

2020 March 3rd Primary Election Ballot Guide for LA County

Author: Michael MacDonald - feel free to share, distribute, reuse as you see fit.

Here is my ballot guide, which is rooted in progressive, social justice, equity- and urbanism-focused policy, but grounded by some strategic considerations:

- [In-person voting has changed!](#) You can now vote at any one of hundreds of voting centers across the County starting on Saturday, February 22nd from 8am-5pm until March 2nd, and then 7am-8pm on Tuesday, March 3rd (Election Day). Additional voting centers will be open starting on Saturday, February 29th. You are not limited to the location nearest to your residence, so for some people it will make sense to utilize a voting center near your work, school, or other destinations. You can find a map of voting centers here, be mindful of the checkboxes on the top that differentiate between the 11-day locations that start on 2/22, and the 4-day locations that start on 2/29: <https://locator.lavote.net/locations/vc>
- For those voting in person on Election Day, you get to vote as long as you are in line before 8pm, you get to vote. But my strong suggestion is to vote before Election Day, as there probably won't be lines if you take advantage of early voting, and because so much has changed this year that Election Day is likely to be messy.
- Digital ballot marking devices are here! These are touch screens that generate a print out ballot. Be aware that for many races, all of the candidates don't fit on a single screen, so you will need to tap "more" to see all of the options. You can also make selections in advance on your phone or smart device to avoid having to fill out the digital ballot in person: <https://isb.lavote.net/>
- If you don't remember what address you registered with, you can check your voter registration status here: <https://www.lavote.net/vrstatus/>. You now can register to vote in-person and vote same-day under California's new [Conditional Voter Registration](#) rules.
- If you are a Vote By Mail voter, you can 1) mail your ballot (must be postmarked by Election Day), 2) turn your ballot in (signed within its envelope) on Election Day to any voting center, or 3) surrender your ballot *and* envelope at any voting center to vote in-person.
- You do NOT need an ID to vote. Your signature is all you need to prove your identity.
- If you want to take a selfie of/with your ballot, [there's nothing stopping you](#).
- You don't need a permanent address to vote. Resources for unhoused Angelenos to vote: <https://findyourlens.co/blog/2020/2/6/votesendhomelessness>
- Local elections come first! Your ballot will start with important local elections and you'll find the presidential primary at the end. This guide follows the same organization.
- Any other questions? Check here: <https://www.lavote.net/home/voting-elections/voter-registration/register-to-vote/faqs>

L.A. City Council:

This is the first year that local L.A. offices are aligned with a presidential election, and there's a big opportunity to get progressives and more importantly, progressive women, elected.

L.A. City Council District 2: No recommendation

Incumbent Paul Krekorian is not facing a serious challenge, but is far from inspiring.

L.A. City Council District 4: Nithya Raman

Nithya Raman is a former executive director for Time's Up and the founder of the SELAH homeless advocacy organization. She's endorsed by DSA-LA, League of Conservation Voters, and Sunrise Movement, and is an absolutely inspiring candidate with an exceptional policy platform. Sarah Kate Levy is also a great candidate in this race and any vote against the incumbent is the right vote.

L.A. City Council District 6: Bill Haller

Incumbent Nury Martinez has re-oriented the City's homeless policy towards policing and sweeps. Bill Haller is a long shot challenger, but comes from an environmental advocacy background and appears deserving of your protest vote.

L.A. City Council District 8: Marqueece Harris-Dawson*

Marqueece Harris-Dawson was an exciting entry into City Council as a community organizer and leader of Community Coalition. He has been a positive voice in many cases, but at times has also been disappointing for his hesitancy to challenge the status quo on policing and homelessness. That said, he is still one of the best in the City Council and we can hope that he can do more with better allies to work with.

L.A. City Council District 10: Aura Vasquez or Channing Martinez

Both candidates are progressive allies in a race that is dominated by an out-of-touch career politician and a lawyer who has made her name fighting against housing Angelenos experiencing homelessness.

