



# SANTA CRUZ COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

## **June 2022 Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire Must be completed and submitted no later than \*\*\*March 20, 2022:**

Santa Cruz County Democrats, PO Box 7763, Santa Cruz, 95061,  
or by email: [endorsements@cruzdcc.groups.io](mailto:endorsements@cruzdcc.groups.io)

The Santa Cruz County Democratic Central Committee will be considering endorsing eligible Democrats who have qualified to appear on the ballot in the June, 2022 election for both contested and uncontested positions. In order to be eligible, a candidate must be a registered Democrat for at least six months prior to the final filing date for that candidate's race in this election. An endorsement by us automatically carries an endorsement by the California Democratic Party.

All eligible candidates who wish to be considered for endorsement are invited to complete our Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire and return a copy electronically (1) via Google Forms, or (2) by email to [endorsements@cruzdcc.groups.io](mailto:endorsements@cruzdcc.groups.io) no later than March 20, or (3) by USPS Mail postmarked no later than March 16 to Santa Cruz County Democratic Central Committee, PO Box 7763, Santa Cruz, CA 95061. Due to recently implemented USPS delays, we encourage an electronic reply.

Questions: Please email us at [endorsements@cruzdcc.groups.io](mailto:endorsements@cruzdcc.groups.io)



## **General Informational Questions**

**List the ten (10) organizational or personal endorsements of your candidacy that you consider to be the most important or most representative of your campaign:\***

1. *Bill Monning*
2. *Fred Keely*
3. *Luis Alejo*
4. *Lowell Hurst*
5. *Vanessa Quiroz-Carter*
6. *Eduardo Montesino*
7. *Maria Orozco*
8. *Pajaro Valley Cesar Chavez Democratic Club*
9. *Monterey Bay Central Labor Council*
10. *Monterey Bay Building Trades*
11. *SEIU 521*

**Briefly describe aspects of your background and experiences that indicate your qualifications for the office you seek:\***

*I currently serve on the Cabrillo College Board of Trustees. I have served on the Watsonville City Council, I served one term as Mayor, two terms as Vice-Mayor and nine years on the City Council. I currently serve as the Santa Cruz County, District 4 Alternate for the Regional Transportation Commission and Santa Cruz County, District 4 Representative for the Human Services Commission. I also serve on the City of Watsonville Redistricting Committee. Born and raised in Watsonville. Attended only local public schools. Son of an apple farm worker and mother who worked in the cannery and was a leader in the Cannery Strike of '85 with Teamsters Local 912. Enlisted in the Army at 17 as a Combat Medic. Proudly served in the 1st Cavalry Division in the Persian Gulf War, earning numerous medals.*

*Enrolled at Cabrillo College and DQ-University; transferred to UCSC; graduated with a degree in Community Studies; interned with Watsonville's Community Development and Neighborhood Services Department. Co-founded the local Student Empowerment Project (STEP) later became the Brown Berets, where we attended CNA, HERE and SEIU actions in the Bay Area and local labor actions. Created local Tutorial Programs at three area Migrant Labor Camps. And began the Watsonville Peace & Unity March after the death of 16 and 9 year old brother and sister in Pajaro. We would encourage local youth to attend college, often taking students to visit UC /CSU schools during Recruitment Days.*

*Worked as a Political Organizer with United Farm Workers for three years and then organized with SEIU International as an External Organizer for nearly a decade, improving the quality of life for working people.*

*Served in the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, Board of Directors, Monterey Bay Community Power, Policy Board Alternate, Library Finance Authority, Pajaro River Flood Prevention Finance & Governance Committee.*

*Served on the City's Library Commission, Redistricting Committee and as Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission. Active Delegate in the California and Santa Cruz County Democratic Parties. Former Co-Chair and active member of the Pajaro Valley Cesar Chavez Democratic Club.*

*Currently work with The LEAP Institute, which seeks to advance green mobility and California's clean energy goals. I currently serve as the Commander for the American Legion Post 121 and 2nd Vice President for the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1716. I am also a member of the Friends of the Rail & Trail Engagement Committee and a member of the Elks Lodge #1300 in Watsonville.*

**What are the top five major issues facing this office?:\***

**Affordable Housing.** . *A person could make \$78,000 and still qualify for Affordable Housing. And those Income limits are expected to go up this summer. It's time to fight to keep our residents from being priced out of their hometown. Let's start by streamlining the building permit process and lowering fees for both affordable housing and accessory dwelling units, as well as those affected by the CZU fires. Let's work as a region to bring affordable housing to our County. I will work with the CAO and my fellow Supervisors to work with all our cities on updating or creating Inclusionary Housing Ordinances.*

*Many Cities now have 20-25% affordable housing ordinances. I will work with the County and all our cities to create a uniform streamlined process and reduce the fees for both affordable housing, ADUs and those affected by the CZU fires. We also need to partner with school districts and college district that want to create workforce housing as well. And look at pilot programs that reduce impact fees for affordable housing. Lastly, I would support a Countywide measure similar to Santa Cruz' Empty Home Tax to fund Affordable Housing. Such a measure would increase affordable housing options in the County of Santa Cruz by raising funds by establishing a tax on residential parcels that are in use less than 120 days within a calendar year, through a parcel tax on empty homes to create affordable housing.*

