

CD4 Candidate Questionnaire

Who We Are

The Democratic Socialists of America is a member-driven, member-funded organization committed to the vision of democratic socialism that has recently captured the imagination of millions across the US. Nationally, the organization has over 50,000 members, and we have elected dozens of our own members to office, most notably Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.



The Los Angeles chapter, DSA-LA, has over 1,700 dues-paying members that regularly join forces with labor and social justice groups across the county to push for change.

What We Do

When DSA chapters across the country choose to engage with electoral campaigns, we work to make our endorsement more than just a name that a candidate lists on their website. Our members work alongside campaigns to gather signatures, knock on doors, make phone calls, and tap into our media skills to get the word out. Over the course of the recent Proposition 10 campaign, DSA-LA members turned out for over 1,000 canvassing shifts and knocked nearly 30,000 doors—and precincts in which we canvassed voted Yes on 10 by some of the highest margins in the county.

In addition to the material support DSA-LA can provide, an endorsement signals to other community groups that the candidate has serious progressive bona fides. Many groups and unaffiliated community members respect our group's integrity and look to DSA-LA's lead to help them make their decisions. An endorsement would also go a long way to reach those traditionally uninvolved in local politics.

Endorsement Process

We, the Electoral Politics Committee of DSA-LA, are reaching out to candidates for the 2020 primary cycle so that we may gather information for a potential endorsement.

If you would like to seek our endorsement, please return completed questionnaires to electoralpolitics@dsa-la.org by Sunday, November 3rd 2019. We will be reviewing responses as they are returned. Candidates will be invited to speak in front of our membership at our general meeting at the discretion of the Electoral Politics Committee, after which our general membership will vote on the endorsement.

Note: in the event that the chapter chooses to endorse your candidacy, we will create an independent expenditure campaign to conduct voter outreach and raise awareness of your campaign. If this is not acceptable to you, do not return this questionnaire.

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 have not been a member, but I just joined! Thank you for having me.

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

I've never been in politics until this election, so I've never really been in a position to publicly declare my affiliation. But yes, my values and principles align with democratic socialism. I believe in the principles of collective ownership and governance for the good of the many. I believe in a generous social safety net. I believe in strong unions, and the ability for workers to manage themselves. And I believe in achieving those goals through a fair, transparent democratic process with strong regulatory limits on the influence of money.

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

I believe that an economic system that defends the right for a small number of individuals to accumulate limitless wealth, but provides no corresponding defense for the rights of the most vulnerable, has lead directly to the myriad intersecting crises

facing our city and our world. Homelessness is an illustrative example: we guarantee the right of landlords to raise rents and evict tenants in most cases, but no such guarantee exists when it comes to providing people with the basic human right of housing.

Same goes for the way we design our streets -- the wealthy insist on the ability to drive single-occupancy vehicles as quickly as possible through the city, and those demands are met. Meanwhile, those who can't afford cars are forced to confront cuts to bus service and deadly conditions for cyclists and pedestrians.

The housing crisis, climate disaster, injustice toward the undocumented, failing public institutions -- all are the result of a government that has primarily served and depended on corporate interests and the very wealthy, at the cost of everyone else.

Our systems are only as good as the most vulnerable within them. By that standard, our economic system in Los Angeles has obviously failed.

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?

In the work that I have done, I have focused on those issues that I believe are central to the future of Los Angeles today. I am trained as an urban planner, and through most of my career, I have worked on urban poverty. In India, I worked with slum-dwellers and residents of informal settlements who were fighting for basic services like running water and toilets, and for land rights. In Los Angeles, I have done a lot of work on homelessness, briefly at City Hall, and later in my own community.

We are communicating two kinds of things to voters in this campaign, about the power that City Council has to make significant progressive change in Los Angeles, and about my ability to use this power to its fullest potential. As part of the campaign, we have been educating people about the failures of Los Angeles to achieve many of the same progressive goals that people are fighting for across America, and about the power of City Council to advance these goals. In talking about my qualifications with voters, I have been emphasizing my skills as an organizer, the degree of commitment I have displayed in my career addressing the needs of vulnerable residents, and my training and work in urban planning. We have been using as many means as possible to communicate with potential voters - social media, videos about issues and policies,

detailed policy platforms that lay out a clear vision for the future of the city, and direct conversations with residents at their doors or in small gatherings.

