

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

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

Please email completed Questionnaire and Additional Materials to
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Your Candidacy

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

Fundamentally, the Rent Control Charter stabilizes our community. When people decide to live here, we want them to be able to stay long term – to put down roots and become contributing members of the community. We want people of all income levels and diverse backgrounds to call Santa Monica home. With today's extraordinary high housing prices, that would not be possible if not for strong rent control protections. As a Commissioner, I have and will continue to view it as my responsibility to stand strong to protect those values against anyone who might threaten them, as well as to help my constituents navigate the various rights, protections, and resources available to them.

2. Why are you running for Rent Control Board?

I'm running to continue serving my fellow Santa Monica residents, protecting tenants and landlords of rent controlled units by ensuring our regulations meet the needs of today's housing environment, and fairly evaluating appeals that come before the Board in its capacity as an appellate body.

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

I am currently a Commissioner on the Santa Monica Rent Control Board. Last year, I served as Board Chair. I have worked professionally on political campaigns for Democratic candidates for many years. I also have professional experience working in the entertainment industry in various communications, production, and marketing roles. Furthermore, I have lived in rent controlled apartments in Santa Monica for more than 12 years (including currently).

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

My experience on the Rent Control Board (including as Chair) and my proven leadership in the community protecting renters and helping constituents navigate the many rights and resources available to them.

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 (questionnaire [available here](#))
- I will also be seeking the endorsement of the Los Angeles County Democratic Party

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

I am not yet fundraising for this cycle.

So far, I am endorsed by:

- Santa Monica Mayor Caroline Torosis
- Santa Monica City Councilmember Dan Hall
- Santa Monica City Councilmember Ellis Raskin
- Santa Monica City Councilmember Barry Snell
- Santa Monica City Councilmember Natalya Zernitskaya
- Santa Monica Rent Control Board Commissioner Kay Ambriz
- Santa Monica Rent Control Board Commissioner Phillis Dudick
- Former Santa Monica Mayor Sue Himmelrich

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.

- Santa Monica Rent Control Board (Commissioner, former Chair)
- Santa Monicans for Renters' Rights (Member)
- Santa Monica Democratic Club (Member)
- American Association of Political Consultants (Member)

SMRR

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

I have been a member of SMRR since, I believe, at least 2022 (perhaps longer!).

I was endorsed by SMRR for Rent Control Board Commissioner in 2022, and I participate in SMRR Steering Committee meetings. I also regularly consult with SMRR leadership on various policies.

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, and I have done so over the past 4 years.

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

Yes.

Rent Control and Tenants Rights

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

Yes, whole-heartedly. Santa Monica's rent control law is the reason I have been able to stay in Santa Monica, and more importantly it is the reason Santa Monica has the diversity of income that it does. Without rent control, Santa Monica would have a very different, wealthier population and would not reflect the community that has been built here over so many decades.

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

Yes, I was appointed to and then ran for and was elected to the Rent Control Board in 2022. That year, I also strongly supported and campaigned for measure RC. For the previous approximately four years, I have supported many regulation changes and new regulations that protect tenants, including as a member of important Board sub-committees that produced updates to Rent Decrease Standards (2023) and new proposed charter amendments (2026).

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 record on the Rent Control Board over the past approximately four years (including the subcommittee work previously described), as well as my advocacy in the community. I've also addressed the Rent Control Board before I was elected and the City Council on various tenant-related issues.

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

- Supporting the charter amendment ballot measures recommended by the Rent Control Board, including adjusting Commissioner term limits, reforming registration fee financing provisions, clarifying petition decision timelines, and new tenant occupancy protections related to allowing additional tenants to move in
- Working with staff to revamp how the office receives rent decrease petitions (and other documents and information) from the public to streamline their experience and reduce barriers to entry
- Amending regulations for determining new maximum allowable in Tenant Not In Occupancy cases
- Advocating for stronger code enforcement capabilities, potentially with increased budgets

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?

Absolutely not. Rent Control Board Commissioners and staff are the subject matter experts, and there's a long history / precedent of the City Council honoring the independence of the Rent Control Board by not attempting to modify the Rent Control law without the Board's recommendation.

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.

There is no doubt that we need to build more housing in Santa Monica. It is the way out of the housing affordability crisis. That said, we should not displace current tenants to do it, and we don't have to. There are other ways to accomplish the same goal, such as building along the boulevards and in Downtown Santa Monica, as well as potentially on a relatively small portion of airport land.

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 the original version of SB79. I also voted (as part of a Rent Control Board resolution) to oppose a modified version of SB79. The version that was passed does not sufficiently protect existing tenants, such as those in 2-unit rent-controlled apartments located within impacted transit zones. Additionally, the bill will, in effect, produce opposition to public transit projects from people who would otherwise be supportive, in an attempt to block development that supersedes local regulations.

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

Yes, because without those laws short term and corporate housing would greatly deplete the housing stock in Santa Monica, driving up rents and displacing our current neighbors. However, we need stronger enforcement of these laws to prevent the short term rentals that have been occurred and continue to occur in Santa Monica.

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

Yes. No one should be faced with homelessness or pushed out of their community because of one missed paycheck or a small amount of rental debt. Bridging the gap as our most vulnerable neighbors get back on their feet is the right thing to do morally and also practically, as emergency assistance programs are much less expensive than the cost to bring in homeless people off the street and funding related services.

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. Tenants facing eviction who have legal counsel are exceptionally more likely to be able to remain in their home compared to those who do not have counsel. A legal counsel program would be much less expensive than the cost of bringing in homeless people off the street and funding related services.

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. Initially, additional funding could help to chip away at the applicant back log. Subsequently, additional funding could allow for expanded eligibility by raising the income threshold and/or adjusting the tenancy date to more recent than 2010.

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 provides Santa Monica with desperately needed funding for affordable housing construction and other tenant initiatives that respond to and address the housing affordability crisis. Santa Monica voters very clearly decided how they want these tax dollars to be raised and spent. Sacramento should not override Santa Monica voters.

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

No, not right now. Measure GS has not brought in the amount of revenue originally anticipated, at least to date. However, it is still providing desperately needed funds for affordable housing and tenant assistance. We must continuously assess whether it causes a measurable decrease in new housing development, and make adjustments if needed to avoid that. But only if shown to actually have a measurable negative, unintended impact (definitive data, not accusations or theories).

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

We should always explore opportunities to bring in county, state, and federal funding as long as the strings attached are compatible with our local regulations and priorities. At this time, I do not know of any specific funding sources that are low hanging fruit. We should continue to monitor GS revenue as economic conditions change (tariffs, interest rates, etc) to determine if and how crucially other funding is needed to fill local revenue gaps.

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, I do not support the Howard Jarvis measure, and I would encourage my supporters to oppose it. The will of a majority of voters on tax measures should be implemented.

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)?

Yes, I would support such a threshold, and I would encourage my allies to support it.

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. Voter ID proposals are a solution in search of a problem, and their effect would be to disenfranchise hundreds of thousands if not millions of eligible voters while preventing a negligible amount of exceptionally rare voter fraud. I would encourage my supporters to also oppose the voter ID requirements being proposed by Donald Trump and the Republicans.