

POLITICAL INTERVIEW

Candidate Profile

Robert Garcia (AD-50)

Pronunciation:

- RO-bert Gar-SEE-uh

Proposed Ballot Designation:

- Governing Board Member, Etiwanda School District

Membership in Under-Represented Communities:

- Latinx man

Candidates in this Race:

- Robert Garcia (D)
- Adam Perez (D)

AD-50 Electoral History

2022 U.S. Senate General Election:

Alex Padilla (D): 56.86%, 51,824 votes

Mark Meuser (R): 43.14%, 39,318 votes

2022 Gubernatorial General Election:

Gavin Newsom (D): 55.17%, 51,436 votes

Brian Dahle (R): 44.83%, 41,792 votes

2020 Presidential Election:

Joe Biden (D): 61.53%, 113,982 votes

Donald Trump (R): 36.25%, 67,156 votes

2020 AD-50 General Election:

AD-50: Eloise Gomez Reyes (D): 56.92%,
51,340 votes

Sheela Stark (R): 43%, 38,851 votes



ABOUT ROBERT GARCIA

Robert is a son of immigrants, educator, and public servant who has spent his life making excellence in education his mission. His biggest influences have been his parents, who instilled a work ethic to excel in school and in life. Born to his mother at age 17, and his father who was denied an education past third grade, he thrived because of the sacrifices his working-class parents made to prioritize education. At 17, Robert became the first in his family to graduate high school.

Robert continued his education earning his Bachelor's degree in biology from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and Master's degree in public policy from the University of Southern California. Having volunteered to mentor high school students from schools in Los Angeles challenged with low educational outcomes, he was driven to become a teacher. In his 20 years as an educator, both as a math and science classroom teacher and current school administrator, he has led schools through transformational change and success.

In 2016, Robert was first elected to the Etiwanda School District Board of Trustees and re-elected in 2020 with nearly 70% of the vote. He served as Board President and led the school district through the pandemic while maintaining national and local recognition. During his tenure on the school board, his school district earned the California Exemplary District Award twice, as well as National Blue Ribbon School status for five schools. Robert is passionate about education and its role in strengthening communities. It is for that reason that Robert was drawn to serve. Robert is a Democrat running for State Assembly to continue his mission for excellence, prioritizing the needs of all in the Inland Empire. He is backed by Assemblymember Eloise Gómez Reyes and other community leaders throughout the district. He will fight to ensure safe neighborhoods, fully fund our schools, invest in homelessness reduction, create good-paying job opportunities while building a sustainable economy, and supporting our small businesses across the Inland Empire.

Robert and his wife, Samantha, and their three children live in Rancho Cucamonga.

**Biography sourced from Robert Garcia website*

THE DISTRICT: AD-50

AD-50 is in the Inland Empire, covering parts of San Bernardino County, including the whole Cities of Loma Linda and Colton and portions of the Cities of San Bernardino, Redlands, Rialto, and Ontario. Major population hubs include Fontana and Rancho Cucamonga. This district must comply with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, ensuring fair representation while balancing population and community interests. It is home to diverse communities with common concerns about affordable housing, wildfires, and rural living.

AD-50 DEMOGRAPHICS:

Party Registration in AD-50:

- Registration Advantage: Democrat +21.07%, 116,198 voters
- Democrat: 45.48%, 116,198 voters
- Republican: 24.41%, 62,382 voters
- No Party Preference: 21.83%, 55,788 voters
- Other: 6.6%, 16,872 voters

Demographics in AD-50

- Latinx: 52.6%
- Black: 10.1%
- White: 27.6%
- Asian: 8%
- Indigenous: 0.5%

State Legislature Overlaps:

- SD-19 - Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh (R) (13.54%)
- SD-22 - Sen. Susan Rubio (D- Eastern Los Angeles) (4.29%)
- SD-25 - Sen. Anthony Portantino (D-San Fernando and San Gabriel Valley) (3.57%)
- SD-29 - Sen. Josh Newman (D-Los Angeles, Orange, and San Bernardino) (75.47%)
- SD-31- Sen. Richard Roth (D-Riverside) (3.13%)

Congressional District Overlaps:

- CA-23 - Rep. Jay Obernolte (R) (12.51%)
- CA-28 - Rep. Judy Chu (D) (0.31%)
- CA-33 - Rep. Pete Aguilar (D) (52.88%)
- CA-35 - Rep. Norma Torres (D) (34.29%)

CAMPAIGN

Campaign Analysis:

