

**Santa Monicans for Renters' Rights
Rent Control Board Questionnaire - 2026**



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Office: Rent Control Board
Year: 2026**

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Did you include the requested Additional Materials? Yes XX or No

☐ Please email completed Questionnaire and Additional Materials
to smrrinfo@gmail.com

Your Candidacy

1. What is your understanding of the role of a rent control board member?

Rent Control Board members play several roles. The first is quasi-judicial. Board members act as neutral arbiters when a landlord and tenant are in dispute, hearing and deciding cases from both sides. In practice this often ends up being about requested rent decreases from tenants due to services being cut, or units not being kept up. Another role is to administer the General Adjustment, which now has a ceiling at 3%. But the Board can also cap the dollar increase at a flat dollar amount instead, so that tenants aren't hit with enormous rent increases. The Board (and its members) also make sure to keep track of the official rent records for the rent control housing stock.

I see the role as much more than administrative, though. The Board and its members also have real power to strengthen tenant protections, and I intend to use it. The Board can close gaps that harm renters, like it did recently by limiting how much accumulated banked increase a landlord can apply at once. The Board can also improve tenant education, and strengthen enforcement against violations and tenant harassment.

Board members can also use their visibility and standing to advocate for policies that positively affect renters (and similarly to oppose those policies that negatively affect renters), even when the policies don't fall in the purview of the Board. They can use their influence on the City Council and the state legislature regarding laws that affect rent-controlled housing. That piece of the job is something I'm particularly enthusiastic about and believe I can bring my skill set to.

2. Why are you running for Rent Control Board?

I strongly believe in rent control, and I've become very concerned about the city's housing and neighborhood issues overall. We face unprecedented risks to our housing

stock because of new state laws that encourage large dense market rate housing. The potential loss of Santa Monica's historic rent-controlled housing stock and resulting displacement of existing residents, which these laws exacerbate, is especially concerning to me. I care about the people who face displacement from our rent control units, who are often the very people - our most vulnerable poor and senior populations - who have the least ability to withstand such displacement.

I also care about rent control in general, because I have lived its difference. On the open market my rent jumped 50% in a single year. I downsized to a place smaller than a one-bedroom just to hold my costs steady, only for the landlord to sell it out from under me for about a million dollars. After being displaced again and again, I made a deliberate choice and sought out a rent-controlled apartment, in search of the stability the open market had never given me. That stability changed my life. It's where I felt secure enough to get a dog, where I had my first child, where my husband and I built a family and saved toward a home of our own. The roots I have in Santa Monica today exist because rent control gave me the ground to grow them. I want this kind of opportunity for stability for everyone who lives in Santa Monica.

Rent Control is also central to Santa Monica's identity. It's what keeps our city livable for people who aren't high earners and allows us to maintain our historic economic diversity which I find to be one of the most compelling features of our community. I'm running for the Rent Control Board to defend that.

I will be an advocate for the education of rent-controlled renters, so they can know their rights and how to use them. When a landlord offers a buyout, I'll make sure tenants see the full windfall driving it, so they can negotiate for a fair share of it, not a fraction. And I'll fight to get Santa Monica's right-to-counsel and rental-debt assistance to at-risk tenants as quickly and surely as possible, before a notice becomes an eviction. I know firsthand that rent-controlled renters care about the livability of their neighborhoods as much as anyone else in this city. They aren't passing through, and I want to be a strong voice on the Rent Control Board to make sure it stays that way.

Finally, I want to bring additional rigor to the housing debates that shape rent control. I don't accept the simple story that building more market-rate housing will, on its own, protect our lowest-income renters from rising prices. In a high-demand city like Santa Monica, new luxury development can raise land values and displacement pressure on exactly the rent-controlled tenants we want to protect. Supply matters, but the kind of supply we fight for matters even more. And no new supply can be a substitute for defending rent-controlled housing and the people in it. I hope to be a voice on the Board for that perspective.

