

Green Party Questionnaire for State Assembly

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Line of work: California State Assemblymember

1) Why are you running for State Assembly? What are your qualifications? What have you accomplished in any offices that you now hold or have recently held?

I am running for reelection to the State Assembly because while we have made much progress over the past four years in improving the lives of all Californians, and particularly those in Oakland, Alameda, and San Leandro, there is still much more work to be done.

Prior to being elected to the Assembly in 2012, I served as the Vice Mayor of the City of Alameda, and before that served on the Alameda Healthcare District Board of Directors. At the time, I worked as a Deputy City Attorney for the City and County of San Francisco, where I worked on consumer protection cases and represented hard working San Francisco public employees. Prior to my work for San Francisco, I was an attorney at Kecker & Van Nest, and served as counsel with the ACLU while negotiating the racial profiling settlement for *Rodriguez v. CHP*.

Since my election to the Assembly, I have worked hard to improve the lives of my constituents and across our state. I served as Chair of the Health Committee for one year and Chair of the Public Employees, Retirement, and Social Security (PERSS) Committee for almost three years, while also serving on the Health and Human Services Budget Subcommittee for one year.

As Chair of Health, I have played a critical role in the fight against big tobacco, from regulating e-cigarettes to raising the smoking age from 18 to 21. Additionally, I led the fight in the Assembly to pass #Health4All, or SB 4, which provided access to full Medi-Cal to all undocumented youths. I authored and am working with Health Access California and the California Labor Federation on AB 533, which will put an end to the flawed practice of Surprise Billing, where a patient goes to an in-network hospital but is treated by an out-of-network physician and stuck with an incredibly unfair bill. Finally, I was deeply involved in negotiating the Managed Care Organization (MCO) Tax, which funded Medi-Cal and restored funding to our developmental disability services.

As Chair of PERSS, I have fought hard to protect the pensions of California's hardworking public employees, like my mother and father who have since retired. We beat back the Chuck Reed "Pension Reform" proposals in the media and in the Capitol, while showing that California pensions could be successful and reflective of our values. I worked with my colleagues in the Legislature and the Governor to author the bill fully funding California's Teacher Retirement System, CalSTRS, crafting a plan that will wipe out a \$74 billion unfunded liability that was growing by millions of dollars per day. I partnered with Senate

President Pro Tempore Kevin De Leon by floor managing his SB 185, requiring CalPERS and CalSTRS to divest from thermal coal companies.

And on the Health and Human Services Budget Subcommittee, I have fought to restore funding for our vital safety net programs, who were still recovering from recession-era cuts. I have stood with In-Home Supportive Services workers that were denied overtime by the Governor, and put into law a 7% restoration of their hours. And I have supported the end of the racist, sexist, Maximum Family Grant cap, which limits financial assistance to low income families should a recipient become pregnant while on the program.

2) Where are you getting the money to run your campaign? Are there any sources of financial contributions for your campaign that you refuse to accept? Do you feel it is important to get corporate money out of politics?

My campaign is funded by people across our state and nation that I have had the privilege of knowing and working with. I also accept funds from business and labor, alike. I have not taken any donations from Big Oil, Big Tobacco, or WalMart. I believe that need to fundraise is an unfortunate evil within our political system, and strongly support efforts to reform our campaign finance laws, allow for publicly funded campaigns, and overturn the corrupting idea of Citizens United: that corporations are people. I have also supported reforms to our campaign finance system, such as the DISCLOSE Act.

3) Are you interested in the contributions and the opinions of individual constituents in your district? What must a constituent do in order to meet with you?

I am quite interested in the opinions and ideas of my individual constituents in how to improve our government and our state, and regularly work with them on legislative ideas or budget changes. Requests for meetings are run through my scheduler, and if I am unavailable to meet then my dedicated staff will make themselves available. Additionally, I hold regular town halls in each city I represent, to hear directly from the people.

4) Please give us your position on the following issues. Indicate your sponsorship and/or votes on any previous relevant legislation, and plans for future legislation:

-- Budget deficits

I am a strong supporter of revenue enhancements instead of service cuts. I support reforming Prop 13, additional taxes on oil, tobacco, and sugary beverages, and lowering the vote thresholds for local taxation. I am proud that our budgets have not been running a deficit and we have instead been able to restore much needed services.

-- Controlling the corrupting influence of profit-driven prescription drug and vaccine manufacturers

Through my work on the Assembly Health Committee I have stood up against the pharmaceutical industry, including by supporting AB 463, the Pharmaceutical Cost Transparency Act of 2016, which would have required disclosure of additional information on pharmaceuticals that cost more than \$10,000 per treatment.

-- Fracking, and other environmental regulations

I was proud to support California's landmark SB 350, creating world-leading greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and clean energy standards. I also supported SB 4 of 2014, which created an unprecedented system of comprehensive regulations on hydraulic fracturing and well acidification, including a study, a permitting process, and public notification and disclosure. Finally, I floor managed and coauthored California's Plastic Bag Ban, SB 270 of 2014, which seeks to expand statewide our success at banning plastic bags locally, and will be actively fighting the referendum campaign against the bill which is set for the ballot this November.

-- Income, wealth, and tax inequality

I support raising the minimum wage, providing quality, affordable, and accessible healthcare for all, and increasing taxes on the wealthiest among us. When we reduce income inequality, we create a more fair and just society. Last year, California enacted a historic State Earned Income Tax Credit, to help boost the wages of the working poor in our state, which should provide financial support to some 600,000 families or 2 million Californians.

