RCYD's Policy Platform for Riverside County

Policy Context

In the diverse and vibrant landscape of Riverside County, the collective voice and potential impact of individuals aged 13-35 cannot be overstated. With over 750,000 people in this demographic group, we represent a formidable force, comprising more than one-third of Riverside County's population. Despite our significant presence, our policies and local political representation fail to adequately reflect our interests, concerns and issue priorities.

Riverside County grapples with challenges that are unique to our region. Pollution clouds our skies, economic exploitation stagnates growth, and brain drain threatens our talent pool. We receive less than our fair share of resources while bearing the burden of problems that other regions neglect. These issues constitute systemic policy shortcomings that affect our livelihoods, our quality of life, and our ability to access the American Dream.

As Young Democrats, we must harness our collective power to demand the change our communities desperately need. The depth and urgency of the issues we face require a bold, unconventional approach that goes beyond traditional party politics and activist moralizing. By championing a dual strategy, we aim to confront the pressing challenges of our time through direct engagement with institutional power at all levels, while organizing a grassroots movement to drive the transformative change we seek.

We present the following political program aimed at empowering young people in Riverside County and amplifying their critical issues.

HEALTH

Riverside County faces significant health challenges compared to the rest of California. Our County has a higher population of uninsured individuals, elevated rates of heart disease and cancer, and more than one-fifth of adults reporting poor health. Moreover, our region faces persistent challenges and assaults on reproductive health organizations, jeopardizing access to comprehensive reproductive health and preventative services for all individuals.

We want healthy citizens, to ensure a healthier democracy. We advocate for healthier, more resilient communities where every individual has the opportunity to thrive and contribute to a vibrant democracy. We advocate for comprehensive policies that address the holistic health needs of our communities:

Public Health

Universal Healthcare Access: Advocate for universal healthcare through CalCare to ensure equitable access to healthcare services, including comprehensive mental health services, for all community members.

Protect Reproductive Health Rights: Support local reproductive rights groups in advocating for comprehensive reproductive rights, justice, and affordable access to abortion, birth control, and sexual health education. Oppose local exclusionary zoning ordinances and regulations on reproductive health clinics that contradict California regulations and support for reproductive health.

Develop Medical Professional Pipeline: Support initiatives to increase the medical professional pipeline and boost the doctor-to-patient ratios in Riverside County.

Community Health

Expand Food Security Programs: Advocate for policies that expand County and local food assistance programs, community gardens, and initiatives to increase access to affordable, nutritious food options for community members.

People-Centered Urban Development & Planning: Advocate for urban development and planning by Riverside County and city officials to promote healthier, walkable communities and reduce reliance on cars. Support the expansion of light rail and infrastructure improvements to combat car dependency, mitigate air pollution, and improve community health.

Promotion of Physical Health: Advocate for policies that promote preventative care, increase access to affordable healthcare facilities, and combat chronic diseases.

Investment in Programs Promoting Physical Activity: Encourage County and local municipal officials to invest in community programs promoting regular physical activity. This includes developing public parks and recreational facilities, funding local sports leagues and fitness classes, and partnering with schools to encourage daily exercise for children.

HOUSING

In Riverside County, young families and working professionals face an increasingly difficult housing market. Over the past decade, the median price of a home has nearly tripled, putting homeownership out of reach for many. Currently, more than one-third of our county's residents are renters, yet rental prices continue to soar while wages remain largely stagnant. Adding to this crisis, private equity firms and mega-corporations are buying up thousands of housing units, unchecked by any meaningful regulation or oversight from elected officials in our County.

We envision a community where every individual has access to safe, stable, and affordable housing. To achieve this, we advocate for:

Banning Private Equity and Mega-Corporation Ownership of Housing Property: Prevent large corporations from cartelizing housing and driving up prices.

Acceleration of Affordable Housing Construction: Address the housing shortage by expediting the development of affordable housing units for individuals and families of all income levels.

Establishment of Community Land Trusts: Promote affordable homeownership and prevent displacement through community-controlled land trusts.

Implement Rent Stabilization Policies: Protect tenants from exorbitant rent increases and ensure housing stability by regulating rent hikes.

Introduce a Riverside County Tenant Bill of Rights: Establish a stronger, uniform county-wide framework for tenant protections including easier organization of tenants unions, provision of universal free counsel in housing court to safeguard tenant rights and just-cause evictions.

JOBS

Riverside County boasts abundant natural resources, a robust labor force, and a thriving economy. In 2022, our gross domestic product (GDP) exceeded $115 billion, surpassing that of thirteen U.S. states.

However, economic resilience and sustainable, living wage jobs remain elusive for many residents. A significant portion of our population continues to rely heavily on employment in the Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics (TDL) sector, also known as the ‘goods movement’ industry. Nearly one-sixth of our working population is employed in transportation and warehousing, where jobs often lack sustainable opportunities and fail to provide living wages. Moreover, these roles frequently involve non-standard employment arrangements, posing challenges for workers to secure labor rights and employment benefits.

Furthermore, the region faces a critical issue of "brain drain," as recent graduates seek employment opportunities outside Riverside County, opting for metropolitan areas like Los Angeles or the Bay Area, or relocating out of state.

