

Assembly District 51 Candidate Survey for October 3, 2017 Special Primary Election

1. Californians face looming cuts and in some cases the current elimination of federal funds to California social safety nets, such as after-school programs, teen pregnancy prevention programs, and HIV/AIDS education. How will you ensure that adequate state funding for sexual and reproductive health is secured and maintained for this district?

California needs to be prepared for budget cuts from the Trump Administration and Congressional Republicans. These prevention programs rely on funding tied to the Affordable Care Act, which remains under threat of repeal. Our state needs to look at our budget line by line and see where we can direct more funding to make up for the reduction of federal dollars. Through my work managing the Saban Family Foundation, I worked with Children's Hospital Los Angeles and the Saban Community Clinic to ensure patients have access to reproductive health and HIV/AIDS services. I am committed to ensuring these programs continue, especially in communities of color where services gaps still exist.

2. In a multicultural state, the conversations about race, white supremacy and bias are real. There have been recent attacks on communities that make up the fabric and strength of Los Angeles- Muslims, immigrants, refugees, communities of color, and transgender people.

a) What is a concrete policy or campaign that you will commit to championing that affirms the humanity of transgender people? (e.g. SB 396 and Transform CA)

California has strong laws to protect LGBTQ people but we need to do more. We need to push more recognition of gender identity in our schools, workplaces, and in our criminal justice system. We also have to provide more resources to communities of color and acceptance of people of color in the LGBTQIA community. I am proud to have played a role in establishing the Saban Research Institute at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. They are a national leader in research and providing care to transgendered youth. I look forward to continuing my advocacy for health care and research for transgender Californians.

b) What is a concrete policy or campaign that you would support that dismantles white supremacy, empowers communities of color, and addresses safety in our communities?

Education is the root to dismantling white supremacy and empowering communities of color. We need to ensure public schools have resources to provide inclusive curriculums of the history and struggles of communities of color. I will make it a priority to provide students a wellrounded education that exposes them to multiple points of view.

3. 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 in police shootings, and other serious uses of force, so long as releasing the information does not interfere with an ongoing investigation? Should California allow public access to records of findings and discipline imposed in any case where a department has, after an appeal, found an officer engaged in misconduct involving a civilian, such as racial profiling, excessive force, unlawful search, or falsifying evidence?

I absolutely agree that we need to hold police officers accountable for wrong doing and institute discipline standards. When it comes to public records, we need to strike a balance that encourages transparency but also protects law enforcement officers and their families' privacy, as well as respects the victim's right to privacy.

4. 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. Only one officer in Southern California has been criminally charged in a shooting since 2000, and no officer has been convicted.

Should California require de-escalation training for police officers at all departments? In deciding whether an officer's use of force was legal, should California require that departments and courts consider whether the officer used deescalation

techniques and exhausted alternatives to force? 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 reasonably necessary?

Yes. Our law enforcement agencies need to provide proper de-escalation and cultural competency training. We also need to continue to encourage diversity within the rank and file of law enforcement as well.

5. 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.

a) The Healthy California Act, SB 562 (Lara & Atkins), would guarantee healthcare for all California residents through a single-payer model. SB 562 would provide medical, dental, vision, mental health, chiropractic and many other services while eliminating premiums, co-pays and deductibles. Will you publicly support and if elected co-author SB 562?

Yes. I support Health Care for All and have already publically supported SB 562. I will fight to move California towards a single-payer health care system.

b) Do you believe California – as a state and its municipalities – should change laws that target and criminalize people experiencing homelessness and will you support changing these laws and championing legislation that invests in a wellfunded statewide housing trust fund and permanent supportive services?

Yes. I support changing laws that criminalize homelessness. I will also advocate for funding in the proposed Housing Bond for transitional and supportive housing. I will also push the city and the county to invest Prop HHH and Measure H funds in services and workforce housing in Northeast LA and East LA.

6. It has been widely acknowledged that California's court system is underfunded. In recent years, defendants in criminal court and traffic court have been charged higher fines and fees in order to fund the courts. 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.

Who should bear the costs of administering California's justice system? If you believe that criminal and traffic court defendants are partly responsible for funding this system, what measures would you take to address California's high fees and fines and their disproportionate impact on low-income communities and communities of color?

The reality is that budget cuts have left our court system struggling and we have not replaced funding taken from our courts during the recession. We need to ensure that every Californian is paying his or her fair share and close loopholes that allow for tax breaks for multi-million dollar corporations. We should not be balancing our court budgets based on punitive damages that could be detrimental to a low-income family's well being.

7. 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. I support reforms to commercial and industrial property taxes and require these properties to be assessed at fair market value. I am committed to maintaining existing protections for residential property and small businesses. Large corporations have taken advantage of loopholes for far too long and it's time that they pay their fair share.

8. 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. California keeps far more people in jail awaiting trial compared to the rest of the country, but has lower court appearance rates than other states. Further, bail amounts are assigned with staggering racial bias.

Research shows that Black people are assigned higher bail amounts than white people accused of similar offenses. Bail bond amounts for Black men are 35% higher than for white men; for Latino men, they're 19% higher than for white men. As a result of not having the money to pay bail amounts, people often pay nonrefundable fees to bail bond agents and never see that money again even if their case is dismissed, they make every court date, or they are found innocent. People who can't raise money for a bail bond (1) more readily decide to accept plea bargains as a means of getting out of jail quicker because even just a few days in jail can cost people their cars, jobs, housing, or child custody, and (2) are much more likely to be sentenced & to receive longer sentences. SB 10 (The California Money Bail Reform Act) aims to restructure the current bail system and significantly reduce and constrain the use of money bail and prioritize services to help people make their court appearances while their cases move forward. Last Friday the Governor and the Chief Justice publicly announced their support for bail reform and their commitment to work together with the legislature through the fall to pass SB 10. Would you support SB 10?

