

DSA CD14 Candidate Questionnaire from Jamie Tijerina for LACD14

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Our organization

1. Are you a member of DSA? If so, how long have you been a member, why did you join DSA, and what work have you done with our organization? If not, would you join?

I am not a member, but I would join. I have worked alongside members in the fight for immigrant rights, for Prop 10, and through involvement in the neighborhood council system.

2. Do you publicly identify as a democratic socialist? If so, what does being a socialist mean to you?

Yes. To me, socialism means collaboration within our communities in a prosocial manner to fight against the commoditization of humanity. It means being honest about the realities we face and compassionate towards others' struggles.

3. How do you believe capitalism affects your constituents and the issues in your district?

Our district has long been victimized by disinvestment. Working class neighbors are viewed as labor instead of as human beings. Our city and institutional systems benefit from our poverty, generating revenue through fees, fines, and penalties when misfortune falls upon us, instead of generating revenue based on providing positivity, resources, and support for the well-being of the people. This is apparent in many ways. Visually, it can be seen in the deterioration of our infrastructure. The data shows us that it can also be seen in our health outcomes: that we have higher rates of diabetes in District 14 than we do county-wide, as just one example. It also shows it in our economic outcomes. Our district has some of the highest levels of student loan debt and default in the city. The current structure exploits our hope for upward economic mobility and access to resources and instead places its young people into a dystopian cycle of poverty where, in addition to being paid wages that are not sufficient, we are now generating further revenue for moneyed interests without achieving promised economic prosperity.

You and your campaign

1. What in your life or work experience qualifies you for this office? What part of this will you highlight in communicating with voters?

I am highly qualified for the role of CM for our 14th District. In addition to my academic training and formal management training and experience, I have a firm understanding of navigating LA City government because of my experience in the Neighborhood Council System, as a Budget Advocate [where I represented most of CD14 in Region 8], and appointee to the Funding Equity Work Group and have participated in a great deal of impactful advocacy for Los Angeles. I was raised in the neighborhoods of the district and I understand firsthand the struggles we face. There is a biotech corridor planned for parts of the district, and my scientific background also makes me uniquely suited to navigate the changes that this will bring. I am the youngest candidate in the CD14 race. There is no one under the age of 35 on our LA City Council and the young people of Los Angeles, young people of color, need representation and a seat at the table.

2. Please describe any experience you have, paid or as a volunteer, in community organizing. What, briefly, have you learned from this work?

Please refer to my answer to question #9 for a listing of organizations that I have worked within. Through this work I have learned that activism is a lifelong effort that can take many forms for a person who engages in the work. It requires persistence and determination, balanced with a good understanding for when efforts need to be refocused in order to be more effective.

3. If elected, what are your top 3 priorities and how would you go about achieving them?

Environment (climate, hazards, transportation):

- **Encourage** urban planning choices such that housing, livable wage jobs, and basic amenities are located within reasonable walking distance of each other, or are fully connected by robust transit that runs frequently and is affordable to use.
- **Create infrastructure** to gradually encourage the use of zero-emissions vehicles for those who need to travel to work in areas which are not easily accessible by public transit. This includes increased affordable or free charging stations for electric cars and mobility devices. Additionally, transit choices like trolleys or streetcars should be researched and considered, especially in neighborhoods where they existed in the past.

- **Create safe and comfortable stops for transit riders** to use as they wait for public transportation
- **Work with the state and local industry to address emissions** for freight that passes through to create the traffic pollution that plagues our district.
- **Stop placement of hazards**, especially when they occur without community input or notification.
- **Continue the efforts to address the Urban Heat Island Effect** in our district by using lighter color pavement to create immediate temperature reductions.
- **Push for continued cleanup** of contamination from the Exide battery plant by the DTSC.

