public employee: all information about discipline and investigations into misconduct is confidential, even that related to shootings and instances where the officer's own department has found they engaged in misconduct.

Should California allow public access to records of investigations, findings, and discipline related to police shootings and other serious uses of force, and to proven serious misconduct, such as sexual assault, filing false reports and fabricating evidence?

YES NO OTHER

Explain (200 words maximum):

I agree with this policy. We need to both secure transparency within the police departments while changing a culture of "us versus them" and allow for a better relationship between the communities and its police representatives. It was this sense of secrecy and injustice that motivated me to author and fight to pass Assembly Bill 1909 which amended Section 141 of the California Penal Code to make it a crime for law enforcement and prosecutors to intentionally, wrongfully, knowingly, or in bad faith to alter, modify, or withhold relevant exculpatory material or information. This benchmark in change and accountability to our enforcers of the law has been greatly appreciated by the people of the State of California, who want to uphold the law and maintain due process. With our success in California, other states have followed suits with similar legislation. Also, various district attorneys have set up conviction integrity units to ensure compliance with this sweeping change.

Question – Police de-escalation and use of force

Over the past several years, public concern has grown over the high number of police shootings of civilians, especially in light of disproportionate number of African Americans and individuals who suffer from mental illness. Last year, California saw more police killings than any other state, and the Los Angeles Police Department fatally shot more people than any other police department — including the Chicago PD and NYPD, which are significantly larger. Nothing in state law requires police to engage in best practices to reduce fatal shootings and other excessive force, such as employing de-escalation techniques, requiring officers to intervene when other officers are using excessive force, and requiring prompt provision of medical aid to civilians they injure. Since 2000, only one officer in Southern California has been criminally charged in a shooting and none have been convicted.

Should California law require officers to use de-escalation techniques and exhaust alternatives before using force against a civilian?

YES NO OTHER

Should California change state law regarding officers' use of deadly force — from authorizing officers to use any “reasonable” force, to authorizing police to use deadly force only when necessary?

YES NO OTHER

Explain (200 words maximum):

Our communities demand that we change both training and culture of how our law enforcement performs its primary duty to protect its citizens. I see that there is an issue with training and also as several research papers have purposely called a “warrior’s mentality”. De-escalation technique is not something uncommon yet is has been successfully applied in other countries like Australia. A perfect example is Project Beacon which was implemented in Victoria after an outcry of police fatal shootings. This change introduces a heavy training component to de-escalation which began in 1995. At its core it embraces ten operational safety principles rather than the use of force. Other countries like Japan also have embraced a different training and culture to mediate and remedy situations without the use of deadly force. We tend to be a stubborn culture and refuse to learn from others, their experiences and errors. We need to make changes in order to stop the spiral downwards of both the relationship between the police departments and the communities and the ongoing number of fatalities.

Question – Single-payer healthcare

We believe true freedom and equality includes the right to healthcare, housing and access to all basic human needs services so our communities can thrive. That's why we advocate in support of single-payer healthcare, ending the criminalization of poverty (i.e. laws that target people experiencing homelessness) and expanding access to affordable housing and supportive services.

The Healthy California Act, SB 562 (Lara & Atkins), would guarantee healthcare for all California residents through a single-payer model. SB 562 would save \$37 billion per year off our current healthcare spending, contain costs going forward, and guarantee healthcare for ALL California residents. Benefits include medical, dental, vision, chiropractic, acupuncture, and services covered under Medicare, Medi-Cal and the ACA, without insurance premiums, co-pays and deductibles, funded by progressive taxes. Do you support the single-payer model in SB 562?

YES NO OTHER

Explain (200 words maximum):

I feel that a universal healthcare system is the right of every constituent in California. Every country with single payer healthcare has a different method of delivering healthcare systems. I am happy that we are willing to innovate and create our own version of healthcare. Our system should provide the finest medical care possible to all Californians and be a system focused on individual patient care where individuals and doctors make medical decisions. I also want a system that encourages and protects medical and biologic innovation and rewards doctors and medical researchers for coming up with the newest cures,

My hope is to develop a few sources of exclusive funding to pay for the increased cost of medical care. Some options we can explore are oil and gas extraction tax and a pharmaceutical advertisers tax (a small flat fee per advertisement for those drug companies who wish their drugs and treatment to be covered by health insurance).