L.A. City Council District 12: Loraine Lundquist

This is LA's opportunity to flip a red district blue, with an absolutely terrible Republican-turned-independent incumbent having to face the reality of higher Democratic turnout during a presidential election cycle. Loraine Lundquist is an exceptional candidate who built her name as an environmental community advocate and has just about every Democratic endorsement available.

L.A. City Council District 14: Cyndi Otteson

Cyndi is the only candidate who has been willing to stand up for transit while other candidates make wishy-washy statements.

Glendale City Council: (3 seats available) Dan Brotman (bullet vote)

Dan Brotman is an environmentalist who helped lead the charge to get Glendale to reorient an upgrade of the Grayson power plant towards renewables and away from fossil fuels. There are 3 seats that voters are voting on, with two incumbents likely to get re-election. Ardy Kassakhian and Paula Devine are the other candidates worthy of your vote here, but my recommendation is to use a bullet vote (vote only for one candidate) for Brotman to increase his chances of winning.

Pasadena:

Pasadena Mayor: No recommendation

Just about everyone in the race is mediocre at best. Mayor Terry Tornek is afraid of NIMBYs and personally downgraded a new BRT project. Challenger Victor Gordo is endorsed by Westside traffic safety denying group, Keep LA Moving. Jason Hardin pled no contest to a domestic violence charge, and the other guy in the race is a Trump supporter. Go with your gut.

Pasadena District 1: Tryon Hampton*

Running unopposed, but deserving of a vote

Pasadena District 2: Tricia Keane

Inspiring, optimistic, and visionary deputy director at the LA Dept of City Planning who happens to be Bike The Vote-endorsed. Felicia Williams is also good but appears to be afraid of bikelash.

Pasadena District 4: No recommendation

They're all terrible.

Pasadena District 6: Ryan Bell

Exceptional progressive candidate who comes from a tenants rights advocacy background. Bike The Vote-endorsed.

Long Beach City Council:

These are my least well researched local offices so if you are a Long Beach resident or political junkie who knows these races better, please feel free to reach out.

Long Beach City Council District 2: No recommendation

Cindy Allen seems like the favorite for this race, but her anti-safe streets position makes her a no from me.

Long Beach City Council District 4: No recommendation

Long Beach City Council District 6: Suely Saro

Former field rep to Ricardo Lara when he was a state senator, endorsed by the Democratic party as well as Long Beach Councilmember Rex Richardson

Long Beach City Council District 8: Tunua Thrash-Ntuk

Thrash-Ntuk is an urban planner focused on income inequality with the Democratic party endorsement.

L.A. Education Offices:

The context of the LAUSD race is that the 4 union-aligned seats the LAUSD Board are up for election. I recommend each of the incumbents, and the union-backed candidate for Area 7.

LAUSD Trustee Area 1: Dr. George McKenna*

LAUSD Trustee Area 3: Scott Schmerelson*

LAUSD Trustee Area 5: Jackie Goldberg*

Pay no attention to the massive amount of anti-union mail some millionaire is sending out to oppose her.

LAUSD Trustee Area 7: Patricia Catellanos

I liked Silke Bradford when I heard her speak, but Catellanos is the dependable UTLA/public school candidate.

Pasadena Community College District Trustee Area 2: No recommendation

Pasadena Community College District Trustee Area 4: No recommendation

Glendale Unified School District Board of Education, Area A: Jennifer Freemon*

Glendale Unified School District Board of Education, Area E: Nayiri Nahabedian

Glendale Community College Board of Education, Area 1: No recommendation

Glendale Community College Board of Education, Area 5: No recommendation

CA State Legislature:

These are really important offices who have a profound effect on how our tax dollars are spent in Sacramento. You might not get to vote for a state senator this election cycle as this year is odd number districts.

CA Senate District 21: Kipp Mueller

Kipp Mueller is a progressive Democratic challenger in this Republican-controlled Northeast LA County district. He is an attorney who has fought ICE pro bono, and is endorsed by DSA-LA and CalBike.

