

SOLANO COUNTY DEMOCRATIC CENTRAL COMMITTEE (SCDCC)
Election Endorsement Questionnaire

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Office Sought: Solano County Superior Court Judge, Department 3

1) Relevant Involvement

Please see attached list of volunteer and pro bono activities, including in particular the following:

- a. Vice Mayor and City Council – City of Benicia
- b. Chair and Member – Planning Commission - City of Benicia
- c. Member - Economic Development Board - City of Benicia
- d. Member - Redevelopment Advisory Board - City of Concord

2) Background and Experience

- a. Judge Pro Tem - Solano County Superior Court – 2008 to Present - over 4000 cases heard in multiple departments including juvenile misdemeanor, unlawful detainer, traffic, small claims, truancy and others.
- b. Faculty - National Judicial College - 2008 to Present - Faculty instructor to judges from all levels of state and federal courts throughout the United States and some foreign countries in four different subject areas. Have among the highest faculty evaluation ratings at the NJC of 6.8/7.
- c. Attorney – Co-founder and Managing Partner of Gizzi Reep Foley, which now consists of eight attorneys and full support staff, serving the needs of Solano County in the areas of general civil law, family law, personal injury and other areas as required. The firm was previously awarded Best Law Firm in Solano County by the Solano County Bar Association, and also Best Customer Service Award by Local Happenings magazine.

3) Reasons for Running

I have served the Solano County Superior Court as a volunteer “temporary” judge (Judge pro tem) over 300 days in the past 10 years. It is a job that I have come to love, and believe I have brought thoughtful and fair justice to the parties who rely on our Court. I spent my entire career devoting my energy and creativity to business. In this time of ever dwindling resources within our Court, I would now like to see if I can be an asset within that system for the benefit of all.

4) Goals and Objectives During Term

It is my hope to increase efficiency and maximize the resources allocated to Department 3 in a manner that reduces the highly stressful environment that naturally accompanies the types of cases heard. To the extent possible, I would like to make the Department more accessible and user-friendly by proposing to the administration that we conduct hearings in Vallejo once or twice per week, offering more online or in person instruction for self-represented litigants, that day of hearing mediators be on site and we consider other innovative approaches to this highly volatile calendar.

5) Endorsements

Though this is a nonpartisan race, I would very much appreciate the endorsement of the SCDCC and its individual members because I believe they are well respected in our County, which is overwhelmingly comprised of Democrats, because I have been a Democrat my entire voting life, and I have previously been involved with the SCDCC and its fundraising activities and know it can be a powerful influence in any election.

6) Current Endorsements

Please refer to my website for an updated list of current endorsements. Please note that I have a policy of not requesting nor accepting endorsements from any judges who serve on the Solano County Superior Court bench.

7) Amount of Required Funding

I anticipate this race will in the costing approximately \$50,000-\$55,000.

8) Source of Funds/Contributors

To date, the campaign has raised approximately \$39,000, \$37,000 of which is a candidate “loan.” The minimal funds that have been raised consist of unsolicited donations of \$250 or less from personal friends who are supporters. We do not have a specific plan for raising future funds and are extremely selective as to the source of all donations, given the nature of the position I am seeking.

9) Budgetary Solutions

As a judge in Department 3, I will have minimal on budgetary matters for the Court, much less external jurisdictions. I do intend to maximize the budget I do have, run the docket as efficiently as possible and use volunteers where available for such functions as mediation and training.

10) Major Issues

- A. Constituents - Washington, Traffic, Budgets, Local Jobs, Housing Costs, Living Costs, Safety, Healthcare
- B. Public Employees - Fairness, Budgets, Turnover without replacement, Pensions
- C. Union Members - Quality Recruitment, Non—Union Employers, Pensions, Sustainable income, Healthcare
- D. Small Businesses - The “Squeeze,” Competition from all sources, Litigation, Lack of support, Employee issues, Employee costs
- E. Families - Education, child care, Lack of government priority, Education, Resource inequity, Education, Dearth of resources, Education
- F. African-American Community – Opportunity, Resources, Programs, Commitment, Education, job opportunities
- G. LGBTQ - Acceptance, Acknowledgment, Community Integration
- H. Latino – DJT, Immigration issues and fears - personal and for loved ones, Community Integration, educational opportunities, economic parity
- I. API Community - Recognition, Acknowledgment, Acceptance
- J. Environmental - Need for diligent, constant monitoring and enforcement of existing laws for existing projects, and swift, unitive remedies when and where warranted. Strict scrutiny of all proposed new projects for legal compliance and formality with existing surroundings, in addition to representing an asset to the community.
- K. Poverty/Income Balance - Rapidly rising home prices, Poor homes/jobs ratio countywide.

11) Women's Right re Healthcare Choices

Pursuant to the Code of Judicial Ethics Canon 5(B)(1)(a), a judicial candidate must not *"...make statements...that commit the candidate...with respect to cases, controversies, or issues that are likely to come before the courts..."* As a family law judge, there are a number of ways that issues arising under this subject matter will likely need to be decided in my Court. Therefore, in order to comply with my obligations as stated above, I decline to answer this question.

12) Position on Negative Campaigning

I deplore negative campaigning and have signed the Civility Pledge provided by the Registrar of Voters. However, if I am personally attacked, or lies are told about me, as I have had done by the other side in one of the local newspapers Comments section, I will respond in whatever manner is justified only to the extent necessary to clarify the record. We will never initiate a negative campaign.

13) Democrat

I have been a Democrat since I started voting at the age of 18. I am not been heavily partisan person and believe we would get a lot more done if people would reach across the aisle. Deep down, I believe most people feel this way we are being forced to vote for extremes, so nothing gets done.

I grew up in San Francisco and went to school with the children of George Moscone. While many people describe how life changed the moment they heard Kennedy was shot, that moment for me happened when Moscone was murdered. To this day, whenever I see the film clip of Diane Feinstein making the announcement on the City Hall steps, I get goosebumps. The sort of social conscience that Moscone represented is what we were all taught and what has been a part of my entire life. How could I not be a Democrat?

As I've gotten older, I also appreciate the fiscal realities and limitations that keep us from doing everything we would like. Becoming a mediator, helped me to appreciate the value in listening to both sides and seeking commonalities, in order to move forward. For these reasons - my ingrained social conscience, modulated by a dose of economic reality, combined with a willingness to listen in an open-minded manner (until it's my time to decide), I think makes me eminently qualified to handle the family law duties of Department 3.

14) California Democratic Party Platform

I have not read the Party platform and cannot comment on the issues contained therein.

15) LGBT Right of Marriage

I do support the right of legal marriage for our LGBT community members. In fact, I personally performed such a wedding over a year ago. In my personal legal practice, I had a niche area of law working with same-sex couples preparing their estate plans. It is an area that has my full support.

16) Additional Information

I very much appreciate the opportunity to submit this to the SCDCC, and for all of your support and encouragement. Please do not hesitate to call me with any questions or for further clarification.

Steve