

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?

Our campaign calls for fully free healthcare, including all reproductive healthcare, HIV/AIDS, abortion, gender reassignment services, and public education programs. We say that all people have a fundamental right to free, accessible, high-quality healthcare, regardless of citizenship status, age, ability, race, ethnicity, or medical need. We call for universal healthcare or a single-payer system. Every other industrialized country in the world provides universal healthcare and yet here in the richest country in the world, we have millions of people who go underinsured or uninsured. The leading cause of bankruptcy is emergency healthcare costs. Meanwhile, insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies, and healthcare profiteers like Martin Shkreli are enjoying rich bottom lines like never before. We would reorganize healthcare to be based on people's need over the profit-driven medical, insurance, and pharmaceutical industries.

1. 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)

Despite the major victory of marriage equality, it is still well within the law to discriminate against LGBTQ people at school, in the workplace, and many other key areas. Trans people are particularly vulnerable to and are far more likely to experience homelessness and violence. Trans people must have the same equal and protected rights as any other people. We support SB 396 insofar it encodes workplace discrimination protections for trans individuals. Likewise, we support any measure which ensures protections for trans people, recognizing that the struggle for legal protections is a result of many years of trans people's struggles, such as in yearly Pride Marches. In the final analysis, anti-trans bigotry, whether committed by individuals, businesses, or organizations, must be rooted out from society. Public education campaigns should aim to undo patriarchal norms imposed by capitalism. The city of Los Angeles and the state of California must fully fund and provide for unrestricted services to trans people. Trans people must be guaranteed the right to all

healthcare services, including gender confirmation surgery.

- 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?

The modern American far-right movement—really more fascist in character than “alt-right”—gained its strength and grows emboldened by the unadorned bigotry of Donald Trump, which brought previously-fringe positions based off of white supremacy and bigotry into the mainstream. Trump’s election to the White House amplified the fascist movement’s gains. History shows that fascism can be defeated only through mass action to confront and oppose fascism. I support and join with the anti-racist and anti-fascist organizers and activists who have courageously hit the streets in defense of people under threat of bigoted violence, of deportation, and oppression by other means. I have participated in numerous anti-war and anti-racist mobilizations and plan to participate in and organize more. Los Angeles is a fast growing majority-minority city. Oppressed communities possess the power of numbers, although we don’t have corporate money or resources. Recent anti-fascist mobilizations in Boston, the Bay Area, and across the country, demonstrate that the fight against white supremacy requires the united mobilization of the people. Tens of thousands of people in the streets is the required response to defeat the forces of fascism and reaction.

As a candidate, I can say definitively that the support of elected officials for the anti-fascist movement has been lukewarm at best: there are no politicians currently who truly represent the anti-fascist movement past paying lip-service to those injured or killed after the fact. The tragedy in Charlottesville was made all more tragic by the fact that it was a preventable crisis.

Mass incarceration and police terror are a central feature of white supremacy in this country. Concrete policy measures to demilitarize the police and replace aggressive policing with community self-defense programs like the NEAR Act are literally matters of life and death. I fully and unapologetically support comprehensive police reform and replacement with community self-defense as real steps towards dismantling institutions fundamentally bound up with white supremacy.

Our campaign supports the formation of anti-racist educational campaigns for schools, universities, and neighborhoods. White supremacy and fascism depend on the division and scapegoating of oppressed people: White supremacist and fascist ideologies label people of color as social pariahs, but through genuine education and anti-racist organizing, our communities can unite, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, age, ability, or race.

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?

Police operate with far too much power in our society—with each incident of excessive force or brutality, the evidence of police impunity is evident. The Police Officer's Bill of Rights must be immediately rescinded. We must monitor the activity of police departments through the mechanism of community-controlled oversight committees. All cops who are guilty of abuse and murder must be immediately punished to the full extent of the law. Racial profiling and violence is a profound issue in police departments across California and the United States. Profiling must be completely uprooted from policing. We support any transparency and records access laws that would enable us to hold police officers and their departments accountable.

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 de-escalation 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?

Police officers should only use lethal force in the most extreme cases, when all other options have been exhausted. Police violence—especially on the scale taking place in California and Los Angeles—is completely unacceptable. Murder at the hands of police reflects the

inextricable relationship of white supremacy to the evolution of modern policing and capitalism in the United States. The police serve in lieu of adequate mental health services, too often with deadly results. Police rely on brutality and excessive force as a matter of course, and make little to no attempt to deescalate their contact with civilians. We should institute and normalize de-escalation and non-lethal interventions. The police claim to serve the people and should be held to that standard, rather than acting as a mechanism for brutality and oppression. Communities of color and working-class people are made unsafe by over-policing, militarized, and racist policing. We support the defunding and dismantling of the prison-industrial complex, the demilitarization of the police, and de-escalation training. We are long past due for the creation of community-controlled police.

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?

Our campaign vigorously and publicly supports universal healthcare provision. The veto of the Healthy California Act, SB652, by a lone Democratic Party state senator, was an infuriating insult to working people in this state. We understand that beneath the veneer of social equality and progress, the Democratic Party is not democratic and in fact is just as hollow as the Republican Party. The travesty which befell SB652 adds to a long history of spurious betrayals by the Democratic Party, notably also the manipulation of the 2016 Democratic Party primary. What the SB652 scandal does show is that despite the immense popularity of the single-payer healthcare model, Democratic politicians are ultimately subservient to pharmaceutical and other big-money donors. Our campaign unreservedly supports SB 562 and free healthcare for all, and we will continue to struggle and fight for it.

