

Assembly Candidate Answers

1. What is your position on SB 1186?

(SB 1186 is bill pertaining to surveillance. The bill would require public debate and a vote by local elected leaders prior to law enforcement's acquisition of new surveillance technology. The bill also requires written rules for existing surveillance technology in order to curtail the possibility of civil liberties and civil rights abuses by local law enforcement).

Beckles — (Score: 5) Yes, I support.

Wicks — (Score: 5) I support SB 1186: this bill gives Californians needed power to participate in the conversation about our law enforcement--including our college police departments, the Department of Justice, and the California Highway Patrol--uses surveillance technology. While innovative technology can help keep us safe and make our public systems more efficient if used in a smart way, this should never come at the cost of people's rights to privacy and protection from discrimination. This bill creates necessary transparency, oversight, and accountability mechanisms to require public debate before law enforcement agencies use new surveillance technology like drones or social media surveillance, and written rules that outline new technology's specific uses how people's civil rights will be upheld in these uses. Especially when our immigrant neighbors and friends are being threatened at new heights by new discriminatory and unjust deportation policies, we must protect all Californians' civil and privacy rights in their communities.

2. Do you support a full repeal of the Costa-Hawkins Law as well as the Ellis Act? If not, why not?

(These two California state laws pertain to rental housing. The Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act sets limits on the kind of rent control policies cities are able to impose. The Ellis Act allows landlords to evict residential tenants by choosing to withdraw their properties from the rental housing market.)

Beckles — (Score: 4) Yes.

Wicks — (Score: 4) I strongly support reforms of Costa-Hawkins to ensure that tenants are not unfairly evicted or priced out of their homes. I do share the concerns raised by the NAACP, the Building and Construction Trade Unions and affordable housing experts that a full repeal of Costa Hawkins could lead to unintended consequences: a

slowing or all-out stopping of any new home construction or incentivizing developers to build condos instead of rental units. This would thereby exacerbate our housing crisis, and making affordable rental housing even harder for those who need it to find.

One potential fix that could be implemented through Costa-Hawkins reform would include a rolling date for buildings to come under local rent stabilization laws, as opposed to the 1995 fixed date. This would ensure new housing can be financed and built to support community needs while still empowering local municipalities to implement appropriate rent stabilization measures. This should be done in tandem with implementing anti-gouging measures that prevent profit-driven landlords from unfairly raising rents above a certain cap.

I also strongly support increasing tenant protections and believe we should repeal or reform the Ellis Act to close loopholes and ensure that landlords cannot unfairly evict tenants. We also must take other action to increase tenant protections, such as significantly increasing and expanding the Renters Tax Credit (RTC) and setting rates based on metro area. The RTC is currently only \$60 per person or \$120 for a family. Homeowners get the financial benefit of deducting their mortgage interest. Renters need relief too. This work is being pushed at the federal level by Kamala Harris, and we as Californians should push similar efforts at the state level as well. Putting real money into the pockets of our renters can go along way to helping those out who are \$700 away from falling over a precipice and spiraling into poverty.

Lastly, to prevent unscrupulous landlords from wrongly kicking tenants out of their homes, I would also push for legal services for folks facing unfair eviction. We know this works. We've seen success in the Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Act pilot program designed to help low-income Californians facing high-stakes civil cases. The results were a drastic increase in the likelihood of settlement, the majority of which reduced back-owed rent or helped protect tenants' credit by keeping eviction notices off the public record. Among Shriver program clients, 67% of cases settled, as compared to 34% of people who represented themselves. While all Shriver clients received eviction notices, only 6% were ultimately evicted from their homes. Let's bring this to scale and really help those that need it.

With a 40% increase in homelessness in Alameda County alone in the last two years, we must do everything we can do end displacement and keep folks in their homes.

3. Do you support anti-gouging legislation that would protect tenants from excessive rent increases?

Beckles — (Score: 4) Yes.