Public Health and Safety:

- **Examine and document the specific causes of trash buildup** in various sectors of the district that are experiencing this issue. Organize more frequent bulk trash pickups in those areas and deploy solutions to abate the buildup.
- **Install more waste receptacles** in high traffic areas of the district that see increased littering and schedule more frequent pickups as needed. Also include sharps containers to make sure there is a safe place for disposal of needles and other biohazardous materials.
- **Invest in sidewalk repairs and pothole repairs**, especially in areas that have not seen investment in this type of infrastructure repair in far too long. As more community members walk, bike, and alternate forms of personal transportation, these types of repairs will be increasingly urgent to prevent avoidable injuries and improve the experience of using our streets and sidewalks.
- **Advocate for a Sanctuary Ordinance for Los Angeles**
- **Fight for a proper budgetary allocation to the LA Justice Fund**
- **Increase investment in the Department of Recreation and Parks** to address the lack of affordable gyms, year-round pools, and exercise facilities in District 14 which contributes to rates of diabetes that are higher in-district than county-wide.
- **Increase investment in the delivery of mental health** treatment and services.

Economy (housing and jobs):

- **Better Data:** Work with LAHSA to fine tune their data collection. The age groupings for the Homeless Count are too broad, in one case grouping people from the age of 25-54 together. Grouping two generations together raises more questions than it answers. The effects of the Great Recession has impacted Millennials' lifetime earning potential. The survey's current design will not allow us to examine the relationship between age and economic factors on rates of homelessness.
- **Decentralizing the delivery of services to homeless neighbors by ensuring that services are available in every neighborhood is critical.** Every community

in every council district needs resources for those who need services and would prefer to remain in familiar communities they call home.

- **Investing in mental health services is imperative for the community.** Prevent homelessness by increasing support to those who are at-risk before they end up un-housed.
- **Build high-quality, soundly designed housing of all sizes as quickly as possible, and affordably as possible, and ensure that it is available and affordable to working-class people and those on low or fixed incomes.**
- **Make it easier and more affordable for families to build ADUs, and to build projects like duplexes, triplexes, and bungalow courts by adjusting local zoning policy so that we are not criminalizing or stigmatizing multi-family and intergenerational living.**
- **Collaborate with other council districts and create accountability in participating in increasing our city's affordable housing supply.**
- **Working transparently in the community with local schools, universities, local businesses and enterprises** to identify opportunities to nurture job creation for people at all skill levels, including students from the neighborhood who are graduating with qualifications for such work.
- **Welcoming and fostering community businesses** that offer true living wage jobs with good working conditions for people at all skill levels.
- **Organizing free, accessible workshops** to support people at all experience levels with job search tools and skills for starting and operating a successful small business.
- **Examining the effect of automation on our district.** The 800+ jobs that were lost in our district last year were primarily in manufacturing and education. Examining how many of these jobs were lost to automation will be important to making sure we can effectively tackle the issue. In addition to creating new work opportunities for jobs that may be automated away in our neighborhoods, we must also examine policy of the future like Universal Basic Income in the form of a pilot/feasibility study.
- There is a biotech corridor that is planned for parts of our 14th District on the Eastside. We need to hold the organizations participating and doing business accountable to fair behavior. We must make sure that it **serves the people equitably, does not displace the community, and creates jobs for local students, graduates, and their families.**

4. Who do you support for president in the 2020 election cycle?

My Top 5 are Andrew Yang; Bernie Sanders; Elizabeth Warren; Julian Castro; Tulsi Gabbard

5. How many signatures did you turn in to qualify for the ballot?

At the time of completion of this questionnaire, the signature gathering period had not yet begun.

6. How much money have you raised to finance your campaign?

\$13,000

7. How many unique donors do you have?

198

8. Have you pledged to refuse campaign contributions from corporations and their PACs, as well as real estate developers and landlord interests (ex: California Apartment Association, the California Association of Realtors, and real estate investment groups such as Blackstone)? Why/why not?

Yes. Our district's councilmember is currently under FBI investigation for possible wrongdoing associated with campaign finance and pay-to-play. Our district's people do not trust our city government. Refusing developer contributions is an important step toward regaining the trust of the people and rebuilding their trust in our local government to do the right thing.

9. What community organizations in your district have you worked with prior to starting your campaign? For how long and in what capacity?

- **Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council, Director At-Large.** (August 2016-April 2019). Chaired the Culture & Equality committee and served as the Digital Communications Liaison. Worked on over 25 Community Impact Statements, started the NELearn Community Learning Series, co-sponsored arts events, and organized a forum about Gentrification. Generated a weekly newsletter and was a prolific creator and distributor of information to the community via digital media.
- **Budget Advocate, Region 8 for the Neighborhood Council Budget Advocates.** (June 2018-June 2019). Advocated for accountability for the Department of Recreation and Parks and wrote a citywide position paper about the legacy of redlining in Los Angeles. Region 8 overlaps with most of CD14. I am still a Budget Representative for HHPNC.