-- Minority rights

I coauthored AB 953, California's Racial Profiling Act of 2015, requiring law enforcement collect and report new racial and identity data on their interactions with the public. Additionally, I Co-Chair the Assembly Select Committee on the Status of Boys and Men of Color, which works to address the inequities in opportunity and outcome among young men of color, and reform our institutions of government to aid in this outcome.

-- Police and prison reform

As mentioned previously, I authored AB 953 on racial profiling. Additionally, I support the replacement of money bail with evidence-based risk assessments and pre-trial services, which will reduce unnecessary jail time by the unconvicted and the associated negative effects. I oppose ineffective mass incarceration and support well thought out re-entry programs that provide services and allow for integration into the community prior to release, ensuring that the formerly incarcerated can land on their feet, with a job, and financial support services, following the model of Casa Grande in Nevada. Last year I introduced AB 1118 to establish procedural justice and implicit bias training across our state, and this year I am partnering with my Select Committee on the Status of Boys and Men of Color Co-Chair, Assemblymember Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer, Sr., and Attorney General Kamala Harris, in authoring AB 2626, which requires the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) to offer a principled policing course focusing on procedural justice and implicit bias, and incorporate elements of the course into the standard peace officer training.

-- Proportional representation/ Ranked choice voting

I support proportional representation and ranked choice voting.

-- Rent control

East Bay rents have reached a point of crisis, resulting in rapid displacement and gentrification in Oakland. I support rent control and increasing the supply of available units on the market.

-- Single payer healthcare

I support single payer healthcare, and believe that while we continue to fight for single payer, that should not be to the exclusion of supporting a public option, improving medicaid, and reducing the abuses of our current system. As mentioned above, I helped lead the fight in the Assembly for #Health4All and support expanding Medi-Cal to all undocumented individuals, not just the children. Health care is a right, not a privilege; for all, not the few.

-- Tuition-free higher education

I introduced a bill this year, AB 2434, to study universal, tuition-free, accessible higher education for all. Until we study how to get there and what the unmet need is, we won't be able to achieve this admirable goal that will keep California a world leader in the decades to come.

5) An unanticipated consequence of the passage of 2010's Prop. 14 is that candidates from small political parties now need to gather vastly more signatures-in-lieu of the filing fee -- for example, 10,000 valid signatures for statewide candidates instead of the previous 150. Will you help us lower this number?

Yes, I would support such a measure.

6) Will you introduce and sponsor, or co-sponsor if already introduced, legislation creating a public Bank of California, similar to the state-owned Bank of North Dakota? Such an entity would hold the State's money instead of depositing it in Wall Street banks, and make infrastructure loans, loans in partnership with community banks, and other loans based on the best interests of the people of California, not banker profits. A bill which would have accomplished this, AB 2500, was introduced to the California legislature in 2012. How did you/ would you vote on it? Here is the text:

http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/11-12/bill/asm/ab_2451-2500/ab_2500_bill_20120224_introduced.html

Bank of North Dakota website and article: <https://bnd.nd.gov/>,
<http://www.motherjones.com/mojo/2009/03/how-nation%E2%80%99s-only-state-owned-bank-became-envy-wall-street>

AB 2500 was not taken up for a vote, and I was not in the Legislature at the time of its introduction. California already has the I-Bank, or infrastructure bank. I am open to the idea of a state bank, and believe it may be useful in assisting medical cannabis businesses in receiving access to financial services, but acknowledge that there are huge obstacles in the Legislative process to creating such an entity.

7) Are there any other important challenges facing California? What will you do to address them? Anything else you would like us to know about the goals of your candidacy?

With the TRUTH Act, I am working to protect California's immigrant population from deportation by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) by ensuring the previous protections under the TRUST Act are preserved for new immigration programs, and requiring local governments to enter into memoranda of understanding with local law enforcement prior to local law enforcement participation in federal immigration enforcement programs.

Ballot Statement:

For the past four years, I've worked in the State Assembly to make East Bay communities safer, healthier, and more prosperous. With your support, we have made great progress.

We increased funding for California's public schools by over fifty percent, returned control to parents and educators, and provided a secure retirement for our teachers.

We provided quality, affordable healthcare through Covered California, and expanded Medi-Cal to all low income children, regardless of immigration status.

We nurtured Early Childhood Education, because every child deserves the opportunity to reach her full potential.

We passed the world's most aggressive clean energy requirements, leading the fight against global climate change.

We worked together to fight California's historic drought.

We encouraged the growth of a million new jobs and created a new earned income tax credit, helping lift 600,000 families out of poverty.

We cracked down on human traffickers, because our children are not for sale.

However, our work is not yet done.

Housing costs continue to soar, threatening the character of our communities.

Senseless acts of gun violence tear apart families.

And our economic recovery has left too many behind.

But, I know what we can accomplish, together.

Together, we will stop displacement and keep our communities whole.

Together, we will break the cycle of violence and heal our youth.

Together, we will educate and train our workers for jobs in the new economy.

I ask for your vote because, together, we will overcome these challenges, and build a better future for all.

8) What endorsements have you received?

California Democratic Party

State Employees International Union

California Teachers Association

Professional Engineers in California Government