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

I have done a lot of community organizing in my work. In India, I led a mapping and data initiative that brought communities and workers' groups together to create data about issues that were of concern to them, like pedestrian safety, working conditions, and access to public toilets. The work we did helped to increase investment in issues facing the urban poor in Chennai and to change punitive municipal policies. In Los Angeles, I helped to create a homeless coalition in my neighborhood that enabled hundreds of local volunteers to interact with and provide support for their unhoused neighbors. Through our efforts, we increased support for more compassionate local responses to homelessness.

My community organizing experiences have taught me to have hope for the future. Time and time again, I learned that if people were given opportunities to work towards greater justice, they took those opportunities! Effective community organizing tapped into people's need for a sense of purpose in their lives, and for a sense of connection with the people around them. At a time when there is so much work to be done, we have a real need in Los Angeles to create more of these opportunities. That's why I started SELAH, and that's also why I decided to run - I wanted to be able to engage a much wider range of people in a movement for greater justice and equity.

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

Ending Homelessness:

I believe we can end homelessness in our city by doing three kinds of things:

- Addressing people's urgent humanitarian needs by bringing them the services they desperately need.
- Stop the fall of people into homelessness through tenant protections like a rent freeze, right to counsel, and emergency rental support for those facing eviction.
- Build the kind of housing the people of our city desperately need, like public, affordable, and permanent supportive housing instead of more luxury units. In my district during the incumbent's term, only 7% of development was affordable housing. That must end.

Addressing our climate crisis:

We can move our city towards a carbon-neutral, sustainable future through the following means:

- Moving to 100% renewables by 2030 through the use of solar projects
- Reducing energy demand by improving energy efficiency for all homes
- Electrifying all new construction
- Cleaning our air by reducing automobile dependency through investing in public transit, and making it safer and more comfortable to walk and use bicycles and scooters
- Moving towards water independence by reducing local water use, especially for outdoor use and increasing stormwater capture.

Finally, one of my major priorities is addressing residential disengagement with city government. After decades of seemingly deliberate efforts to wall Angelenos off from of the political process, I don't blame people for not getting involved. But we can't let elected officials get away with feeding the public myths of scarce resources and powerlessness -- it's time the people of this city really understood how much power they have. I'm spending every day of my campaign working on bringing people in to city government, and that will be one of the signature efforts of my time in office.

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

My heart is with Bernie Sanders in this election. Sanders' 2016 campaign transformed American politics. It energized so many activists, including so many young people who are now transforming the political landscape through organizations like the Sunrise Movement, Justice Democrats, and the DSA. It has led to the resurgence of the progressive movement across the country. On a personal level, it was only because of Sanders and the movement that he built that I felt like I really had a political community at all.

I also really appreciate that Elizabeth Warren is building support for progressive policies among people who may never have engaged seriously with Sanders. If she were the Democratic candidate in November, I would be happy to vote and campaign for her as well, and would be excited to finally have a woman president.

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

The signature-gathering process for city elections doesn't begin until November 9th.

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

At the last filing deadline on September 30th, I had raised \$85,000 from donors, and contributed an additional \$20,000 of my own money. We're also seeking the maximum \$151,000 in matching funds provided by the city, and according to our records we've met the requirements to receive the full amount.

7. How many unique donors do you have?

Our internal records show that we currently have received donations from 415 unique donors.

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?

I've taken the No Corporate Money pledge (you may see in my public records that one person donated through an LLC he created to accept payments as a freelance writer--we've returned that donation and asked him to contribute as an individual).

I also refuse to take a dollar from anyone representing fossil fuel interests, developers, Wall Street landlords, or those lobbying on behalf of their interests. I don't believe it's possible to govern without bias while accepting money from individuals or corporations attempting to buy influence.

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

I have been the Co-Chair of the Silver Lake Neighborhood Council's Homelessness Committee for almost three years.