Yes. It is an unfair system and critical to protecting our public safety. We need to ensure that dangerous offenders don't skip spending time in jail only because they can afford bail and lower level offenders who can't afford it are crowding our jails and losing their ability to keep their jobs.

9. 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 nonserious 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?

We need to stop the school to prison pipeline and make more investments in programs that work to prevent people from going to prison in the first place. I believe we need to focus on mental health and reintegration services. If we are looking to release people convicted of serious crimes, then we need to ensure that they are not going commit another crime. We also need to focus on best practices to reduce recidivism and expand job training programs, like the ones spearheaded by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, GRID Alternatives, and Homeboy Industries.

10. 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 primary reason school administrators suspended students, accounting for 129,835 suspensions statewide. 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%). Would you support a bill that prohibits California schools from suspending students on the basis of "willful defiance" and "disruption of school activities" in grades kindergarten to 12? If so, what alternatives to such suspensions would you recommend?

Yes. While discipline is important, we need to ensure students continue to be motivated to attend school. I would support afterschool programs that help students work on anger management, mental health, and academic services. These programs have been proven to work and need to be more widely implemented.

11. 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 prohibiting law enforcement officers from being permanently stationed on school campuses? If not, what limits would you place on law enforcement officers being present at school sites? What practices would you recommend as alternatives to arresting or citing students for misbehavior?

I believe we need to find a balance when it comes to policing at schools. In my personal experience, school police officers have saved lives and responded to emergencies. When I attended John Marshall High School in the late 1990s, drugs, gangs, and violence was part of our daily life. I recall one day when gang members entered my high school in an attempt to kill a student on campus. My friend Angela was caught in the cross fire and was shot in the leg. If it was not for on campus public safety officers, these gang members would have certainly killed more students on campus. We should focus our energies and resources for training and collaboration between public safety officers and teachers and increase parent involvement where possible.

12. Under U.S. and California law, all students, regardless of their nationality or immigration status have a right to public education. Across California parents and guardians have reported being afraid of sending their children to school for fear that students or their family members would be arrested by immigration enforcement. Indeed, in one prominent case, a parent was detained by immigration enforcement while dropping his student off at school. Would you support litigation that (1) bars immigration authorities from school campuses and (2) prohibits school districts from sharing immigration-related information with immigration authorities? How would you protect California immigrant students and families and ensure that they feel safe to attend school?

Yes and yes. I grew up in an immigrant family and went to school with students who were undocumented. I believe all children deserve to have the opportunity to succeed academically regardless of their immigration status and they should not live in fear of deportation while attending school. I wholeheartedly support SB 54, the California Values Act sponsored by Senator Kevin de Leon. I don't believe that our state and local tax dollars

should be used to support the Trump Administration's misguided immigration policies.

13. Since 1980, California has built 22 prisons and only three (3) new universities. Decades of disinvestment have resulted in making college less affordable and less attainable for all California students, especially low income students of color. In 2016, SB 1050 (de Leon) was enacted through the state budget, allocating \$240 million to level the playing field and "expand the pie" of educational opportunity for low income and underrepresented students. Would you support continuing SB 1050's pipeline approach with future budget funding to increase college readiness and eligibility, expand University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) enrollment slots, and support retention and college graduation for low income and underrepresented students of color? What would you do to increase college access and success for low income students and underrepresented students of color?

Yes. I am the product of LAUSD public schools and college including John Marshall High School and Cal State University Northridge. Public education opened the doors of opportunity for me to succeed. I firmly believe that we need to fully fund and focus on strengthening our public schools in order to sustain our higher education pipeline for all California students regardless of income or background. I support bringing back affirmative action to our public higher education system. I have benefited from diversity programs throughout my career, and believe they are important to ensuring a diverse workforce but also providing everyone, no matter their background, with the opportunity to succeed. Through my work helping establish the Cheryl Saban Self-Worth Foundation for Women and Girls, I directed foundation dollars to fund scholarships for women of color.

14. The Trump Administration has promoted anti-immigrant rhetoric and aggressive immigration enforcement tactics that threaten millions of immigrants, and their families, in California. As part of its stepped-up enforcement campaign, the Administration is seeking to broaden collaboration and cooperation with local law enforcement agencies. This collaboration undermines immigrant community members' trust in the police and public safety for all Californians. Do you support policies that prohibit local law enforcement agencies from engaging in any cooperation with federal immigration authorities, including by detaining individuals for, or providing release notifications to, immigration agents?

Yes. I wholeheartedly support SB 54, the California Values Act sponsored by

Senator Kevin de Leon. I don't believe that our state and local tax dollars should be used to support the Trump Administration's misguided immigration policies. This is personal for me. I am the son of immigrants. When my father came to Los Angeles from the Philippines in the 70s, he faced the harsh realities of starting over in a new country. He did what he had to do to make ends meet. He washed dishes in restaurants, sold off family heirlooms, and slept on park benches until he saved enough to reunite our family in Historic Filipinotown. My parents worked 80 hours a week so that my sisters and I could have a better life and achieve the American Dream. Every person coming to this country should have the same opportunity without fear of deportation.

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

Yes, I support a state funding for counsel for indigent California residents in removal proceedings and I agree that due process protection should be available to everyone.