- **Funding Equity Working Group, Appointee for Region 8.** 2018. Part of a group of appointees tasked with providing recommendations to the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners about how to equitably fund the Neighborhood Council System.
- **Highland Park Heritage Trust, President** (2019), Vice President (2017-2018). This organization advocates for cultural and historic preservation in the Arroyo Seco Communities.
- **Northeast Democratic Club, Corresponding Secretary.** (January 2019-present).
- **Indivisible Highland Park.** (2017-present). Worked within the coalition for a sanctuary resolution and ordinance for LA.
- **Assembly District Delegate, AD51.** (January 2019-present). Public education and outreach to teach everyday people about Democratic Party politics.
- **Board Member, Art in the Park LA.** (August 2019-present). Provide input and ideas for this local arts non-profit that serves NELA.
- **Sotomayor Advisory Board.** (2018-present). Career readiness mentorship for high school juniors.

10. What community organizations in your district do you currently work with as part of your campaign?

I was endorsed by the Occidental College Democrats. I keep my work with non-profits separate from my campaign.

11. Please list significant endorsements you have received for this position.

Please see separate document.

12. Do you support Medicare for All?

Yes.

13. If you do not win electoral office, what other methods would you use to try to implement your policies in the community?

I would continue my involvement in local organizations and may also return to the Budget Advocates to continue to advocate for accountability for our LA City Budget and correct the injustice associated with failed budgetary decisions and inefficient spending that takes away resources from vulnerable communities.

14. It can be argued that voting is largely ineffective and not a viable means for accomplishing a progressive agenda on its own, especially given the stranglehold of corporate power on the political process. How would you approach this challenge and convince us to vote for you?

I would agree that voting alone is not the only means of attaining progressive political goals. However, it should not be ignored or skipped because it is much easier to accomplish political goals when the political will exists within your representatives. The existence of this candidacy alone is an act of protest against the status quo. As a young person from our neighborhoods, this process is not set up for our success and various forms of gatekeeping keep us excluded from conversations that will affect our futures. It actively fosters complexity that keeps people from the community on the outside. Voting in numbers will demonstrate, and provide concrete proof, that the people can triumph over moneyed interests if we all choose to show up and continue showing up in the face of disillusionment. Your vote will be sending a huge message. Finally: winning is on a spectrum. There is the zero-sum version of winning, to win the seat, which we believe we must do and are working as hard as humanly possible to achieve. But there is also a non-zero-sum win. Bernie Sanders did not win the presidency in 2016, but his voice and message have persisted and inspired millions of people. He changed the national conversation and pushed the Democratic Party Platform in a better direction.

City of Los Angeles

1. Do you support the creation of a Public Bank in Los Angeles? Currently city tax money is used to fund fossil fuels, private prisons, and weapons manufacturing. If a Public Bank were created in Los Angeles, what would you want the bank's charter to stipulate that it fund?

Yes. This is a huge opportunity for our city to offer banking services that will allow us not only to divest from corporate banks, but to also uplift our communities and people through innovative financial solutions that will help Angelenos improve their situations and also create city revenue to reinvest in our crumbling infrastructure before it's too late, without raising taxes on working-class communities.

We need to charter a bank that can provide financial solutions to give Angelenos the tools to pull themselves out of economic crises that the Federal Government chooses to ignore and patently refuses to solve, such as the student loan crisis.

Without a public bank, there was very little that municipalities could do to provide relief to the young people dealing with crippling student debt, which cannot be discharged through

bankruptcy. Neighborhoods in District 14 have some of the highest levels of student loan debt and rates of default in the city of LA. What a public bank in LA could do is provide a competitive financial solution in the form of an ultra-low interest loan that would let student loan borrowers refinance their loans with better terms, give them a real pathway out of debt and save them thousands of dollars in compounding interest. Additionally, instead of the revenue from these students' and graduates' payments going to a for-profit corporate banking entity (like Navient), where the funds will never personally provide them any benefit, the revenue from the ultra-low interest could be earmarked to directly fund infrastructure projects in the neighborhoods where the borrowers live. Meaning: fixing streets and sidewalks, updating park facilities, and more to directly improve quality of life.