Question – Decriminalizing poverty

Do you believe California – as a state and its municipalities – should eliminate laws that criminalize poverty (e.g., laws that make it a crime to sleep in public when people experiencing homelessness literally have nowhere else to go)?

YES NO OTHER

Explain (200 words maximum):

Of course, 100% yes. It is bad enough that we have individuals who are currently living in fear, criminalized, and vandalized illegally. We need to ensure that we wrap around these individuals and case by case understand their historical context and how to best assist them on a path out of homelessness.

Question – Affordable housing fund

Will you support championing legislation that invests in a well-funded statewide housing trust fund for affordable housing and supportive services?

YES NO OTHER

Explain (200 words maximum):

Yes. I will support this measure. I would like to ensure that we implement the “Housing First” model and ensure that both affordable housing and wrap around supportive services are part of the model of continuum of service. During my tenure as Assemblywoman I hired specifically a housing specialist and we assisted over 200 families with housing location, assistance, and homeless services. I intend to work to see our homeless population decrease while creating a pathway out of homelessness and for those who are at risk to become homeless, a way to reassure their housing.

Question – Repeal court fines and fees

In recent years, defendants in criminal court and traffic court have been charged higher fines and fees in order to fund the court system. This has led to a cycle of debt and incarceration for some of the poorest and most vulnerable Californians. The ACLU of Southern California believes that administering a court system is a core function of government and that the costs of administering courts should not be shifted to defendants, the vast majority of whom are low-income. Do you support repealing fees and surcharges charged to criminal defendants and providing low-income defendants with affordable means to pay off their court debts?

YES NO OTHER

Explain (200 words maximum):

I support repealing fees and surcharges as depicted in the question. This system of imposed charges is a debt trap. When we look at research by Bastien's (Policy Link – Bastien, March 2017), and others, we find that this system of utilizing fees to fund the system is not unique to California. We also find that minorities, and specially African-Americans, are penalized more heavily proportionally. California needs to assist individuals to grow and prosper economically instead of burden them to the point of spiraling out of control. It is not difficult to know someone who has lost a job because they could not pay the fine which lead to losing transportation to the mentioned job. We need to revisit this issue and ensure that we have clear guidance and practices that help our communities instead of suffocating them even more financially.

Question – Reform Proposition 13

Proposition 13 was passed by voters to provide important protections for homeowners and renters, but it also included a property tax loophole for many corporations and wealthy commercial property owners. This loophole allows some big corporations and wealthy investors to avoid paying their fair share in property taxes. We can no longer afford to keep giving billions of dollars in tax breaks to millionaires, billionaires and big corporations. Closing California’s commercial property tax loopholes restores \$9 Billion for schools, community colleges and other vital community services, including health clinics, emergency rooms, affordable housing, parks, libraries and public safety. Do you support closing the commercial property tax loophole in Proposition 13 by taxing commercial and industrial property at its fair market value while preserving the important protections for homeowners and renters so we can invest in strengthening our schools and important local priorities?

YES NO OTHER

Explain (200 words maximum):

I believe that all big businesses must pay their fair share of taxes. I see this law as seeking to eliminate a “loophole” that allows corporations to avoid paying as much as homeowners, while at the same token helping small businesses by eliminating taxes on their fixtures and equipment.

Question – Bail reform

California’s bail system needs to change. On any given day, roughly 60% of people in California jails are being detained before trial or sentencing simply because they cannot afford to post bail. SB 10 (The California Money Bail Reform Act) aims to restructure the current bail system and significantly reduce the use of money bail and prioritize services to help people make their court appearances while their cases move forward. Would you support SB 10?