Wicks — (Score: 5) Yes, absolutely- I would author or support legislation that would make it illegal for any landlord to increase rents beyond a certain cap (as determined by a formula.) This is an important measure to protect all tenants from excessive rent increases driven by profit-seeking landlords, and would be a broad protection that any tenant would be assured of, instead of being subject to the specifics of a local city's rent control policies. We absolutely need this legislation in Sacramento to show all Californians that we are ready to put tenants first in our ideas and our actions. I would support implementing anti-gouging policies in tandem with other strong tenant protection policies, such as expanding the Renters Tax Credit and providing legal protection to any tenant facing unjust eviction. To solidify my positions on this and other progressive housing policies, I consistently consult with Carol Galante, the Faculty Director of the UC Berkeley Turner Center and the Housing Commissioner at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development under President Obama, who has endorsed my campaign.

4. What will you do to enact single payer health care in California?

Beckles — (Score: 4) Help build the movement that can pressure the legislature and Governor to turn this into law.

Wicks — (Score: 5) I will fight tirelessly to bring single-payer health care to California as soon as possible, and I fully support Medicare for All federally. A single-payer system has the potential to lower cost, confusion, and uncertainty for our citizens. It would ensure health care security for working people and health equity for all communities, make our companies more competitive, and free Californians from being tethered to their employer for health care, thereby allowing them to do what they do best — take risks, innovate, and change the world. This is the vision we should all be striving for, and as someone who has spent her career bringing people together to pass progressive policy, I believe I'm uniquely suited to push us towards a single-payer health care system in Sacramento.

I believe I am the strongest healthcare candidate in this race--I have been endorsed by leading health care organizations including Planned Parenthood and California Health+ Advocates, who champion community clinics like LifeLong Medical throughout our state. If elected, I will tackle tough spending questions and champion creative policy solutions

to keep moving us towards a full single-payer system where every Californian has access to quality health care.

While we work towards this goal, there is an intermediate and immediate step I believe we must take now to ensure our citizens are protected from Trump's disastrous policies- we should immediately create a "Medi-Cal public option" to ensure affordable and quality care open to all state residents.

While California has one of the strongest and most competitive exchanges set up by the ACA, Trump's actions threaten to destabilize people's access to health care and our robust social safety net. A Medi-Cal public option would mean the government would take the risks, set the rules and pay out the claims. This would live on the exchanges and compete with private insurers, many of whom are risk-averse and could leave the marketplace at any moment. Any state resident could opt for this plan, receiving the same quality care that that current Medicare recipients receive. This could serve as an important and necessary next step on our way toward a single payer plan, while at the same time stabilizing our exchanges and protecting us from the President Trump's power grab aimed at helping the wealthy at the expense of the poor. I strongly support AB2472, which would push us forward on this important step by enabling Covered California to conduct a feasibility study for a California public option.

In conjunction with implementing a public option, we need to take immediate steps to reduce medical price gouging to bring down health care costs. California can also lead the way in exploring a transition to a fee-for-service system, as opposed to a prospective payment system, which could help us prioritize preventative care and reduce hospital readmissions rates and long- term healthcare expenditures.

Once Californians' access to quality health care is protected through these steps, we must take creative and bold action to explore additional revenue streams to fully fund a single-payer system, which could include closing the corporate loophole in Prop 13, reducing our prisons and corrections expenditures, and reassessing inequitable tax policies. We will need to conduct a more robust analysis of expected costs and savings to get a clear roadmap of how much money we will need and how we should allocate it. And we'll also have to get a federal waiver to reallocate Medicare funding into a single-payer system — a move that will take time, given our current federal administration. I will remain committed to working continuously to make this and the other progressive health care goals a reality so that we can get to a single payer system as soon as possible.

5. What is your position on the City of Oakland's attempts to block Phil Tagami and the Oakland Bulk and Oversized Terminal (OBOT) from shipping coal (that would be transported through Richmond and Berkeley) through the Port of Oakland?

Beckles — (Score: 5) Support

Wicks — (Score: 5) I signed the No Coal in Oakland letter and fully support the City of Oakland's efforts to block the shipment of coal through the Port of Oakland. To allow this to happen would be injustice, plain and simple. Our West Oakland community already breathes disproportionately dirty air caused by all the heavy-polluting vehicles in the area, and it is literally killing our community members-- research shows that West Oakland children younger than 5 are hospitalized for asthma twice as much as others in the county. If this coal export project is implemented, West Oakland residents would be exposed daily to significant coal dust and would be at even greater risk of health crises ranging from decreased lung capacity to increased childhood bronchitis to heart disease. We cannot let this happen.