CA Senate District 23: Abigail Medina

I think DSA-LA's guide has a typo for this district. Both Abigail Medina and Kris Goodfellow seem worthy of support, with Goodfellow receiving support from the Democratic Party and Planned Parenthood, while Medina has support from progressive organizations, environmental groups, and more of the unions.

CA Senate District 25: No recommendation

Incumbent Anthony Portantino is running unopposed. YIMBYs are furious at him for shelving SB50 in 2019, while leftists are unhappy with him for shilling for payday lending companies, Elevate Credit & ACE Cash Express. Congrats to Portantino for uniting these factions against him, his reward is no recommendation.

CA Senate District 27: Henry Stern*

Democrat Henry Stern has been a disappointment on housing, police accountability, and complete streets. His opponent is a Republican who says his priority is to address the "vagrent (sic) crisis."

CA Senate District 29: Josh Newman

Democrat Josh Newman won this seat 4 years ago, only to be recalled by a cynical Republican campaign after a bold and correct vote in favor of SB1, which helps fund transit and transportation projects across the state. Let's get him back!

CA Senate District 33: Lena Gonzales (unopposed)

CA Senate District 35: Steven Bradford*

CA Assembly District 38: Dina Cervantes

This is the seat that Christy Smith is giving up to run for Congress in the seat formerly held by revenge porn victim, Katie Hill. Cervantes is the DSA-LA pick, in part for her work with unions and immigrant justice organizations.

CA Assembly District 39: Luz Rivas*

CA Assembly District 41: Chris Holden*

CA Assembly District 43: Laura Friedman*

One of the best in the Assembly on housing, environmental issues, and transportation. If Friedman is your assemblymember, vote for her with confidence.

CA Assembly District 45: No recommendation

Jesse Gabriel is running unopposed, but was the only candidate to snub Bike The Vote when he won this seat two years ago. DSA-LA also doesn't recommend him over him abstaining on police reform.

CA Assembly District 46: Adrin Nazarian*

CA Assembly District 50: Richard Bloom*

CA Assembly District 51: Wendy Carrillo* (unopposed)

CA Assembly District 53: Godfrey Santos Plata

Koreatown renter Godfrey Santos Plata is running an impressive progressive grassroots challenge to incumbent Miguel Santiago. While he might be a long shot within the context of establishment politics, a vote for Santos Plata helps remind Santiago of the progressive energy of this Downtown-centered district.

CA Assembly District 54: Tracy Bernard Jones

Incumbent Sydney Kamlager is a landlord who voted against rent control. Tracy Bernard Jones is a longshot, but one running as a socialist and supporter of Medicare for All.

CA Assembly District 59: Reggie Jones-Sawyer*

CA Assembly District 62: Autumn Burke*

CA Assembly District 63: Maria Estrada

Incumbent Anthony Rendon is the assemblymember responsible for shelving California's attempt at single-payer healthcare in 2018. Maria Estrada challenged him over that vote in 2018, and helped make a name for herself in the process. In this 2020 rematch, Estrada's progressive platform puts her in a stronger position for what is still a tough battle, but one worth fighting.

CA Assembly District 64: Fatima Iqbal-Zubair

In their recommendation of Fatima Iqbal-Zubair, DSA-LA highlighted her focus on environmental racism alongside incumbent Mike Gipson's funding by the fossil fuel lobby. Iqbal-Zubair is by far the better option.

CA Assembly District 66: Al Muratsuchi*

U.S. Congressional Representatives:

U.S. House District 22: Kim Mangone

Long-shot Democratic challenger to the awful Republican leader in the House, Kevin McCarthy.

U.S. House District 25 (special election): Christy Smith

U.S. House District 25 (regular primary): Christy Smith

This is the seat that was held until recently by Katie Hill, who resigned as she found herself a victim of revenge porn by her estranged husband. Assemblywoman Christy Smith is the leading Democratic candidate in what will be a very competitive race. Yes, you need to vote for this seat twice, once to fill the current vacant seat and then again for the regular primary to serve 2021-2023.