Our public bank would provide affordable lending solutions to homeowners who are seeking to build Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) on their properties. Right now, we are facing a crisis of homelessness and a lack of affordable housing. Speed is key when it comes to building housing and adding more affordable units to our housing market. A public bank that will lend to these homeowners at a low interest rate could then reinvest the revenue from the interest in programs to subsidize building ADUs and make it more affordable for future individuals to be able to quickly build the housing that our city desperately needs.

Additionally, it would incentivize owners of historic and rent-controlled properties by providing competitive ultra-low rates to maintain their properties appropriately and may also discourage owners from removing them from the market. The revenue from the interest could be earmarked specifically to go into a fund that would subsidize repairs and make adequate maintenance more affordable, thus discouraging slumlords, and enabling good landlords to continue to provide affordable rent-controlled housing.

Our public bank would open up banking services to the unbanked and create the possibility for the emerging cannabis industry to be able to deposit funds from doing business.

Our public bank would allow Angelenos to take a new level of control over their financial futures. Everyday folks who didn't have access to credit unions through their jobs (which are widely known to provide better rates on most financial services) would now have access to one through the City's newly formed Municipal Community Credit Union. Angelenos would save large amounts of money if they chose to switch to the Municipal Community Credit Union. It wouldn't make private banks illegal, but if it is set up and run properly, it would be a much better option. The revenue generated from allowing Angelenos to do their banking through this entity would be returned to them in the form

of adequate improvements to infrastructure that directly benefit their communities, instead of being lost to a corporate entity.

2. Do you support the common practice of city council members deferring to their colleagues when voting on developments in their colleagues' districts?

No. Recently the Councilmember from CD1 opposed a project in CD13 because of the potential for negative impact to the Latino community. The opposition was viewed as "unprecedented" even though dissent is a healthy aspect of government.

3. Do you support the 2028 Summer Olympics being held in Los Angeles?

No, an Olympic Games is not what LA should be focused on, and it should not be the catalyst for investment in city infrastructure. Also, the City of Los Angeles cannot hope to gamble that LA 2028 will cure its structural deficit. To highlight an aspect of injustice around this, kids in the 14th district do not have enough access to the facilities needed in order to be able to train to participate in a 2028 Summer Games. Many of our local pools and facilities are in disrepair, they are not open year-round, and their hours are not even sufficient to accommodate a regular workout schedule for working people. We have completely inadequate access to basic gym facilities for basic health maintenance. We need to correct the issues and disinvestment we have here because the people deserve resources 365 days a year because they matter. Not because of a sporting event that is 9 years away. However, if the Olympics proceeds, we need to fight for harm mitigation.

Housing and Homelessness

1. Do you support universal rent control? Vacancy control (cap on rent increases between tenants)? If yes, at what annual percentage rate, if no what qualifications or limits on rent control do you support?

Yes, I support universal rent control and vacancy control. I think that anywhere between 3-7% is acceptable while someone is in the unit for rent control. For vacancy control between tenants, 10% maximum is reasonable. However, safeguards need to be in place to prevent foreclosures due to high property maintenance costs and prevent foreclosures during recessions, in order to discourage speculation that could follow and result in units being removed from the market.

2. Do you oppose the criminalization of unhoused people? What is your stance on the specific demands of #ServicesNotSweeps? To read the specific demands of #ServicesNotSweeps, please [click here](#).

Yes, I oppose criminalization of unhoused people. I agree with the demands of #ServicesNotSweeps. These demands are reasonable and logical. They are what I believe to be a beginning of a proactive approach (in contrast to the reactive approach that our city takes). Law enforcement officers, a last resort in any instance, should not be the first at the scene for street cleanliness. Mental health issues and systemic failures should not be met with shows of force, but instead with actual care. Scheduling and noticing cleaning is a logical and efficient way to handle maintaining street cleanliness while also building community based on peaceful and expected actions. Additionally, it addresses the fact that, especially in DTLA, much of the waste on our streets is a result of commercial businesses not having adequate trash pickups. Having adequate receptacles for trash is common sense and I would even suggest that sharps containers be added to trash receptacles. Finally, accountability is very important. Many of the conversations that I have had with community members have involved issues with accountability to requests placed via 311 that are never filled, but marked as completed anyway. Training community to use 311 is not a panacea, although it is often treated as such. There is widespread distrust of our local government and having services that are performed ad-hoc and arbitrarily as they are now does not help heal this.