I am a co-founder and former Board President of the SELAH Neighborhood Homeless Coalition.

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

In writing our policy platforms for the campaign, we have had the privilege of learning from issue experts and individuals working with a range of community organizations

who gave generously of their time. It's honestly difficult to list them all! But here are some:

- LA Tenants Union
- KTown for All
- Safe Place for Youth
- Ground Game LA
- Lens Co
- Food and Water Action
- LA Street Watch
- Sunrise Movement LA
- Point Source Youth
- Public Counsel
- People Organizing for Westside Renewal
- Black Alliance for Just Immigration

I want to clarify that listing these groups doesn't indicate an endorsement from any of them -- most are nonprofits that can't participate in electoral politics.

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

I'm still beginning the process of soliciting endorsements, but so far my campaign has been endorsed by Bike the Vote LA and Ground Game LA, as well as DSA's Climate Justice Committee.

12. Do you support Medicare for All?

Yes! Healthcare is a human right.

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

I'd return to the work I've done for my entire career -- organizing in my own neighborhood and throughout the city to advocate for and implement change that defends the vulnerable. Hopefully I'd also be able to use a raised profile from the campaign to make that work more effective.

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 believe that voting in local elections is significantly more impactful than in federal or state elections, but you're definitely right that voting alone is not a viable means for accomplishing a progressive agenda. That is why my campaign is dedicated to building and sustaining the kind of movement that, regardless of whether I win or lose, will create the public pressure to enact the policies we're all fighting for.

If I were to be elected, I would also work to reform the political system at the city level to make it less susceptible to corporate influence. While we have a good matching funds program in the City of Los Angeles, there are other changes to elections like increasing the number and shrinking the size of council districts, placing bans on independent expenditure spending, and limitations on campaign spending that would further improve the system, as well as banning things like behested payments.

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! A public bank would cut out Wall Street middlemen who profit from fees and interest paid by the city, and allow for more of the robust infrastructure projects our city absolutely needs. A public bank will help accelerate the funding of Green New Deal renewable energy projects, allow our city to dramatically increase our public housing stock, and so much more. Through their investments, Wall Street banks contribute to the exploitation and destruction of our planet. A public bank would ensure that our tax dollars do not contribute to that.

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

No. There is no part of Los Angeles that is completely independent from the rest. We live in a shared city, and if a councilmember is planning on developing something that would contribute to climate crisis, homelessness, or endanger the lives of my constituents, I will not idly stand by. I'll vote my values.

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

No -- especially not after the way it was approved. There was no vetting of this process, extremely rushed budgeting outreach, and the residents of our city had no say in any of it. We deserved a voice and an honest evaluation of the potential harm this event could cause, *especially* during a generational homelessness crisis. Even [the IOC now is advocating for local referendums](#) in cities as a condition of hosting!

If elected, I will work to prioritize ending homelessness and getting us to carbon neutral by 2030 before I vote to spend another dime on 2028.

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. Rents have spiraled out of control in LA over the past 15 years, even as wages for renters have stayed flat. In [the housing and homelessness policy our campaign released](#), I support removing the 3% floor on rent increases in LA's Rent Stabilization Ordinance that has allowed rents to dramatically outgrow wages. 80% of apartments in Los Angeles are covered by the RSO, so any changes to the rules under the RSO would support a large percentage of our tenants. I also support a temporary rent freeze to allow workers to catch up with their high rental costs. Going forward, I also propose tying rent increases to real wage increases rather than to CPI, to ensure that our rents go up only when our paychecks do. To support small, locally owned businesses to thrive, I would also encourage extending rent stabilization or rent control to commercial leases.

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! It is one of the central issues of my [Housing and Homelessness policy](#), which members of the Services Not Sweeps coalition helped us develop. I also helped to found SELAH, one of the members of the coalition, and we joined while I was the organization's Board president.

I also want to add that I've been encouraged by the progress made on humanizing encampment cleanups over the last month, largely thanks to the efforts of the coalition!