YES NO OTHER

Explain (200 words maximum):

This effort is one more reason why I need to be back in the California Assembly. I will support this bill. It is unnerving to know that your liberty is based on a system that favors whoever is more financially secured. This means that most of our communities are vulnerable and exposed to financial catastrophe based on our current system. Our communities are underemployed, receiving inadequate salaries, little to no medical benefits, living in poorly maintained living environments, and experiencing very little support to have any means to scale up. We need to confront these realities and know that our communities of color statistically represent the majority of clients under this system and we need to create a fair and reasonable manner in which our constituents can attend court and undergo the judicial process without incurring long term financial damage.

Question – Criminal sentence reductions

Current sentences are racially disproportionate and ineffective from a public safety standpoint. The incarceration rate for Black and Latinx people is now more than 6 times higher than for whites; 60% of those incarcerated are Black or Latinx. Eight percent of Black men of working age are now behind bars, and 21% of those between the ages of 25 and 44 have served a sentence at some point in their lives. To serve overly long sentences, people serve time in jails and prisons with horrifying conditions and rampant inmate abuse, where they're separated from their communities and support systems, and where people with mental health and substance use conditions leave with worse prognoses. People are then released on probation or parole to face years-long waiting lists for reentry services. They're overly surveilled, face numerous of obstacles to reentry, and receive little to no support to ease their transitions. Nearly two thirds of the reentry population technically violate probation or parole in some way and become incarcerated again. Experts say (1) that we are not going to have a sustainable reduction in our prison population if we continue to limit the discussion to those who are sentenced for non-serious or non-violent crimes and (2) that jurisdictions that divert resources away from incarceration and towards investments in communities are safer and healthier. Would you support reducing sentences, including for people convicted of serious/violent crimes?

YES NO OTHER

Explain (200 words maximum):

I will support reducing sentences for individuals and ensuring that they receive proper re-entry services and support. I believe that if a person has paid their debt to society then we should have a progressive system to re-embrace them. Our judicial system can be skewed to punish those who do not have the means to pay for top legal representation, investigators, or researchers. We know that many of our minority groups are victims to forced confessions or plea bargains that have little to no foundational grounds. We need to have a system that can compete and balance against those who have the financial resources to gain their freedom without compromise. Our laws should serve everyone not just to those who can afford them.

Question – End willful defiance and disruption suspensions

The California Department of Education (CDE) reported that 243,603 students were suspended once or more in the 2014-15 academic year. The vague and all-encompassing terms "willful defiance" and "disruption of school activities" were by far the most common reason school administrators suspended students, accounting for 129,835 suspensions statewide. Such suspensions have disproportionately impacted students of color, students with disabilities, and other student populations. For example, in California, African American students make up 6% of total statewide enrollment, but made up 18-20% of the total number of suspensions for willful defiance-related offenses in both 2013-14 and 2014-15. With respect to the age of students suspended or expelled for willful defiance offenses in 2014-15, the majority were high school students in grades nine through twelve (52%), followed by middle school students in grades six through eight (35%), and elementary school students in Kindergarten through fifth grade (13%). Do you support SB 607, a bill that prohibits California schools from expelling or suspending students on the basis of "willful defiance" and "disruption of school activities" in grades kindergarten to 12?

YES NO OTHER

Explain (200 words maximum):

I have many times accompanied mothers and family members to advocate in their schools because of this issue. We have a big problem in that schools are not culturally armed and aware of the many cultural contexts that are represented amongst minorities. Our schools systems many times see behavior through only the lens of one culture and forget that some behavior is not and should not be labeled as "willful defiance" and utilized to punish students. I support SB 607 and can easily provide testimony during committee hearings on how families and students are victimized by the lens by which schools choose to utilize when passing judgment on students.