3. What skills, background, and experience do you possess that prepare you for this office?

Over the last year and a half, I've put a lot of time into understanding how housing works in Santa Monica and what really drives what gets built here. I've talked with many people to get a better grasp on the landscape, including the folks who fought for our original rent control law, people currently on the Rent Control Board, former Rent Control Board members, every City Council member serving right now, plenty of residents living in rent-controlled units, and the major players in affordable housing. I wanted to understand what the city needs and how we actually get it done. That work is exactly why I can see clearly what headwinds rent control faces: there are forces that want to get rid of rent control completely, and others that would let developers tear down our rent-controlled housing and displace tenant households, including a lot of long-time senior renters who are the most vulnerable people we have. So I'd come in already knowing what we're up against.

My professional experience includes 15 years as a writer. The skills I've gained in that time translate to the Rent Control Board in a number of ways. Communication is an essential part of any political job, being able to convey messaging in particular. Beyond that, one of the skills of fiction writing is imagining scenarios from different peoples' points of view. This will be useful in tenant/landlord disputes as well as in policy advocacy.

I've been active through my union, the Writers Guild, including going on strike for better wages and health care for all members, and supporting the efforts of other unions. That experience taught me what it means to organize and hold the line for people's economic security, which is the same instinct I'd bring to protecting renters.

Television is also intensely collaborative. A writers' room only works if everyone listens, builds on each other's ideas, and reaches something together. That's the same temperament good board work takes, and it's one I have, and will bring to the Board.

4. What sets you apart from the others running for Rent Control Board?

My personal experience that I described earlier (of seeking out a rent-controlled unit after multiple experiences of displacement) sets me apart. That experience cemented the importance of rent control for me, and its value for anyone and everyone, and deeply informs my perspective.

I also have a strong command of many of the state housing laws that have passed in the last several years. I know how to think about their interplay with each other and our own local laws. It will serve the Rent Control Board well to have someone with this kind of knowledge, as we work to educate renters, and to influence our City Council and the state legislature itself on how to protect renters in the face of these laws.

Finally, I am raising a young family in Santa Monica right now, which gives me a direct feel for how rent control policy lands on households with children. For a family, losing a rent-controlled unit isn't just a move, it means uprooting kids from their school and trying to find a two- or three-bedroom at a price that essentially doesn't exist anymore. Families need space, and space is the hardest thing to replace affordably, so when they're displaced they are very likely to leave Santa Monica for good. I will bring this perspective to the Board, and will always think through how any given policy might affect families with young kids.

5. List each organization other than SMRR whose endorsement you have sought and whether or not you completed a questionnaire for that organization. Provide a copy of any questionnaire(s) you submitted to any other organization(s).

Santa Monica Democratic Club (yes)

6. Please list your main funders, endorsers, and supporters, and provide an overview of your campaign's financial progress to date.

I haven't pursued funding yet.

I have endorsements or statements of support from the following people:

- Denny Zane, Co-Founder of Santa Monicans for Renters Rights nearly fifty years ago and a former Mayor of Santa Monica.
- Michael Tarbet, Co-Founder of Santa Monicans for Renters Rights
- Michael Soloff, Co-Chair Santa Monicans for Renters Rights, and V.P. of Santa Monica Democratic Club

7. Will you accept donations from developers and/or their paid lobbyists for your campaign?

No.

8. Please provide a list of all organizations with which you are a member, along with a description of leadership positions held, whether related to your civic, community or professional endeavors.

SMRR, Santa Monica Democratic Club, Stonewall Democratic Club, Grant PTA, ACLU, The Neighborhood Taskforce (board member), Friends of Sunset Park,

SMRR

1. How long have you been a member of SMRR? Please outline the extent of your relationship and engagement with SMRR.

I've been a SMRR member since May 2025, and have attended nearly every Steering Committee meeting since then. I participated in the sub-committee to look at how the Trump administration's cuts would affect our Section 8 voucher subsidies, and how we might protect our at-risk residents. I volunteered to be a part of the subcommittee that was proposed for Santa Monica College, but as far as I know that hasn't materialized. I've read many of the letters SMRR has submitted on various policy issues. I've followed the advice SMRR has given to non-SMRR events that SMRR has an interest in, including the panel that took place on the new homeless services certificate program at SMC (which I would never have known about, if not for the SMRR email about it).