The No Coal in Oakland campaign takes critical action to address this inequity, and to make concrete California's commitment to a clean energy future. Our fossil-fuel-dependent economy has created a public health crisis throughout California, If we are truly serious about living up to our leadership on national and global environmental and clean energy goals, then we must take concrete local steps like this one to eliminate high-pollution transportation and dirty fossil fuels from our communities.

In this and other legislative measures, I will be a strong and relentless champion for steering California toward a clean, renewable energy future, protecting our bays, coastlines, and public land, and fighting for environmental justice in our communities. See my environmental and energy platform for more details on my legislative priorities.

6. Would you support legislation that transfers responsibility for single-use plastic products to manufacturers in the way that redemption value is applied to bottles?

Beckles — (Score: 5) Yes

Wicks — (Score: 5) Yes, I would support legislation like this that reduces or eliminates our use of single-use plastic products. In 2014, California took important steps to

become the first state to ban plastic bags, we have had a Consumer Redemption Value program since 1986, and the legislature just passed a bill that bans plastic straws in most restaurants. We are a state that leads the way nationally and globally on expanding recycling and sustainability practices and products, and the legislation suggested here could move us further on that path.

7. How do you think California can protect marginalized groups in the current climate, e.g. immigrants, Muslims, transgender people?

Beckles — (Score: 3) We have to do more than simply pay lip-service. We have to be prepared to take mass action and civil disobedience if necessary to protect anyone terrorized by the right.

Wicks — (Score: 5) As the current president continues expanding his list of who does and does not belong in the United States, California must stand firm in protecting vulnerable members of our community from attack and unjustified deportation. I strongly support California's actions to successfully pass a law declaring itself a sanctuary state, and its work to uphold that law in the face of Trump's attempt to dismantle it. We must reject the politics of hate and fear, and we can do that through responsible legislation that protects crime victims and keeps undocumented immigrants out of the shadows. Our strength is our diversity, and our diversity is reflected in our vibrant immigrant communities. I will do everything in my power to make immigrants from all corners of the globe feel welcome here.

In the face of Trump's abhorrent normalization of bigotry and racism, we also need to take steps to protect the civil liberties and rights of every Californian, especially those who are being unjustly targeted for their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. The rate of hate crimes has increased for the past three years in California, and the numbers we have likely don't even capture the full picture, due to underreporting. We are hailed nationally and globally as a progressive state that welcomes diversity, but that means nothing unless we show our commitment to these values through our actions.

We must facilitate better tracking of hate crimes in our state-- I applaud our legislators for recently passing AB 1985, which took great steps in these efforts--and do more to increase prosecution and consequences for hate crimes. That also means we must equip our Attorney General's office with the funding they need to continue litigation against discriminatory rules from Trump's administration. And we must also address the problem of hate crimes in our schools--in the past year, almost 8% of hate crimes

occured in our grade schools. This is unacceptable, and we must fund and structure better bias training statewide for our educators and increase the number of counselors and social workers in our schools who can support student victims.

Finally, we must do more to protect and empower marginalized groups by addressing the disparities in access, quality, and outcomes that exist in all of our public systems. If elected, I would consider every state issue through an equity lens, and will insist that all our reforms, from reforming our criminal justice system to investing in our public schools, includes strong mechanisms for equity. See my priorities page to learn how I would do this in each issue area.

Unscored Questions for Assembly Candidates

(The following questions were included to provide voters with additional relevant information on the candidates. El Cerrito Progressives chose not to score these questions as we have not taken a position as an organization on these issues.)

A. What is your view of the role of charter schools? Have you received money from any groups that promote charter schools?

Beckles — I am for a moratorium on the expansion of charter schools. I believe that taken together the charter schools are undermining real public education. I accept no money from charters or charter-supported PACS.

Wicks — In order to truly invest in our public school system, we desperately need charter school reforms. We need to immediately outlaw for-profit charter schools- I support AB406 which does just this, and which I urge Governor Brown to sign. I strongly believe we need more accountability for all charter schools. We need to subject charter schools to the Brown Act, the Public Records Act and the Political Reform Act. The law governing California's charter schools was passed in 1993; we have had zero reforms to this law and it needs to be fixed. We need to make it easier to identify poor performing charters and shut them down. And I believe charter school teachers should be unionized. We also need to address the funding issues at the local level to ensure traditional public schools get the funding they desperately need.