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

Absolutely. Our city should provide counsel for any individual who requests it, regardless of citizenship status. Right to counsel has now been passed in San Francisco and New York, and in New York, evictions declined by 11%, and tenants receiving legal help had an 84% chance of being able to stay in their homes. This is one of the most obvious and consequential steps we can take to stem the pipeline into homelessness -- I'd put forward a motion to give all Angelenos right to counsel as one of my first acts in office.

4. Do you support just cause eviction laws?

Yes. I'm thrilled at the passage of Assemblymember David Chiu's AB 1482, extending just cause protections to millions of California renters. I would also support reforming the Ellis Act to further limit evictions and ensure that we are not losing more affordable housing. Between 2001 and 2018, [the city lost 25,000 units to the Ellis Act](#), about 3% of our rent stabilized housing stock.

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

I would ramp up enforcement of illegal hotel conversion, especially when it threatens to impede on the supply of affordable and rent stabilized housing. It can be hard to regulate illegal hotel conversion: [New York recently filed suit against people who ran an elaborate scheme](#) to rent 130 apartments through AirBnB using false names and multiple corporations to circumvent the law. The city's Housing and Community Investment Department, which enforces all violations of the RSO and the city's multi-family housing code, needs to be funded at appropriate levels to ensure that enforcement really takes place, which it is currently not.

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 to all of the above, but I don't believe we should be relying on Section 8 funding alone, which is at the whim of an unreliable federal government and often not accepted by Los Angeles landlords. We have to focus our efforts on building housing locally and affordably, and given that no public housing has been built in Los Angeles since 1955, we need to get back in the public housing game with a fund to purchase and refurbish derelict buildings -- I've been calling it a Public Option for Housing. This will help gradually decommmodify our city's housing stock, something we desperately need to do. I also strongly believe in extending funding to immigrants who do not qualify for HUD assistance.

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

The numbers are clear -- permanent supportive housing saves cities money by reducing the costs associated with the suffering of people who are homeless, like policing and emergency room bills. I deeply regret that our city government has slow-walked and mismanaged the spending of Prop HHH funds, possibly making future public votes to secure additional funding more difficult to pass. But more money for supportive housing is coming online from the state and possibly even the federal government -- we have to be ready to fight for it and spend it urgently.

One way to spend it quickly and cheaply is by refurbishing existing buildings, as I propose in my housing and homelessness policy. But some supportive housing needs to be built anew to accomodate the needs of the service providers: I'd fight to make supportive housing construction by-right, saving builders costly and time-consuming hurdles in the planning process.

I would also fight to expand the kind of housing that we fund through these programs. Currently, the kind of housing being built is studio or one-bedroom units, which are incredibly expensive. Shared housing, such as dormitory style rooms with two to a bedroom or homes with multiple bedrooms where two individuals can be housed, should be part of our supportive housing stock. Additionally, adding units to our permanent supportive housing stock through a master leasing program such as that run by the [Housing for Health program](#) at the LA County Department of Health Services would also be a more cost effective and faster way of rapidly increasing the number of units available for our unhoused neighbors.

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)

Based on data from the CA State Treasurer's office on new construction, affordable housing made up only 13% of new construction in LA over the last four years -- and a dismal 7% in my district. Making affordable units available to low-income people is one of the essential missions of my candidacy.

Public housing is an essential answer to this question, as markets aren't going to provide housing for extremely low-income people at the scale we need. I've already spoken in this questionnaire about the potential for buying older buildings and rehabbing them to add to our public housing stock. Master-leasing units for extremely low income families could also be a way to make large numbers of units available without having to construct new units.

I would also re-shape our zoning code to legalize the construction of housing with some shared facilities like shared kitchens and bathrooms. Such dormitory style housing would be likely to stay affordable and not be subject to speculation, with or without deed restrictions, because of the limited amenities available to residents. Facilities that have rooms with attached bathrooms but share common areas and kitchen spaces can accommodate both families and single individuals, and should be part of our housing landscape.

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! We must get our city fully carbon neutral (without tricks like carbon swaps) by the IPCC report deadline of 2030. Our platform fully details this, but a few takeaways:

- A mixture of large-scale projects like the Eland solar project alongside local solar grids.
- A bold stormwater capture system to finally make Los Angeles water-independent
- An increase in the scale and usefulness of public transit, including protected bus lanes, doing whatever we can to get cars (which cause 90% of smog!) off the

road, increased pedestrian protections and comfort (including plenty of new trees), and protected bike and scooter lanes.