U.S. House District 27: Judy Chu*

U.S. House District 28: Maebe A. Girl

Silver Lake Neighborhood Council board member, Maebe A. Girl is running a progressive challenge to Congressman Adam Schiff. While Schiff may have made himself untouchable thanks to an admittedly strong effort in Trump's impeachment, Schiff is way more hawkish on foreign policy than I support and deserving of a reminder that his district is more progressive than he is.

U.S. House District 29: Angelica Maria Dueñas

It was revealed 3 years ago that incumbent Tony Cárdenas was accused of sexual abuse of a teenage girl in 2007. He won re-election 2 years ago regardless, but I still recommend a vote for Green party candidate Angelica Maria Dueñas.

U.S. House District 30: CJ Berina

Berina is running a long shot campaign on a Green New Deal platform, which should be a good reminder to incumbent Brad Sherman of where his constituents are at. Full disclosure: I do applaud Sherman for steadfast support of Loraine Lundquist in the City Council District 12 race.

U.S. House District 32: Emanuel Gonzales

Incumbent Grace Napolitano has been in Congress since 1999 and her campaign is pretty light on an actual platform (telling Voters' Edge your top priority is to "Improve infrastructure" is as good as saying nothing). Of the Primary challengers, Emanuel Gonzales stands out for his support of Medicare for All and a \$15 minimum wage.

U.S. House District 33: Ted Lieu*

U.S. House District 34: Jimmy Gomez*

U.S. House District 37: Karen Bass*

U.S. House District 38: Michael Tolar

Incumbent Linda Sánchez is likely to cruise to re-election, but deserves a rebuke for her votes in support of Trump's National Defense Authorization Acts. Michael Tolar supports Medicare for All and rent control.

U.S. House District 39: Gil Cisneros*

U.S. House District 40: Dr. Rodolfo Cortes Barragan

DSA-LA recommends Dr. Barragan as a progressive challenger to push incumbent Lucille Roybal-Allard left. Dr. Barragan is running on a platform of Medicare for All, rent control, and free college.

U.S. House District 43: Maxine Waters*

U.S. House District 44: Nanette Barragan*

U.S. House District 47: Peter Matthews

Mathews is a progressive author of a book called, "Dollar Democracy: With Liberty and Justice for Some," running on an Our Revolution-endorsed Green New Deal/Medicare for All platform.

Incumbent Alan Lowenthal does not even have a campaign site up and appears to be assuming re-election, which is all the reason to remind him that he needs to answer to constituents who are hungry for change.

L.A. County Offices:

L.A. County District Attorney: Rachel Rossi

It's hard to communicate just how terrible District Attorney Jackie Lacey has been, but the fact that she recently dismissed the obvious racial disparity in the justice system by saying that black people make "bad decisions" is a pretty good example of why Black Lives Matter has been protesting her for over a year. Rachel Rossi would be a welcome change as the first public defender to hold this post. George Gascón is aligned with Rossi on most issues and more likely to progress to a runoff, but I agree with the strategy that voting for Rossi is a reminder that Gascón needs to earn the progressive vote rather than tacking right.

L.A. County Supervisor 2: Holly Mitchell

California Senator Holly Mitchell has been described by her colleagues as the "moral compass and social conscience" of the California Legislature. Besides overseeing a \$30 billion County budget, this seat (opened up as Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas has termed out) will also carry a seat on the powerful Metro Board. Having someone at the County Board and Metro to ground decision-making will be transformative, and Senator Mitchell is the one who can help re-frame conversations around housing and transit to transform our region for the better.

L.A. County Supervisor 4: No recommendation

Incumbent Janice Hahn's awful decision in 2018 to prioritize South Bay access to LAX over broader citywide access from the Crenshaw line, despite a higher cost and less projected riders was

frustrating to me, and an embodiment of what frustrates me with the priorities of the Metro Board to deliver locally rather than thinking through transit rider experience. Hahn's only challenger is a pro-gun and anti-immigrant conservative who doesn't deserve your vote by any means.

L.A. County Supervisor 5: Darrell Park

Longshot environmentally focused Democrat seeking to unseat an awful Republican known for wasting taxpayer dollars by using an \$8k/hour helicopter to get around.