Securing decent jobs with living wages and protecting the rights of workers to unionize is essential to ensuring the economic security and prosperity for all individuals in our region.

Securing Living Wage Standards: Demand a living wage in Riverside County aligned with the cost of living. Implement robust enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance and hold employers accountable for providing living wages.

Support for Workers' Rights: Stand in solidarity with workers' rights and advocate for workplace unionization where possible. Empower workers to negotiate fair wages, benefits, and address workplace injustices. Lower barriers to union recruitment at high schools and college campuses, developing a youth pipeline for union jobs.

Advocating for Worker Co-Ops: Promote the development of worker cooperatives as a sustainable business model that empowers workers and fosters community wealth.

Ensuring Fair Compensation for Political Workers: Candidates running for office should fairly compensate their campaign staff, moving away from unpaid work and ensuring roles pay at least a living wage.

Creating a County-wide Youth Jobs Corps Program: Advocate for the establishment of a County-wide Youth Jobs Corps Program. Invest in meaningful employment opportunities for youth in green jobs, infrastructure, environmental conservation, and community services. This initiative aims to combat brain drain and promote youth employment.

JUSTICE

Economic Opportunity for All

We advocate for policies that empower workers, invest in everyone's well-being, and promote a sustainable planet, ensuring economic justice and opportunity for all.

Student Debt and Student Loan Reform: Cancel student debt, eliminate interest on student loans, and reduce tuition costs. Ultimately, aim for tuition-free public education and trade/vocational training.

Fighting Poverty and Promoting Economic Justice: Support comprehensive policies and initiatives to eliminate poverty and foster economic equity for all Riverside County residents. This includes government-guaranteed jobs programs, universal basic income, housing initiatives, claiming tax credits, and ensuring access to living wage jobs.

Community Benefits Agreements: Advocate for stronger Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) and Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) to ensure local and targeted hiring, living wage requirements, and new economic opportunities for disadvantaged communities in Riverside County.

Climate & Environment

Transition From Warehouse-Based Economy: Advocate for regional strategies to transition Riverside County away from its reliance on low-paying warehouse and logistics jobs. Prioritize the development of high-quality jobs in sectors such as renewable energy, healthcare, education, and technology, offering better wages, benefits, and career advancement opportunities.

Expand Clean Energy Sources: Advocate for the transition to clean, renewable resources, including the development of nuclear power plants and the electrification of big rigs, to reduce emissions and improve regional air quality.

Secure a County-Wide Warehouse Impact Tax: Implement a warehouse impact tax based on parcel size or environmental impacts to hold large corporations like Amazon accountable for their environmental footprint and fund sustainable community initiatives.

LGBTQIA+ Communities

Anti-Discrimination Protections: Advocate for protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity or expression in Riverside County employment, housing, public spaces and services, County and state-funded programs, education, and jury service.

Legislative Support: Support local and County legislation and law enforcement policies that protect LGBTQIA+ people from violence.

Supporting Marriage Equality: Advocate for the Freedom to Marry Act and ensure marriage equality for LGBTQIA+ populations.

Local Educational Protections: Push for protections in Riverside County education systems to prevent forced “public outing” and counter anti-LGBTQIA+ rhetoric and anti-trans policies.

Emergency Housing Support: Secure additional County funding towards emergency housing support and resources for LGBTQIA+ individuals experiencing homelessness in Riverside County.

Immigrant Communities

Advocate for Migrant Worker Rights: Implement additional protections for migrant workers to prevent work exploitation and ensure fair treatment.

Secure Protections for Street Vendors: Advocate for the protection and support of street vendors to ensure their safety and livelihood.

Improve Access to Public Benefits: Facilitate easier access to public benefits and resources for immigrant communities.

Immigrant Health Resources: Increase access to preventative health resources and programs tailored to immigrant populations.

Expand Language Accessibility: Ensure that Riverside County and city government documents and benefits are available in multiple languages to accommodate diverse immigrant and migrant communities.

Public Safety

Restorative Justice and Social Programs: Promote restorative justice, economic assistance, and social programs that reduce crime by addressing root causes and supporting community well-being.

Improve Urban Planning & Development: Reduce crime through improved urban planning, including enhanced sidewalk lighting, mixed-income housing with recreational spaces, and public investment in community amenities.

Implement Community Policing Strategies: Foster collaborative partnerships between law enforcement officers and the community to address issues like retail theft, petty crime and gang violence collaboratively.

Improved Law Enforcement Training: Support comprehensive training programs that include de-escalation techniques, implicit and explicit bias, cultural competency, and interactions with individuals with disabilities, mental health challenges, or those under the influence of alcohol or drugs

Civilian Oversight: Advocate for the creation of civilian oversight for law enforcement agencies like the Riverside County Sheriff's Department and local police departments.

Government Accountability and Transparency:

1. Campaign Fiscal Responsibility
2. Local Government accountability
3. Financial contributions tracking (Foreign Affairs)
4. Auditing of local departments/offices offices (ex: Sheriffs Dept)