- A massive overhaul of our city's energy efficiency to reduce energy demand. Not only will these programs save ratepayers money (on average \$280 dollars a year), and save the city energy, but they also can create thousands of high paying [manufacturing and construction jobs](#).
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?

It has been clear that communities of color have borne the brunt of highway and oil drilling pollution in Los Angeles. However, many of the most pressing issues related to environmental racism in Los Angeles lie outside of District 4, which is among the wealthier and less diverse districts in the city. That is why the environmental plan that I released as part of the campaign addresses some of these issues at the city level, not just within our district. We are trying to make policies that will not just help us meet climate goals, but also to undo the impacts of structural racism. For example, we want to reduce demand for energy across the city by expanding and scaling up free programs for retrofitting homes of lower income residents for greater energy efficiency. These programs will not only save residents money and increase their comfort, they will also create thousands of well paid jobs. Los Angeles has over 1,000 active oil wells, [most of which are located in lower-income, minority communities](#). At minimum, we propose instituting 2,500 ft setbacks from active oil wells, as recommended by activists and health professionals. Ultimately, these wells must be shut down for the health of our communities. Cleaning our air will depend on getting people out of their cars. Supporting alternatives to cars is intrinsically pro-poor - lower income residents, many of whom are people of color, already are more frequent users of public transit and non-car alternatives. Our plan proposes supporting bus transit by building bus shelters, creating bus only lanes, and improving frequency, and supporting non-motorized forms of transit by protecting pedestrians with safety improvements and shade and creating protected bike and scooter lanes.

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?

Not only do we support the elimination of parking minimums, but we think the city should establish parking maximums. There are 3.3 parking spaces for every car in LA, and that's just far too much valuable space. We support protected bus and bike lanes --

if you build it, ridership will improve! Speaking of buses, we need vast improvements that will make people *want* to ride the bus! 75% of city stops are unsheltered -- one of my first acts as councilmember would be ensuring that every single one offered shade. Buses are also too slow: dedicated lanes that enable buses to go faster than cars will incentivize riders. I would also push Metro to increase bus service. As a regular user of public transit for years, I am too often stuck waiting for more than 30 minutes for a bus, even during rush hour. The bus is the most efficient and cost-effective way to move people around the city. We must dedicate resources to making our bus system work much better than it does now.

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

CD4 is one of the wealthier districts in the city, and it's been blessed with more green space and a lush urban canopy than any other council district. As councilmember, I'd fight to increase access to underserved residents to my district's resources by building more affordable housing in the district and by opening up green spaces, like the Rowena and Silver Lake Reservoirs, to greater public access.

In the rest of the city, I'd pursue an obvious strategy: plant more trees! Developers used to be required to replace any trees they ripped out with two new ones, until last year -- when the City Council voted to allow developers to [pay a fee instead](#). We would fight to undo this law.

Trees can have the biggest impact in the low-income neighborhoods that have traditionally been deprived of them. These same neighborhoods often tend to have [the worst air quality](#) in the city, and street trees do a lot to make the air more breathable.

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.?

My district is an urban one. I strongly support the creation of community gardens as social gathering spaces and educational tools. Based on the research that I have done, I do not believe that there are any significant food deserts in my district. If I am missing anything, please do let me know!

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?

We absolutely need to renew and expand funding for the LA Justice Fund and eliminate eligibility restrictions for representation. Right now, the fund only has \$1 million per year and was funded for just two years. Renewing the fund has required significant advocacy time on the part of lawyers and immigration non-profits. In a city where so many residents are immigrants, funding and expanding the Justice Fund is a no-brainer: it is part of how we can support *all* Los Angeles residents, regardless of immigration status.

Currently, New York has a program of legal representation (the [Liberty Defense Fund](#)) that is far more expansive than ours. However, after carveouts were passed in the LA Justice Fund, New York pursued a similar restriction. Los Angeles should lead the nation in progressive policymaking, especially around immigration. Instead we are doing the opposite. We must reverse the carveouts and make coverage for the Justice Fund universal.