- 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 well-funded statewide housing trust fund and permanent supportive services?

City ordinances that ban camping and sleeping in cars are trending upward. These laws target and criminalize the homeless. The ordinances are designed and enforced not to end homelessness, but to shield gentrifying cities from homeless people. These policies as well as police harassment of homeless people must end. Homeless people have not only a right

to exist and live just like everyone else but have a right to housing as well. There are more empty apartments and houses than there are homeless people. The absurd logic of capitalism dictates that while people live on the streets, and while homes and apartments remain empty, big landlords and developers reap profits in the hundreds of thousands and millions of dollars. We are in a state of emergency: there are about 60,000 people homeless right now in Los Angeles alone, and this number is growing rapidly. Billions of dollars are wasted on tax breaks for the rich, on incarcerating young people and immigrants, on the police, and on the military. These wasted billions must be used for what the people need, including a massive campaign to eradicate homelessness.

To reduce homelessness in California, we should work to overturn the Ellis Act and the Costa-Hawkins Law. The Ellis Act allows landlords to evict tenants regardless of any rent control or other protections, if the owner removes their property from the rental market. Frequently this happens through condo conversions. Landlords that invoke Ellis Act have displaced and evicted thousands of people in California from Los Angeles to San Francisco—Ellis creates and adds to housing instability. The Costa-Hawkins state law prohibits the institution of rent control on new developments, and prevents statewide vacancy control. If we are serious about addressing California's crisis of homelessness we must start by an immediate repeal of Ellis Act and Costa-Hawkins.

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?

We believe that criminal and traffic court fines and fees should be waived for low-income and working-class people. Court administrative costs should not be user-funded. User-funded justice and fee-based court administration is regressive in character, since fees are disproportionately paid by people who can least afford them. The "justice" system along with police and prisons in practice serve only to punish working-class people, mostly for petty crimes such as traffic and non-violence drug offenses. This is why white-collar criminals who can afford top lawyers seldom suffer the same punishments as poor, working-class, and/or people of color in the courts. Hundreds of thousands of people sit in prison today in California for unpaid fees, unaffordable bail, or petty crimes, yet a bank that gives

out fraudulent loans and then forecloses on thousands of people never sees any proportional punishment. The justice system is completely lopsided against working and poor people.

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?

In 1978, when California voters passed Proposition 13, the measure was pitched as protective of individual homeowners, and thus voters indicated their strong approval for the measure. In fact, the proposition was a multi-billion dollar giveaway to real estate and land developers. The effect was a devastating divestment from California's public education, which has rippled all the way out to what we now recognize as the school-to-prison pipeline. The state and its municipalities have tried to patch the corporate property tax funding shortfall through regressive tax measures that are inequitably distributed to the working-class. We are in full and vigorous support to close the commercial property loophole in Prop 13, and to tax commercial and industrial properties at the current market value, and to restore funding to California's public education system.

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, we support SB 10. The money bail system is unduly and systematically burdensome for oppressed and working class people. It must be fundamentally restructured for fairness. Cash bail processes cannot be restructured separately from the criminal justice apparatus. Even the most fleeting run-ins with court or jail reveals just how poorly organized and underfunded the justice system is for poor, working, and oppressed people. Our jails are massively overcrowded, and relatively minor offenses can end up landing you years in jail.

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 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?

We support the reduction of prison sentences without reservation. We cannot tackle mass incarceration without reducing punitive sentencing. We should redirect resources to provide for the basic needs of working people as well as reduce social crime by meeting people's basic needs. Aggressive, racist, militarized policing must be dismantled, and replaced with community-self defense and rehabilitation services.

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?

California, like many areas across the United States, suffers from a school-to-prison pipeline. The school system seeks to contain and discipline children for the workforce rather than nurturing, educating and helping our youth grow into well-rounded and responsible adults. Children are held in overcrowded classrooms without resources or creative and artistic development. Alternatives to suspensions that are grounded in community mediation should be instituted. Schools should not be the start for young people to go to prison. We should not act punitively toward young people and instead should reinvest our resources into public education for literacy, arts, and sports.

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?

We should not police public school students nor station law enforcement officers in our schools. Law enforcement in our public schools leads to criminalizing young people at younger ages, and a reinforced school-to-prison pipeline. Misbehavior should be mediated within schools, and students should be held accountable through a non-criminalized accountability process.

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?

We would support this litigation. We demand full rights for all immigrants, an end to deportations, and any measure that would obstruct ICE's attacks. The targeting of children is particularly traumatizing and disgraceful. In addition to supporting any litigation that disempowers ICE, our campaign will continue to organize and join with mass demonstrations in support of immigrant rights.

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?

Education, including higher education, should be a right. We support legislation like SB 1050 that seeks to work against the inequality of our current system. By prioritizing education over incarceration and tax breaks for the wealthy, we could provide free education to all. We must actively work to counter the disenfranchisement of low-income students and students 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?

We demand full rights for all immigrants, and an end to deportations. The Trump Administration's open racism and attack on DACA indicate that ICE's campaign of terror against immigrant communities will only intensify. Now more than ever we need people in office who are willing to obstruct and fight against these attacks by any means necessary. We support any measure that prevents the collaboration of ICE and other federal agencies

seeking to criminalize immigrants with local law enforcement, or any other public institution.

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?

We demand full rights for all immigrants, and an end to deportations. We support any measure that would ensure current defendants have the same rights as any other, including the right to a lawyer.