3. Do you support a tenant's right to counsel? If implemented, do you support additional funding for this program?

Yes, and I would support city funding for this.

4. Do you support just cause eviction laws?

Yes, I support just cause eviction laws.

5. How would you fight the loss of rent stabilized housing due to legal and illegal hotel conversion?

We need to start by looking at the reasons why people are converting housing into hotels. For those who become unable to work due to disability or discrimination, are not able to find additional sources of income, and choose to rent out a spare room etc, we need to address the lack of employment opportunities and bring other opportunities for wages and income.

For major developers and proprietors who are systematically taking rent-stabilized units off the market, penalties in the form of increased utility costs for legal conversions of specifically rent stabilized housing, or shut-offs for illegal conversions, would discourage

the practice by lowering profit margins (or functionality in the case of a shut-off) and generally making it unappealing to target rent stabilized units for conversion. This is similar to the approach taken with illegal cannabis operations, voted on by City Council earlier in the year.

6. Do you support additional funding (at your level of government) for public housing? Additional funding for section 8? Do you support additional funds for immigrants who don't qualify for HUD assistance?

Yes, but I also want there to be plans in place in order to avoid the issues that have followed the passing of HHH. I support more funding for section 8 as well as funds for immigrants and would work with other agencies and officials to obtain this.

7. How would you increase the supply of permanent supportive housing for those currently unhoused?

We need to combat the “Not in my backyard” mentality that causes neighbors to fight these projects, and we need to start immediately by reducing the stigma of mental health and homelessness through education and improved public awareness. We also need to address the high costs of producing each unit of housing. Finally, we need to identify vacant buildings, much like the former General Hospital, and prioritize the exploration of these facilities for conversion into housing.

8. How would you increase the supply of housing that is affordable for tenants classified as "extremely low income" in LA (Income under 20K for a single person, under 30K for family of 4)

I would find ways to reduce the barriers to production that result in developers not choosing to include affordable units. It needs to be more affordable for families to build ADUs, and to build projects like duplexes, triplexes, and bungalow courts. This type of housing can be built more quickly while also fostering a sense of community that many feel is lacking in Los Angeles.

Climate Justice

1. Do you support the Green New Deal (GND)? What GND policies could you implement in your district? What tools would you use to set targets in line with science, and to make sure targets are hit?

Yes. The ideas I have set forth around job creation, improving health outcomes, and investing in our infrastructure are in line with recommendations made in the GND.

We have CSULA, Occidental College, and USC Keck School of Medicine located in CD14, as well as ASU entering the district. It would be wise to work with these major institutions and engage experts citywide (and nationwide when necessary) to assist in providing accountability that is in line with science. Because of my scientific background and training, I know how important it is for government leaders to recognize the right time to defer to subject-matter experts in order to respect the science.

2. What issues of environmental racism affect your district, and how would you attempt to correct these historical injustices? How will you work to protect frontline communities?

The legacy of redlining has left a mark on the environment in CD14 - environmental hazards have been disproportionately placed in our CD14 communities for decades. As a Budget Advocate for Region 8, I wrote a citywide document that specifically addressed the long term effects of redlining on Los Angeles. I want to address environmental hazards like contamination from Exide Technologies, neighborhood drilling, and the fact that we have some of the highest levels of traffic pollution in the State of CA. Reducing traffic pollution would entail not only transportation improvements, but also addressing the fact that the average commute in LA is 8.8 miles, and longer in communities of color like ours in CD14. We also need to work with the state and local industry to address emissions for freight that passes through to create the traffic pollution that plagues our district. Additionally, because these are working class neighborhoods, many hazards are placed without community input or notification, and this needs to stop. Finally, I would want to continue the efforts started by the current CM to address the Urban Heat Island Effect in our district by using lighter color pavement to create immediate temperature reductions.

3. How will you work to improve equitable access to non-car modes of transit in your district? Do you support the elimination of parking minimums?