When I first joined, I was quiet, listening in on the calls more than participating with them, but I've become increasingly participatory, asking questions and raising points in the meetings.

2. Do you pledge, if elected, to attend SMRR's monthly Steering Committee meetings to provide the Rent Control Board report (in rotation with other SMRR supported Rent Control Board members)?

Yes. I would hope to. The kind of dialogue and education I have witnessed during SMRR calls with various members of the Rent Control Board has been very helpful.

3. Do you pledge, if elected, to discuss major policy issues related to your office with SMRR leaders prior to making decisions?

Definitely. I can't see making decisions about Rent Control without SMRR leaders input.

Rent Control and Tenants Rights

1. Do you support Santa Monica's rent control law? Why or why not?

I definitely support Santa Monica's rent control law. We still face many of the same

conditions in Santa Monica that led to the enactment of Rent Control in the first place: astronomically high prices, inflated land value, and no end in sight to the demand to live in Santa Monica.

Rent control is what lets people who aren't wealthy stay in Santa Monica, and it protects the historic economic diversity I value so much here. And it isn't only current tenants who benefit. Future renters do too, and so does the city, because when renters aren't bracing for the next massive increase, they can actually build a life here.

My own experience with rent control and the stability it provided my life and family is foundational to my belief in and support for rent control. I believe it is critical for the city to protect this essential law.

2. Have you ever taken a proactive role to protect Santa Monica tenants? If so, please describe specifically what you did.

I was an early and proactive opponent of SB79, in large part because of how devastating the original version of it was for rent controlled renters and our rent control stock. The original version would have pretty much obliterated Santa Monica's current housing entirely, and it would have come down particularly hard on nearly every Rent Control building there is, in SM, and possibly in other California cities as well. I've never let up my opposition to this law because of how little care its authors and supporters gave to displacement risks for rent controlled renters and how equally little thought was put into how the law might affect neighborhoods (which renters also care about). I've spoken at City Council meetings on the issue, I've attended Planning Commission meetings about implementation plans.

Another example of proactive protection of renters is that just recently, when I saw a new demolition sign at a rent controlled building on Ocean Park Blvd, I was immediately concerned for the tenants and the housing itself, so I parked my car nearby to investigate. My impulse was immediate and proactive to make sure everything being done was actually allowed. A small action like that pales in comparison to the much more significant actions of many of our past and present tenant advocates, but it speaks to how I feel.

3. What can you point to that should give Santa Monica renters and their allies confidence that you are truly committed to renters' rights and Santa Monica's rent control law?

My own history when it comes to seeking out a rent controlled apartment (as opposed to a market rate apartment) says a lot about the value that I place on

rent control, and the way that I see it as helping lives. My self-driven persistent advocacy against SB79 and how it would affect rent control units in the city is another indicator, and the fact that I kept doing that long after my own neighborhood was taken out of the map of the affected area in which SB79 would apply. I also recently worked to find a different great candidate for the Rent Control Board, a current rent-controlled renter who is a juvenile justice attorney and professor, and would have been a great RCB member, but who ultimately couldn't take on the responsibility. The fact that I worked to recruit that wonderful person for the RCB should point to this as well.

4. What would you propose, if anything, to improve Santa Monica rent control and/or to strengthen tenant protections (including code enforcement)?

I would like to see much greater education brought to Rent Control tenants of the State housing laws that have passed in recent years. It's important for rent-controlled tenants to know about the greatest threats to their housing so that they can become advocates for their own lives, and many of those housing laws (which have inflated land value so much, and in turn made selling more lucrative, and waiting out the 5-year Ellis Act delay more feasible, while not substantially protecting tenants more) are absolutely among those great threats.

I am very very supportive of the proposed Charter Amendment that would create a rental debt threshold for eviction. This seems like one of the most important changes within the purview of the RCB that could be made to rent control. This change could help the city have enough time to identify vulnerable, lower income people who are at risk of eviction for non-payment, such that the rental debt assistance program could kick in.