Superior Court Judges:

This used to be very hard to research until the great people at the LA Public Defenders Union started making recommendations through KNOCK.LA. My selections were further informed by a lengthy discussion at the Bike The Vote L.A. Ballot Party including input from an attorney with a similar progressive, empathy-oriented, bail-reform focus.

L.A. Judge Seat 17: Abstain/no recommendation (uncontested seat)

L.A. Judge Seat 42: Linda Liu Sun

Prosecutor who has focused on white collar criminals and aims to approach the bench from a standpoint of empathy. LA Public Defenders Union pick.

L.A. Judge Seat 72: Myanna Dellinger

Law professor with a strong critical mind. LA Public Defenders Union pick.

L.A. Judge Seat 76: Judge Mike Cummins

Cummins has received a lot of flack for the fact that he legally changed his name to "Judge" back in 2017 when he, a former Stanislaus County judge, was not allowed to list his title as a "former judge" on the ballot for San Luis Obispo DA. Knowing hard-headed lawyers, this actually sounds like a very lawyer thing to do in not wanting to get pushed around. The fact that he ran that race to challenge a DA that wasn't investigating inmate deaths makes me think Cummins sounds a lot better than the prosecutor he's up against.

L.A. Judge Seat 80: Klint James McKay

Administrative law judge with the blessing of the LA Public Defenders Union.

L.A. Judge Seat 97: Sherry Powell

Powell is a sex crimes prosecutor running against a conservative Republican. Reluctant LA Public Defenders Union pick.

L.A. Judge Seat 129: Ken Fuller

Fuller is an environmental and sex crimes prosecutor. LA Public Defenders Union pick.

L.A. Judge Seat 131: Abstain/no recommendation (uncontested seat)

L.A. Judge Seat 141: Abstain/no recommendation (uncontested seat)

L.A. Judge Seat 145: Troy Slaten

Slated is a criminal defense attorney up against a Deputy District Attorney who the LA Public Defenders Union noets was caught fabricating evidence - a huge red flag

L.A. Judge Seat 150: Tom Parsekian

Civil litigation attorney with the blessing of the LA Public Defenders Union

L.A. Judge Seat 162: Caree Harper

This is the one seat I differ with the LA Public Defenders Union based on research at a ballot party I hosted and input from a lawyer friend. Harper is endorsed by the East Area Progressive Dems, Dr. Melina Abdullah of Black Lives Matter-LA, and a number of prominent Democrats including Congresswoman Maxine Waters and Culver City Councilmember Daniel Lee. She has provided

pro-bono legal services to members of Black Lives Matter. The one shot against her that the conservative Metropolitan News Service highlights is about being found in contempt for trying to uphold her client's civil rights. That's the kind of empathy and passion I can get behind.

Democratic Party County Central Committees:

Sorry, I only did my own local committee, AD51, but below are some slate references for other districts.

Assembly District 41 DPCCC: check out [Democrats for Justice](#)

Assembly District 43 DPCCC: check out [United Democrats for the 43rd](#)

Assembly District 50 DPCCC: check out [Grassroots Democrats for County Central Committee](#)

Assembly District 51 DPCCC: (pick 7)

- Luis Lopez

A board member at TERA and an all around exceptional progressive advocate ([United Progressive Dems slate](#))

- Jessica Craven

An amazing environmental advocate who exposed the South Coast AQMD board in December for anti-transit bias ([United Progressive Dems slate](#))

- Seamus Garrity

Field rep for Laura Friedman and friend to the active transportation community

- Ron Birnbaum

A doctor who supports Medicare For All on the [AD51 People's Action slate](#) who I met a few years ago when he ran for the Assembly and generally impressed me

- Koreen Cea

On the [United Progressive Dems slate](#)

- M. (Mia) Livas Porter

On the [United Progressive Dems slate](#)

- Vicky Martinez

On the [United Progressive Dems slate](#)

Assembly District 53 DPCCC: check out [United Progressive Democrats](#)

Local Ballot Measures:

Los Angeles County Measure R - Increased Civilian Oversight of Sheriff: YES

This was actually put on the ballot due to the massive scandal over the past decade related to abuse of prisoners by the Sheriff's Dept, but is timely in that we now see how much of a disaster Sheriff Alex Villanueva is.

