

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

My top priority is preventing sexual abuse of children. This is my priority because it directly impacts several of the other issues we face in the district. For example, homelessness is prevalent in this district and everywhere else in L.A, over 40% of homeless women are homeless due to sexual abuse. Many homeless and those that commit crimes suffer from drug addiction. Over 80% of those addicted to drugs are due to being sexually abused as children. I could go on and on about the impacts of sexual abuse of children but I will just point out, high school dropout rates, suicide, juvenile crime, (80% of our youth incarcerated suffered sexual and other abuses in early childhood), adult crime, and mental health issues.

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? I could answer this by simply making one point. I served on the Board of Directors for Planned Parenthood Pasadena and San Gabriel Valley. I will continue to fight for sexual and reproductive health. We need to expand the amount of funding in the district. One day of HIV education in the school year is an embarrassment.

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) I support any battle that fights for our transgender people but feel that we also need to fight to provide more employment and housing opportunities to take care of basic needs as well as reduced medication costs.

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? Humans are born with two fears. The fear of falling and being alone. Every other fear we learn. We need to develop ethical learning curriculum in our schools at every grade level. Expand employment opportunities through our Workforce Investment and Innovation Act that encourages our America's Job Centers to actually assist the ones that need it most instead of creaming. Return California to among the top in education spending instead of the bottom in our nation.

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.

Change legislation to make public record, discipline and investigations as well as misconduct reports for all law enforcement officers and administration.

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? Yes, to both questions

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? Yes, I agree with the policies listed above but also feel we need to focus our police force on proactive and community based policing as well as spend a percentage of our policing budget on youth prevention programs. Our county has the highest incarceration rate for minors and we continually cut the budget for programs like employment that statistically reduce the rate of crime.

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?

If California were a nation we would be the 6th most powerful economy in the world. I believe that California could develop its own health care system in the single payer format that could be subsidized for all. One clear way to get closer to this is to do the same thing we did with the auto industry and require hospitals to disclose line item costs. We also need to regulate prescription costs and stop issuing patents for methods of dispensing medications that the pharmaceutical companies use for marking up the cost of the medicine without changing the medicine itself. I truly believe that we can humanize our medical care system. If other less economically powerful nations can do it we definitely can.

- 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?

Long term is preventing sexual abuse of children. A disproportionate number of homeless individuals were sexually abused as young children. Most homeless youth are homeless due to running away from sexual abuse at home only to get further victimized on the streets.

Immediately, allow family owners to convert garage into low income housing with tax incentives and include non-profit agencies to provide wrap around services.

My idea for creating more affordable housing is a simple. Create more supply of affordable housing. We can do this by changing zoning laws that allow for homeowners to convert detached garages into small homes to be utilized by homeless or single parent families. They can be modified to have a bathroom, kitchen and bedroom. We could create tax credits and incentives for renting to homeless individuals.

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?

I am a believer that we need to improve our criminal court system. I think this could be done by doing what seven other states are doing in allowing for a discovery system used much like in civil cases. This would greatly reduce the amount of time it takes to try cases and give defendants a clearer picture of their options when considering a plea deal.

We also need to change our system so that public defenders are also actually defending clients instead of focusing on almost serving the prosecuting attorneys to facilitate plea deals for even defendants where there is no strong case against them.

I worked in our Juvenile camps and men and women's county jails and spoke to so many incarcerated youth that would not have been incarcerated if they had private attorneys because their public defender worked more against them than for them just to get them to plea and close the case. In cases where I attended court for minor youth and spoke to the judge about the employment opportunity I had for the youth if they were not arrested more often than not the judge would opt for a summary probation instead of incarceration with the condition that they were meeting their attendance requirements for my employment programs.

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?

I am a champion to the concept that California first and foremost needs to return to being the top five in Education in this nation. Since 1980 we have built 23 prisons and only one college. We have not had a problem filling those prisons. I love the move in this district to make community college free to L.A. residents. The challenge for many students lies in not being able to get into an impacted community college. If they can get in, they can't get the classes they need to graduate in two years. My idea to convert every high school in the district into an annex of the community college so that college classes are being offered at the local high school in the evenings and weekends when the schools are just sitting there empty. A priority also needs to focus on converting this state's prison building industrial complex into a university building industrial complex. I have an interesting plan to do this without using taxpayer money. The only way I know that a great majority of people can move out of poverty is through a quality education and right now it is not accessible to so many. There is no incentive to perform at a regular public school for the many that do not have 4.0 or plus GPA's. Building new colleges that can be hybrid High School/Community College/four-year University will go a long way to improve the chances of the lower socio economic status youth. I believe Proposition 13 was passed in a different climate where we were just coming off a recession and most people that voted for it didn't even think it would pass. 40 years later we definitely need to revisit it and develop a new plan or alter the plan to close loopholes which hurt our educational 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?

I would support SB10. My work with incarcerated youth led me to develop the theory that not only our bail system is broken but our public defender system is also. There are many individuals in jail that if they had high priced attorneys would not be incarcerated. Often individuals that did not commit crimes will be convinced that the best thing to do is to plea out to avoid longer jail sentences. Someone innocent that is incarcerated until the trial without the resources to bail out are more likely to accept plea deals despite innocence. I also feel that we should change our criminal court to allow for discovery such as we do in civil cases. This would expedite our court calendars by giving a realistic view of what individuals would face in court and make better informed decisions when accepting a plea instead of the tactics used right now to get people to plead guilty.

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?

With regards to incarceration I am a strong believer that if we focus on reducing the amount of sexual abuse of children we will make a huge impact on reducing incarceration. Our juvenile detention facilities and jails are full of individuals that were affected by adverse early childhood experiences including sexual abuse. As a society we focus on dealing with behavior instead of the root cause.

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, I would support a bill that prohibits suspension. I am a champion to the concept that California first and foremost needs to return to being the top five in Education in this nation. Since 1980 we have built 23 prisons and only one college. We have not had a problem filling those prisons. I love the move in this district to make community college free to L.A. residents. The challenge for many students lies in not being able to get into an impacted community college. If they can get in, they can't get the classes they need to graduate in two years. My idea to convert every high school in the district into an annex of the community college so that college classes are being offered at the local high school in the evenings and weekends when the schools are just sitting there empty. A priority also needs to focus on converting this state's prison building industrial complex into a university building industrial complex. I have an interesting plan to do this without using tax payer money. The only way I know that a great majority of people can move out of poverty is through a quality education and right now it is not accessible to so many. There is no incentive to perform at a regular public school for the many that do not have 4.0 or plus GPA's. Building new colleges that can be hybrid High School/Community College/four-year University will go a long way to improve the chances of the lower socio economic status youth. I would encourage the concept of ethical learning and more training for educators to incorporate disciplinary measures that improve youth performance in school rather than punitive measures.

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? There is very little incentive for youth that are not on pace to obtain a high enough GPA to enter

college to perform at their best. This inequality builds a system where youth are unable to plan for a successful future and act out. When a person with so much potential is not given the resources to succeed it is easy for those in law enforcement to judge their behavior instead of seeing the potential. We need to study what is working in other states and implement best practices to allow all our youth to thrive.

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, I would support both and in addition fight to encourage congress to develop an amnesty program for immigration. In the meantime we need state legislation to protect all our residents.

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? I believe that we could convert California from a prison building industrial complex to a college building industrial complex and could build one new four year college for each county in the state. That means 58 new colleges. There is a way to build these without additional tax payer money through out of the box thinking.

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? As I champion the fight for protection of sexual abuse of children it is imperative that immigrants feel safe to come forward to law enforcement to report sexual abuse of children without the 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 to both questions.