Question – Police in schools

In 2013-14, 24% of elementary schools and 42% of all high schools in the U.S. had a full-time assigned police officer. In 2015-16, 19 school districts throughout California operated their own police departments. The U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights' 2013-14 statistics show that, in California, the average arrest rate in schools where more than 80% of students are low-income is seven times higher than the average arrest rate in schools where fewer than 20% of students are low-income. Department of Education statistics also show that although students with disabilities made up only 12% of student enrollment nationwide, they comprised 23% of police referrals, 23% of arrests, and 67% of students placed in physical restraint, seclusion, and confinement. Further, school officials are more likely to refer incidents involving students of color to the police than those involving white students: Native American students are 3.4 times more likely, Black students are 2.7 times more likely, and Hawaiians/Pacific Islander students are 1.4 times more likely to be referred to police. Do you support policies prohibiting law enforcement officers from being permanently stationed on school campuses?

YES NO OTHER

Explain (200 words maximum):

I propose that instead of a cadre of police squads stationed to man the schools as jailers in a correctional facility, we create programs that teach students conflict resolution and adopt alternative dispute resolution systems involving the students. Our children deserve to live and experience a school system that is more about thinking and understanding conflict rather than become hyper vigilant of police. Schools also need to be more welcoming and inclusive with all families so that family and school work together with the student to obtain the same goals.

Question – Police cooperation with ICE

The Trump Administration’s aggressive immigration enforcement tactics threaten millions of immigrants, and their families, in California. These tactics rely on collaboration and cooperation with local law enforcement agencies, as well as mining state and local databases and technologies for information about where immigrants live, work, and play to allow them to find and arrest people. Do you support policies that prohibit local law enforcement agencies from cooperating with federal immigration authorities?

YES NO OTHER

Do you support state and local policies that seek to protect from disclosure to ICE information about immigrants that is used only to locate people for civil immigration enforcement purposes?

YES NO OTHER

Explain (200 words maximum):

Yes, I support these measures. I believe that it is only logical that we work together in order to best support our communities. We are living in a time when the Federal administration is implementing policies that are terrorizing our communities, ripping apart families, and singling out hard working immigrants instead of career or violent criminals. We cannot allow this fear to also ruin the fragile relationship between our community residents and local law enforcement. One of the pillars of my platform is to work to create a just pathway to residency and citizenship for all hard working residents, who like me, have toiled for years and paid taxes while they have called our great country their home.

Question – Lawyers for immigrants

Because there is no right to appointed counsel in removal proceedings, most noncitizens are forced to fight their deportation cases without the assistance of a lawyer. Do you support state funding for counsel for indigent California residents in removal proceedings?

YES NO OTHER

Do you believe that funding for this critical due process protection should be available without any exceptions or carve-outs?

YES NO OTHER

Explain (200 words maximum):

I support funding for counsel for indigent California residents in these circumstances. It is a proper course of action that California leads the way in teaching how we really deliver due process. It is deplorable that we know and still do not resist and abolish the concentration-camp style of holding facilities where human beings are being held for months at a time without any legal recourse or hope to know or understand what options they have to overcome their immigration challenges.

Candidate Statement

Please provide a statement (not to exceed 250 words) to explain to ACLU members and activists why, if you are elected, they can count on you to be a champion on ACLU issues.

You can count of me to be a champion for ACLU issues because I have already taken action at various stages of my life to fight for injustice, repression, discrimination, and xenophobia. As an immigrant from Michoacan Mexico who arrived to California as a teenager, I experienced fears and anxiety that many Californians face today. Growing up I fought against oppression of slum lords and employers who exploited immigrants. The story of how I became an Assemblymember best explains who I am as a champion of ACLU issues. It was before the Primary election of 2014 that I obtained an audience with the District 39 Assemblyman because I needed support to stop the closure of 18 schools. The Assemblyman dismissed me and my group of mothers insinuating that we were just dumb immigrant women. I felt enraged and told him that if he would not do anything about saving these schools, then I would run for his seat, beat him, and then I would do something about it, so I did. This is the same spirit by which I authored AB 1909 and the other ten bills into law. I do not talk about what I could do or what others have done for me to get to where I am today. Instead I can tell you what I have done for others and through action and perseverance I have achieved to become what my community needs from their political representatives, a staunch fighter for their rights and well being.