We need funding for representation in immigration court on par with our guarantee of representation for the criminal court system. Due process should be a norm in our country regardless of one's immigration status.

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

Absolutely. I'll even advocate for criminal charges when appropriate -- our District Attorney's record of refusal to charge officers is an embarrassment. We are in coalition with families and organizations seeking justice for their loved one who lost their lives at the hand of LAPD and the LASD. Not only must we fire officers who murder immigrants and communities of color (especially when black Angelenos are egregiously overrepresented as victims of law enforcement), we must also ensure that we are funding peace and moving away from a society reliant on state violence.

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

Yes. Many such programs are outlined in our questionnaire. Specifically on immigration, we recommend funding a City or Municipal ID program. Establishing a popular and widely-used city ID is an effective harm reduction strategy to building a barrier between sensitive communities and law enforcement. Residents who may fear obtaining a license are more likely to obtain and use a municipal ID that comes with clear protections around information sharing. As in New York, we could incentivize the ID program by providing cultural perks like access to museums or other community amenities.

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?

SELAH, the homeless services nonprofit I co-founded, is effectively a mutual aid organization: it's an all-volunteer organization that provides resources unconditionally in a neighborhood context.

We started by doing outreach to encampments in our neighborhood, giving out food and supplies and helping connect people to service providers where they could have their basic needs met -- but we quickly realized we needed to start providing those services ourselves. We opened an access center that now operate four times a week in two different locations, providing showers, hot meals, clothing, entertainment, and case management. Anyone is welcome to volunteer or receive services -- we've had multiple recipients of services become volunteers themselves.

SELAH offered a vision of neighborhood solidarity that I'd like to spread as widely across the city as possible: neighbors banding together to help their neighbors, transcending the rigid structures of government services and charitable organizations. Our access center became a beacon of cooperation and love in our neighborhood: it can work in other places, too.

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

I'm calling for a removal of the police from encampment cleanups. The presence of armed law enforcement only harms our efforts to build trust with unhoused people, and as someone who's been to many encampments, there's no "threat of violence" that could justify their presence. In line with this, I believe we should take a page from the city of Denver, and have trained mental health professionals respond to 911 calls about homeless individuals experiencing an episode on the streets.

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

This sounds like a great idea! As long as the legislation makes sure to prioritize the communities that need it most, I would!

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

Yes, absolutely. While the County manages health services, I believe that City Council offices should do much more to host and promote free medical and dental care. I believe that Council offices should act as gateways to the kinds of public and private resources available to help residents thrive. I have a vision for a Council district office that has a play area for children with a babysitter available, desks and volunteers who can help neighborhood children with their school work, and nourishing snacks and drinks for all visitors. I would invite public interest lawyers who specialized in housing rights to co-locate in the office, as well as case workers from social service agencies, who can help residents experiencing any kind of vulnerability. We would offer meeting spaces for community groups and activists looking to improve their neighborhoods. Through visits to schools, libraries, senior centers, and other facilities, our staff would go out to the community and inform them about the services available and invite people into our space.

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

Yes! I am especially concerned about how students who use free meal programs fend for themselves during summer vacations and holidays. I think there are opportunities for positive partnerships between city and county government, LAUSD, and private companies in the region that can ensure that every child has enough nourishing food to eat.

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

Yes. Currently, subsidized child care is only available to the lowest income residents of our city through state programs. Yet, for most residents, child care costs are so high that they prevent parents from re-entering the workforce, or they eat up large parts of parents' salaries. I would support the expansion of these programs to a much broader range of residents. I believe there are sources of funding available at the state level to expand these services. I also believe that the City could partner with home-based child care providers to rapidly expand the services provided. Across the country, home based child care providers offer services to a much larger number of residents than formal, institutional programs. The city could support care workers by increasing their income and improving working conditions, and improve the quality of care they provide by providing training, licensing and oversight, as [the group All Our Kin does in the New York region](#).

7. Do you support antifascist action?

Yes, absolutely!