Our district is better connected with public transport than others, but the fact that other areas (sometimes identified as “jobs-rich”) have fought off public transport introduces a level of complexity that is not a sufficiently prominent part of the conversation: commutes are longer for communities of color and some workplaces are simply not accessible via public transport. Additionally, part of the legacy of redlining in District 14 includes the fact that 100% of proposed highway projects in Boyle Heights were approved and 10,000 units of housing were cleared to this end in order to optimize the region for cars. If our communities are covered by public transportation, but not fully connected to

neighborhoods that have livable wage jobs, it does not solve the root cause of the dependence on cars. If someone living in our communities, which had a district-wide net loss of 800 jobs last year, cannot get to a livable wage job via public transportation, this is injustice. I support eliminating parking minimums if it means we can build our missing middle housing, but until we solve the situation that described above, where the average commute is 8.8 miles (and more in communities of color like ours), this will have to be applied with care so that it does not perpetuate injustice.

To encourage use of non-car modes of transportation, we need to hold other neighborhoods accountable to allowing more routes and rail projects. We need to get GPS monitoring on our buses, improve bus reliability, and create better, more comfortable stops for riders. We need to expand routes and frequency of arrivals and departure. We also need to improve the condition of the roads and sidewalks in order to make biking and scooter use safer for riders. This also includes increasing the number of protected bike lanes available. We also need to lower the cost of using rental bikes and scooters. Riding a electric scooter or rental bike, in some cases, can be costlier than an Uber Pool ride. Low-income folks will not choose alternate means for shorter trips if they are costly or if they feel unsafe. People will not choose a bus/rail over their car if the service is unreliable.

4. What is the current status of green space in your district, and what can you do to increase its presence in underserved communities?

There needs to be increased investment to the Department of Recreation and Parks in order for our green spaces to achieve their full potential, and that funding needs to reach our district. Elephant Hill requires additional investment and has been in limbo for many years. Instances like this seem to affect this district pretty frequently. Remaining vigilant of projects that threaten the ecosystems around the Arroyo communities is also very important. Downtown LA and Skid Row residents also want increased greenspaces, and we should identify vacant land that is suitable and safe for redevelopment into parks and greenspaces. Working with congressional leaders to advocate for federal funding and protections for our greenspaces and environment will be important (one example is the Rim of the Valley proposal as parts of this area fall in CD14).

5. How sustainable is the agriculture in your district, and what will you do to improve it? If your district is urban, how will you approach community farms, food deserts, etc.?

There are community gardens that exist in our neighborhoods, and they deserve to be protected and offered funding and resources. Efforts that would remove community

gardens from the district would need to be avoided and stopped. I would research the possibility of allocating funding for community gardens and agriculture through the Department of Recreation and Parks. With regard to new grocery and convenience stores, I would encourage that proposed projects include offerings of produce and other healthier options as a condition of their approval. This is something that the current Councilmember has done recently, and so there is precedent for this being within the scope of what is possible to address food deserts in the district.

Immigration Justice

1. Do you support abolishing ICE?

Yes.

2. Do you support renewing funding for the Los Angeles Justice Fund? Do you support reversing the fund's current carveouts and making its coverage universal?

Yes.

3. Will you advocate for firing police officers that murder immigrants and black people?

Yes.

4. Do you support reducing funds going towards law enforcement, and instead increasing funds going towards social welfare and public services for immigrants?

Yes.

Mutual Aid

1. Do you have experience with mutual aid organizing in your community? If so, what kind of work did your mutual aid organization do?

Most of the organizing that I have done is education/information-based and policy-based.

2. What role, if any, do you think should police play in your community?

Interactions with police should be rare for everyday Angelenos. Police involvement should be an absolute last resort when a property crime has occurred or you need them to stop/investigate a violent crime.

3. Will you support legislation mandating grocery stores donate their unsold food before expiry?

Yes.

4. Will you support, sponsor, or otherwise subsidize free medical and dental clinics in your community?

Yes.

5. Will you support legislation sponsoring free meals (breakfast and lunch) for all schoolchildren?

Yes.

6. Will you support, sponsor, or otherwise subsidize free child care in your community?

Yes.

7. Do you support antifascist action?

Yes.