I'm also quite supportive of the Charter Amendment proposal that would extend eviction protections to include allowing certain members of a family to move in without the original tenant facing eviction over that. Family structures are different in different cultures and at different moments in time, and we shouldn't assume that children and spouses represent the only legitimate family structures.

I was delighted to see that code enforcement was just extended to weekends.

I believe we can make headway in chipping away at Costa Hawkins. We saw the legislature provide a pathway to this with AB1482, when they made single family homes exempt only when they are owned by individuals rather than large corporations. We can continue to advocate for similar modest updates to Costa

Hawkins.

5. Do you think it is appropriate for the City Council to propose changes to the Rent Control law without full involvement of the Rent Control Board and tenant advocates?

No. The Rent Control Board is the center of judgment and expertise when it comes to Rent Control. It is an independently elected body, chosen by the people, with clear purview over Rent Control. The City Council is not the expert body, and it does not make sense for the Council to make proposals without the RCB. It also seems extremely unwise for the City Council to propose changes to Rent Control law without full involvement from tenant advocates, and SMRR in particular. My experience with SMRR leadership is that there is an absolutely tremendous amount of knowledge of the history of our current Rent Control laws; making proposals for Rent Control without the insights that these leaders bring means leaving out critical context.

6. Which is more important to you: Preserving controlled rental units and retaining existing renters, or allowing temporary or permanent displacement of tenants who are occupying aging controlled housing stock to replace old buildings with new ones? Please explain.

Preserving rent-controlled units and retaining existing renters is at the heart of my interest in the Rent Control Board. Our rent-controlled buildings are historic, and a critical part of the fabric of the city. Our existing renters are, in many cases, able to stay in Santa Monica long term solely because of the rent control laws that limit the rise of rent, and it is these same renters that largely make up the city's socioeconomic diversity, something I strongly value. Our controlled stock is our main affordable housing, and we must protect it so that our lower earning renters can continue to live in the city.

While there could be scenarios of truly dilapidated buildings that cannot be restored and replacement is the only option, those seem few and far between. And even then, I'd only consider it acceptable if tenants were guaranteed strong protections throughout (a right to return, and equivalent or better local housing for the full duration of construction) so no one is displaced from the community while they wait. Absent that, any renter who faces displacement due to the tearing down of rent control stock is very unlikely to wait out the years before they might be able to return. Construction always takes longer than expected. People need to live their lives, and can't do so in limbo. The reality is that in the time it takes to replace old buildings with new ones, we lose residents permanently, most likely our oldest or otherwise most vulnerable residents.

I also personally find the notion that it's best for buildings to be new to be misguided at best; restoration and remodel are almost always the better choice for the environment. Older buildings are also inherently more affordable than newer ones.

7. Did you support the original version of SB79, which lacked effective anti displacement protections and protections for rent controlled housing stock? Why or why not? What is your opinion of the version of SB79 that was adopted? Explain.

No, I strongly opposed it, and did so in public comment at City Council meetings and directly to the state legislature. I also spearheaded conversations with several of our City Council members, asking them not to support SB79. SB79 was (and is) one of the most reckless state housing bills we've seen so far. The original version of it was worse by far, and posed a threat to our entire rent controlled housing stock. It had essentially no protections in it for rent-controlled tenants, and would quickly have pushed out much of our long term renter population (and others) when buildings were torn down and redeveloped for maximum developer profit. Our neighborhoods as we know them would also have been fundamentally dismantled, and all in the service of market rate housing that does nothing to help the affordability of our city or to help our homeless population (both of which supporters of laws like SB79 like to claim).

SB79's final form still did not provide enough tenant protections, or protections for neighborhoods. While I appreciate the 7-year lookback for tenant-occupied properties that was eventually added, it's already common practice for redevelopment projects to wait 5 years after tenants vacate a property (using the Ellis Act) so that they don't have to rebuild any rent-controlled units; given that SB79 gives unprecedented density to new projects, the profit structures at play seem like they will easily absorb the 7 years that SB79 requires waiting, and our rent-controlled units in the pathway of the SB79 radiuses are all still vulnerable. Add the total lack of protection the final law provides for buildings with 2 or fewer rent-controlled units, and it's safe to say SB79 in its final form doesn't go nearly far enough to protect tenants. Neighborhoods are highly valued by homeowners and renters alike, and SB79 provides almost no protections for them either.