Fundamentally, we must significantly invest in our public schools through a multi-pronged approach — this includes boosting per pupil spending, paying our teachers more, providing housing opportunities for teachers, investing in early childhood

education, and ensuring all low and middle-income students can go to college for free. We can and must do this by closing the commercial loophole on Proposition 13, which has withheld crucial resources that we need to truly serve our kids for too many years.

I am the proud product of California's public schools — from preschool to community college, and I will be sending my daughter to public schools. So the debate about how we properly fund and protect our public education system is personally important for my daughter's future and for me.

Moreover, I have not taken any contributions from charter organizations or pro-charter organizations. Some of my detractors are trying to spread mistruths about contributions to my campaign from Govern for California (GFC), an organization that supports a wide range of public policy issues facing California, including an increase in more housing (SB 827) and the ability to expand midwifery (AB 2682). I want to be clear--Govern for California is not a pro- charter advocacy organization, and their donors have also given to many Democratic and progressive leaders including Senator Kamala Harris, Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom, Governor Jerry Brown, Senator Elizabeth Warren and President Obama.

B. How would you characterize your philosophy and style of engaging with colleagues with whom you disagree?

Beckles —I believe in civil discussions with people with whom I have to work and cooperate where there are common goals. But many things are a conflict of interest and power and in these cases it is important to stand on principle.

Wicks — I am from a small town in rural Northern California, which is a majority pro-Trump town. Many of the community members I grew up around have political values and opinions with which I staunchly disagree. But I know from my upbringing in this community and from my 20+ years of being a grassroots organizer, that we can still work with people with whom we disagree and find commonalities where we can make positive change, if we truly listen to each other and dig a little deeper past the surface. I truly believe that even in today's political climate, we as a state and a country have more in common than we realize, and that we can use what unites us to find our way out of the wilderness.

Throughout my career in organizing and politics, I never compromised on my progressive values or objectives, but I worked every day to dig past my first perceptions of colleagues who disagreed with me, to build relationships and trust with these people,

and to find points of commonality that we could use to build coalitions and create lasting positive change. These skills helped me in my role as Deputy Director of the White House Office of Public Engagement during President Obama's administration, when I brought a diverse set of stakeholders and advocates from across the country together to support and eventually pass the Affordable Care Act, established the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and get Justice Sonia Sotomayor confirmed as the first Latina Supreme Court Justice. It is helping me in my campaign today as I have traveled to more than 170 living rooms up and down the district to listen to a diverse set of voices and conversations about district issues; and I believe it will give me the ability, as an Assemblywoman, to successfully pass bold policies that move the needle on the reforms our district and state care most about.

If elected, I will set bold progressive goals, and I will use my grassroots organizing experience and skills to build relationships with legislators and stakeholders, find common ground, and build coalitions that turn these goals into concrete progressive policy for our California communities.

C. What is the first bill you would author?

Beckles — As a new legislator, my first job would be to determine what is in process that I can give my full support to (Possibly Single-Payer, or Criminal Justice Reform). Then I would work to build support for a Housing for All program. (Please see my platform)

Wicks — I would immediately author legislation to push us towards single-payer health care and protect the ACA through the creation of a public option and an individual state mandate. As the federal administration continues to destroy essential ACA protections and strip vulnerable Californians of health care, getting a public option in place now is critical to put California on a solid path towards single-payer, address the significant health disparities that exist in our state, and protect access to health care for all our communities. With a public option, any state resident could opt for this plan, receiving the same quality care that that current Medicare recipients receive. And because Trump's tax bill repealed the ACA's individual mandate--which ensured that our health care system includes everyone and keeps premiums low-- we also need to pass an individual mandate in California. Other states like New Jersey and Vermont have already taken this important step--we need to step up our game on health care reform and do the same, and I am ready and eager to champion these efforts.

The next bill I would author would involve significantly expanding California's Renter Tax Credit program. Currently the renter tax credit is a drop in the bucket - only resulting in \$60 for an individual and \$120 for a family. This help is next to meaningless for a family struggling to to pay their rent each month. Kamala Harris is pushing critical legislation on this at the federal level, but we also need to expand our state program and re-adjust income levels for eligibility, to provide real relief for families paying increasingly high rents.