- The progressive in this seat is terming out, so progressives are playing defense in this district.
- This Democrat-on-Democrat race is a top priority for our allies in labor, the environmental community, the criminal justice community, and other progressives. According to Target Book, it will likely be one of the most expensive races of the cycle.
- It is seen as a marquee contest between corporate Democrats (Perez) and Progressives (Garcia).
- The primary was a costly and competitive race between three candidates with outside groups spending close to \$1.8M:
 - Robert Garcia:
 - Received 41.95% of the vote.
 - Not targeted by any outside spending.
 - Adam Perez:
 - A corporate, law-and-order Democrat.
 - Received 28.98% of the vote.
 - Backed by \$1.3 million in outside spending.
 - Supporting Perez: Oil and gas, Big Agriculture, Chamber of Commerce, CA Realtors, CA Apartment Association, law enforcement, Phillip Morris, and PHARMA.
 - Opposing Perez: CA Consumer Attorneys PAC, California Environmental Voters, Smart Justice, and labor.
 - Dejonae Shaw:
 - A labor-backed Democrat.
 - Received 28.15% of the vote.
 - Backed by \$131,000 in outside spending.
 - Supporting Shaw: Labor, CA African American PAC.
- Progressives supported both Garcia and Shaw in the primary election while labor backed Shaw as she is a leader in SEIU. After Shaw lost in the primary, labor has fully coalesced behind Garcia, including SEIU, the California Labor Federation, and the California Nurses Association.
- Both Garcia and Perez have credible paths to victory:
 - Garcia needs to consolidate his and Shaw's voters. It is notable that Shaw, herself, has supported Perez.
 - Perez could create a coalition of Republicans, independents, and moderate Democrats (in 2022, the Republican candidate received 45% of the vote in this district.)
- Previously V4P-endorsed environmental justice champion Asm. Gomez Reyes, the current incumbent of AD-50, recruited Garcia to run for this seat.

Fundraising:

Robert Garcia's Fundraising:

- Self-Reported Fundraising from Campaign (Submitted Week of July 8):
 - Total Raised: \$180,00
 - Cash on Hand: \$140,200
- Anticipated Budget: At least \$400,000 in primary, \$600,000 in general

Sources Chambers won't accept campaign contributions from:

- Correctional officer unions
- National Rifle Association and Gun Lobby
- Oil and other Fossil Fuels
- Police officer unions or associations
- Tobacco

- Garcia states that he has worked in the district for over 12 years and has served on the Etiwanda School District Board of Trustees since 2016, twice being elected to represent a significant area within AD-50.
- The Assembly Speaker does not get involved in many Democrat-on-Democrat races, but he has endorsed Garcia in this race. This should be helpful in Garcia's ability to fundraise.
- Garcia has been elected twice to represent a significant area within AD-50

Select Endorsements

- California Democratic Party
- Several labor groups including CA Teachers Association and CA Nurses Association,
- California Environmental Justice Alliance Action
- California Environmental Voters (formerly CLCV)
- California Latino Legislative Caucus (appears to be a sole endorsement)
- California Progressive Legislative Caucus
- Planned Parenthood of Orange & San Bernardino Counties
- Reproductive Freedom for All
- Equality California
- Rep. Pete Aguilar (CA-33)
- Rep. Robert Garcia (CA-42)
- Sen. Maria Elena Durazo (Los Angeles), previously V4P-endorsed
- Asm. Robert Rivas (Anaheim), Speaker of the California State Assembly, previously V4P-endorsed
- Asm. Eloise Gomez Reyes (Fontana), previously V4P-endorsed, Incumbent
- Asm. Alex Lee (Fremont), previously V4P-endorsed
- Asm. Rick Zbur (Santa Monica), previously V4P-endorsed
- Asm. Tina McKinnor (Inglewood), previously V4P-endorsed

POLICY BACKGROUND AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Overall Policy Take-Aways

- Garcia's answers on our questionnaire indicate that he is a strong progressive. He states that he would either author or co-author nearly every single bill and policy we ask about on our questionnaire. His answers on criminal justice and environmental justice particularly stand out. Asm. Reyes' endorsement of Garcia is a strong signal that he is a trustworthy progressive.

Top Campaign Priorities

[from website and from questionnaire]:

- Housing - Invest in reducing homelessness while building affordable housing, as it continues to be elusive in our region.
- Education - the future of our state depends on fully funding our schools.

Scorecard Ratings for Incumbent Asm. Eloise Gomez Reyes (D):

Assemblymember Gomez Reyes has been an important progressive leader, particularly in environmental justice. Her effective collaboration with V4P and allies has driven significant legislative successes. Her departure from the Assembly creates a critical need to replace her with another strong progressive. Failing to do so risks losing a key advocate and vote.

- [American Civil Liberties Union](#): 100%
- [California Environmental Justice Alliance](#): A (93%)
- [California Labor Federation](#): 100%
- [California League of Conservation Voters](#): 99% lifetime
- [Courage California](#): A+
- [Chamber of Commerce](#):

- Jobs & Economy - good-paying jobs that drive and sustain our economy, are directly needed in the Inland Empire.