I was proud that our Rent Control Board opposed SB79. That action made me more aware of how much influence the Board could have in current policy, even when it is not directly under its purview.

8. Do you support the City's laws regarding short term housing, corporate housing, AirBnb? Why or why not?

I support limiting short-term housing, Airbnb, etc. as much as possible. Santa Monica has one of the strongest laws in California against short-term rentals, and I support these laws and the enforcement of them. Short-term housing (when the host isn't there) invites investment in second/vacation homes, while simultaneously removing the housing stock from those who need it most, and driving up prices for everyone. This hits rent-controlled units especially hard. We don't want rent-controlled units (or any units) quietly converted into de facto hotels, and guarding against that erosion is critical.

I lived in Venice for over a decade and saw the damage short-term rentals do. Real estate companies encouraged the flipping of properties specifically for these sorts of short-term rental opportunities, sending prices skyrocketing, as investors took advantage. As Venice became a hot vacation spot, in significant part because of the proliferation of Airbnbs, renters were displaced, and the fabric of the neighborhood suffered greatly.

Medium-term rentals also concern me. I've heard the case for loosening that prohibition, including recently by a Planning Commissioner who noted that he couldn't live in Santa Monica during the first several months his wife was working in the city on a short-term contract, and that corporate short-term housing would have allowed them to be closer to her office. That type of scenario is not a good enough reason to justify the loosening of these rules, which would hand landlords a powerful incentive to convert their units into what amount to hotel rooms, and profit that much more, rather than house actual residents. That's exactly how protected, affordable stock bleeds out of the city. I see this kind of housing as a loophole that threatens our overall affordability, livability, and adds to the threats that already exist to Rent Control.

9. Do you support city financing of emergency assistance to renters at risk of losing their homes, such as the recently adopted Santa Monica Renter Aid program? Why or why not?

Yes. I strongly support this kind of program. We should do everything we can to stop homelessness before it begins. Once someone is evicted and unhoused, it is immensely more complicated to help them manage their case, and to get them back into housing. I'm so proud that our city has this kind of program to help our most vulnerable residents. I hope we can make this program even more effective by finding ways to identify the renters most likely to need the support, and to get the money to them quickly, and avoid eviction scenarios.

10. Do you support city financing of free legal counsel to all lower and

moderate income renters facing the threat of eviction? Why or why not?

Yes. This kind of program is high value, high leverage for society. We must do what we can to help people of modest means stay in their homes. Once they lose a home in Santa Monica, they are unlikely to be able to afford another, which means at best that we lose them to another community (and lose some of our socioeconomic diversity) and at worst see them pushed into homelessness; none of that is good for tenants, for Santa Monica, or for society generally. Santa Monica's local right to counsel program (now funded largely by Measure GS) provides exactly this kind of help to financially qualifying residents, and it's a gift to all of us.

11. Do you support increasing local funding for programs providing ongoing income support to severely rent burdened renters, such as the Preserve Our Diversity (POD) program for seniors? If so, what additional households do you believe should receive ongoing income support?

Yes. I strongly support these programs and support increasing local funding for them. The POD program for seniors is particularly worth protecting and fully funding, and I'd support making that funding stable rather than left vulnerable to each budget cycle. It works because it's simple and direct, a little money each month to help if a fixed income no longer goes far enough to keep someone in their home. I'd potentially support expanding that same approach to other severely rent-burdened households in rent-controlled units, including residents with disabilities living on fixed incomes, who face the same displacement pressure.