Los Angeles County Measure FD - Parcel Tax for Fire Protection: YES

This measure is only on the ballot for voters in unincorporated Los Angeles County and would place a parcel tax on those properties to fund \$134 million for firefighting, desperately needed in an era of increasing climate change. Requires a 2/3s approval threshold to pass thanks to 1978's Prop 13.

Burbank Measure I - Teacher Salary Funding: YES

Culver City Measure CC - First Responder Funding: NO

I'm aware that there are real world conditions to justify this ask of voters, but I can't get behind creating additional funding for policing that isn't directly tied to significant racial justice reform.

Gardena Measure G - Police & Other Funding: NO

Long Beach Measure A - Police Funding: NO
Long Beach Measure B - Arts Funding: YES

California Propositions:

Only one proposition this round.

CA Prop 13 - \$15B School Bond: YES

This “Safe Schools Healthy Learning” proposition is a one-time \$15 billion bond (no property tax impact) to raise money for building upgrades to improve earthquake safety for school and college buildings. Not to be confused with 1978’s Prop 13, or with the pending Prop 13 Reform/Split Roll (“Schools & Communities First”) proposition that will be on the November ballot.

President:

Everyone is focused on the presidential primary, which California will help decide for the first time in decades thanks to moving up this election from June to “Super Tuesday” on March 3rd. I’m assuming that everyone reading has already made up their mind and I’m not going to waste energy lobbying to change yours. Vote for who you believe will help bring about change.

President - Democratic Party: Elizabeth Warren or Bernie Sanders

* = Incumbent

Further reading:

- DSA-LA: https://www.dsa-la.org/2020_primary_voter_guide
- KNOCK.LA (Ground Game/LA Public Defenders Union-affiliated):
<https://knock-la.com/the-knock-la-los-angeles-progressive-voter-guide-for-the-march-2020-primary-7f2c3efc13cc>
- Bike The Vote L.A.: <https://www.bikethevote.com/voter-guide/>
- LA Podcast: <https://thelapod.com/posts/la-podcast-2020-voter-guide-primary-edition/>
- LA League of Conservation Voters: <http://lalcv.org/current-endorsements/>
- California League of Conservation Voters:
<https://www.ecovote.org/elections/current-endorsements/>
- Sierra Club: https://angeles.sierraclub.org/political_action/endorsements
- Sunrise Movement endorsements:
<https://medium.com/@sunrisemovementlosangeles/sunrise-los-angeles-march-3rd-primary-endorsements-1600172df391>
- LA Progressive Majority: <http://laprogressivemajority.org/>
- East Area Progressive Democrats: <https://www.eapd.la/endorsements>
- Calbike: https://www.calbike.org/take_action/bike-the-vote/
- Tom Bellino’s comparative spreadsheet:
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1nQ4r9cEdZqEms-lcb1LvMwmrFhJzo3IEh8ZWnXXvFoM/>

- John Palmer's comparative spreadsheet:
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1wpN4vIHGpdldqVwCD14RWKtj27TBKFHVJ6i8msv1pnQ/>
- Niall Huffman's guide:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TA36GCFSRMRmLMTH2THwhBcLzBa_BPCs6q5D5yncY3k/
- Kelsey Stafanson's guide: <http://yeskelsey.com/lavoterguide/>
- Lex Roman's guide:
<https://medium.com/@calexity/march-2020-election-resources-for-la-voters-4e327cb989fa>
- L.A. Taco guide: <https://www.lataco.com/la-voter-guide-2020/>
- L.A. Times endorsements (surprisingly, mostly terrible):
<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/endorsements/>
- Voter's Edge ballot info: <https://votersedge.org/ca/>
- Courage Campaign:
<https://progressivevotersguide.com/california/2020/primary/county/losangeles>