**Sustainable Transportation:** *I unequivocally support the Rail and Trail. South County residents suffer the impacts of our outdated transportation system the most. We need to provide multi-modal alternatives and finish the Rail & Trail. A sustainable electric commuter train taking people from back and forth from Watsonville to Santa Cruz and connecting them to Pajaro, Monterey, Salinas and Gilroy is the ideal mode of transportation. Especially, when connected with a bike lane along the rail line, is a win-win for our County. We also need to finish the bus on shoulder lanes, so that Metro can be an option and not be stuck in the same traffic as everyone*

*else. But what is most important that we provide an alternative mode of public transportation from Watsonville to Santa Cruz that will reduce greenhouse gasses and get people off their cars and off the daily gridlock. A world class Rail and Trail.*

**Homelessness:** *Our unhoused community members deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. We need to bring in state funding for projects such as Project Homekey, it's cheaper & faster than building conventional housing. We should continue to explore Tiny Homes And continue to seek increased funding for Section 8 vouchers– We need to take a fair share approach, and assure every jurisdiction pulls their weight. I would also like to ensure our Mental Health Services Act funds are being used to get more services out to our communities with the greatest needs and challenges. I would move the County to come up with a spending plan to ensure the money is being used to get services out to the community. They can use MHSA for homelessness, wrap around services, mental health and drug addiction. As housing and services are provided we need to plan for clean-up of encampment areas.*

**Economic Development:** *I would work with Barbara Mason from the County's Economic Development and the City of Watsonville's CM to create or apply for more Opportunity Zone designations, to allow for economic development especially within disadvantaged Census Tracts. We need to look at green jobs, we need to look at expanding apprenticeships and trade jobs into South County.*

**Candidates in the past have said, let the voters decide on controversial issues such as Greenway. Now that the voters will decide, specifically how are you going to vote on the Greenway initiative?\***

**X      Oppose the Greenway Initiative as written**

*I, affirmably, oppose the Greenway Initiative.*

*I unequivocally support Rail and Trail.*

*I oppose rail banking or rail abatement.*

*Furthermore, I am proud to have taken this strong position from day one and have remained a steadfast supporter of our rail-trial.*

**16. Many people look at the big issues facing us and are frustrated at the lack of progress; they feel government just isn't being effective. Given that our housing challenges are complex, what should be the top priorities for the Board of Supervisors in tackling the housing crisis in our county:\***

*Let's start by streamlining the building permit process and lowering fees for both affordable housing and accessory dwelling units, as well as those affected by the CZU fires. Let's work as a region to bring affordable housing to our County. I will work with the CAO and my fellow Supervisors to work with all our cities on updating or creating Inclusionary Housing Ordinances.*

*Many Cities now have 20-25% affordable housing ordinances. I will work with the County and all our cities to create a uniform streamlined process and reduce the fees for both affordable housing, ADUs and those affected by the CZU fires. We also need to partner with school districts and the college district that want to create workforce housing as well. And look at pilot programs that reduce impact fees for affordable housing and certain types of housing development that exceed the inclusionary housing ordinance.*

*Lastly, I would support a Countywide measure similar to Santa Cruz' Empty Home Tax to fund Affordable Housing. Such a measure would increase affordable housing options in the County of Santa Cruz by raising funds by establishing a tax on residential parcels that are in use less than 120 days within a calendar year, through a parcel tax on empty homes to create affordable housing.*

**17.Can you give us an example of when and how input and/or evidence has convinced you to override your initial opinion on a public policy issues?:\***

*As councilmember, I initially supported a proposal to install a propane facility in Watsonville. The plan called for the installation of a rail car unloading tower in addition to tank unloading stations, and I saw this as an additional way to utilize our rail line for freight. As a rail supporter myself, this appeared to be a way to solidify the important role rail might play in our community. However, the public raised safety and environmental impact concerns over the course of a 2 hour hearing. As an elected official I have a responsibility to represent my constituency, and on this issue they were clear. By the of the hearing I chose to cast a no vote.*

**18.Anything further you would like us to know about you?:\***

*The 4th Supervisorial District has only had one Latino Supervisor. Watsonville is 85% Latino and local government should be reflective of its population. I am a proud Democrat and union supporter for life, not just during elections. I was born into the union household, as a child I was on picket lines at Cannery with my mother. One of my most powerful memories was watching my mom talk to the UFCW store workers at Lucky's and Teamsters truck drivers and watching them unload the refrigerated food items right on the street on Freedom Blvd. As a young 12 year old, I thought to myself, that was union power! To this day, when people say, Watsonville is a Union Town, I think back to this moment. Since, then I became a UFW, Political Organizer, an SEIU International, External Organizer. I will continue to attend Democratic events, Social Justice rallies and Labor actions — I want to continue to be the Labor friendly Progressive Democrat champion as your 4th District Supervisor.*

Thank you for submitting your questionnaire. We look forward to hearing from you at the forum on Wednesday, March 23 at 7pm via ZOOM. Questions? [endorsements@crzdcc.groups.io](mailto:endorsements@crzdcc.groups.io)