- In accordance with Chamber: 0
- Not in accordance with Chamber: 12
- **Equality California**: 100%
- **Planned Parenthood**: 100%

Securing Championing a Healthy Climate and Environment

- Garcia states he will author or co-author all the environmental bills listed in our questionnaire, showcasing his strong commitment to environmental issues. He identifies warehouses as the greatest environmental concern in his district and states that he would author and co-author legislation to address this threat. Because he would represent one of the districts most heavily impacted by warehouses, his stance demonstrates political courage. Legislators with warehouses in their district can often temper their votes on this subject matter. However, his leadership would likely help influence other legislators—who do not have warehouse industry interests in their districts and therefore have less to lose—to vote in favor of these protections.

Ensuring Social and Economic Justice for All

- The responses Garcia provides to the three public safety issues he wants to address are impactful and are even stronger than the current criminal justice policies being considered in the legislature. This indicates that he would be a great vote and potential leader in this area. His answers include:
- “Abolishing” the militaristic training law enforcement receives;
- Greater oversight and accountability measures to investigate allegations of misconduct by law enforcement, and
- Barring prosecutorial misconduct.
- He states that he would author and/or co-author all of the issues we raise in the social and economic justice arena. This includes contentious issues including rent control, bills to protect fast food workers, closing the corporate tax loophole, and a wealth tax.
- Garcia notes that, while serving his first year on the school board, he saw that many LGBTQIA+ students were struggling with their identity and did not have anywhere to turn. Because of this, he successfully pushed for trained professional counselors at every middle school in the district, ensuring LGBTQIA+ youth had a trusted adult on campus who would talk with students confidentially.
- It is clear that Garcia is an economic justice proponent, as he states that he would author or co-author bills that implement rent control, a wealth tax, and stand with low-wage workers as they fight against wage theft, poverty wages and workplace hazards. Each of these issues are fights against well-funded and well-organized opponents.

Other

- Garcia shares in our questionnaire that he worked to unionize employees at a charter school when he was a teacher, exemplifying courage.

Candidate Interview Discussion Questions

1. Thank you for taking the time to meet with us! *We are members of Voices for Progress: major political donors, business leaders, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, and other prominent individuals who unite to champion a healthy climate and environment, strengthen our democracy, and ensure economic and social justice for all.* **What are the major recent developments in your campaign? Any setbacks or breakthroughs?**

Candidate Specific Questions

2. We know that your district is the epicenter for warehouses. We really appreciate that this is a big concern for you. V4P has supported Assemblymember Reyes' efforts in addressing this issue in the past. **When you win, will you prioritize this issue? And what do you see as the biggest challenges in addressing the warehouse issue, and what support will you need?**
3. Each year, the Chamber of Commerce targets certain pro-environment, labor, and tax legislation, labeling these bills as 'Job Killers' and working to weaken or defeat them. Legislators respond differently: some rally their supporters to pass the strongest bill possible, while others compromise by weakening their bills to get them off the list. **What would your approach be if one of your bills were labeled a 'Job Killer'?**
4. Which CA state legislator best reflects your values and leadership style? Why? How do you see yourself fitting into the political dynamics of Sacramento?
 - FOLLOW UP: Would you join the Legislative Progressive Caucus should you be elected to the state legislature?
5. If you could serve on any committees in the Assembly, which would you choose and why?
6. How much do you need to raise to win? How far are you from your fundraising goal and how do you plan to get there?

Questions for All Candidates

7. What unique qualities or perspectives do you bring to this race that distinguish you from your opponent?
8. Do you know of any polling in this race? What results are you able to share?
9. How do you expect independent expenditures to impact your campaign and the overall dynamics of this race?
10. Looking ahead to November's general elections, talk to us about your campaign. **What do you see as your paths to victory?** What barriers, systemic or otherwise, do you face heading into the general election?
11. Many candidates get elected and go to the legislature with progressive ideals. They then are repeatedly told by political consultants and conservative industry lobbyists that the only way to rise in the ranks is

by moderating themselves. This pressure can lead them to stray from their values and the reasons why voters elected them. **How do you plan to resist this external pressure and stay true to your values?**

12. Evan Minton is our Sacramento representative for Voices for Progress, and you will primarily work with him. On occasion, V4P members will contact you directly about our priority legislation. As an endorsed candidate, we would ask you to keep an open line of communication with Evan and V4P members. Will you commit to this? What is the best way for us to be in touch to ensure effective collaboration and timely communication?
13. Legislators have 12-year term limits. At the end of your term, **what are three issues that, if you successfully address them, will make you feel your tenure was a success?**

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