12. Voter approved 2022 Measure GS contemplated that an additional 5% transfer tax on sales of properties for \$8 million or more would go to providing additional funds for emergency and ongoing income support programs, the preservation or creation of deed-restricted affordable housing, right to counsel, and other programs aimed at preserving existing tenancies of and units serving lower and moderate income households (as well as to the public schools). The City Council already has directed a portion of the funds raised be used for the Santa Monica Renter Aid program, expansion of the right to counsel, and for a pilot predictive model program to prevent homelessness. But on June 22, AB-736 in Sacramento was gutted and amended so that, if passed, it would cap the total transfer tax rate for all commercial and multi-family property in such a way that only 0.9% would go into the purposes outlined in 2022 Measure GS. Given that the first \$10 million raised by 2022 Measure GS goes to the public schools, and that a City Council commissioned report in 2022 found that 93.4% of the total value of all

transfers of \$8 million or more during the prior decade came from commercial and multi-family properties, AB-736 if passed will decimate the funding for homelessness prevention and affordable housing that 2022 Measure GS otherwise could provide.

a. Do you support AB-736? Why or why not?

No. Measure GS funds are providing critical safety net programs for Santa Monica's most vulnerable residents. We absolutely need more funding for deed restricted affordable housing. Ideally that funding might come primarily from a state tax base, so that the affordable units in our RHNA allocation could actually be tied to funding for them. But since that isn't happening, we are doing what we can at the local level. I strongly support this kind of funding, and I don't support measures that compromise our ability to collect it. Beyond the affordable housing funds, the \$6 million dollars for the flexible financial assistance and expanded right to attorney programs are some of the Santa Monica programs I'm most proud to have in my city.

b. Do you support any other changes to 2022 Measure GS (if so, specify what changes)? Why or why not?

Not at this time. I could imagine in the future structuring the tax to collect from sales at a wider range of prices, such that the tax wouldn't create avoidant behavior right around our 8 million dollar sale price mark.

c. Do you support finding some other local funding source for homelessness prevention and affordable housing programs? If so, what source?

Only as possible *additional* funding sources, not alternatives/replacements for GS. Taxes on second homes in Santa Monica (not the primary residence of the owner) which are not being long-term rented to tenants, and which sit vacant should be taxed. Such a tax could nudge units back into use and simultaneously provide funding for affordable housing. There are challenges with administering such a tax, and the Rent Control Board would not have jurisdiction over that, presumably. But I'm interested in it.

State Ballot Measures

1. Do you support the Howard Jarvis measure (or any substitute for that

measure) to require a two-thirds vote on any and every form of new local tax? Why or why not? Will you actively encourage your supporters to vote the same way as you on this measure?

No. Measures that would constrain local municipalities' abilities to levy taxes are a mistake. Local jurisdictions know their own needs to fund their own programs. Measure GS wouldn't have passed under these terms (it passed with about 52% of the vote), and we wouldn't have the new funding for the right to counsel program, or the SM Renter Aid program, or the predictive homelessness prevention pilot we're engaging with, critical programs that we likely couldn't fund without new taxes. Going forward, if even citizens' initiatives have to clear that two-thirds bar, we lose some of the flexibility to fund our schools and our tenant programs (among other things). As I understand it, the Jarvis measure has been replaced with something that doesn't threaten Measure GS or cap transfer taxes, but it still requires a higher threshold for future citizens' initiatives. Yes, I will encourage my supporters to vote the same way.

2. Do you support the measure to require that any ballot measure imposing a new super-majority vote requirement must itself pass by that same super-majority in order to become effective? Why or why not? Will you actively encourage your supporters to vote the same way as you on this measure (assuming it appears on the ballot)?

My understanding is that this measure will not appear on the ballot. But my take on it is that the whole premise of a two-thirds requirement is that hard to reverse decisions should require broad consensus. Since this measure itself would have been a hard to reverse decision, it seems internally consistent for it to also require a two-thirds majority to enact.

3. Do you support the measure to condition the right to vote on new voter identification requirements? Why or why not? Will you actively encourage your supporters to vote the same way as you on this measure?

No. I'm strongly opposed to that measure. These sorts of conditions on voting disproportionately disenfranchise voters of color and lower income voters. I'm not aware of any evidence supporting the idea that requiring an ID actually does anything to address any voter misconduct, however it's quite clear that the impacts on voter turnout overall, and especially on voter turnout among already vulnerable groups, is negative. I will absolutely encourage my supporters to vote the same way as I do on this one.