

Santa Monicans for Renters' Rights Questionnaire for State Senate District 24



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Please email completed Questionnaire to **smrrinfo@gmail.com**

Why do you believe Santa Monicans for Renters' Rights ("SMRR") should support you for State Senate from District 24?

SMRR's values, your platform, are my values, which I have put into practice both in my decades of activism and in professional life. Why should you endorse me? Because we are in alignment on 99% of the issues dear to both of us. If I had been in the State Senate during the SB 79 debates, I would have fought for better renter protections on displacement and inclusionary housing. I signed your pledge, so I hope you see how sincere I am about this.

You should support me for many, many reasons beyond one issue, although I do not deny its importance. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community who has been an underdog my entire life, I have learned to be a courageous advocate for a more equitable, equal, sustainable, and safe world. Those are the things that anchor all my decisions in life, as demonstrated by my chosen careers and work as a West Hollywood councilmember. Our shared values are why I worked as VP at Planned Parenthood Los Angeles, where I helped codify reproductive freedom in the state and keep open critical community health clinics. It is why I now work at the Alliance for a Better Community, where I have fought ICE and helped improve the rights and quality of life for the LA County Latino population. And lastly, it is why I have serve on the West Hollywood City Council, where I have been a staunch supporter of renters' rights and affordable housing, expanded our model aging in place policies that were emulated by Santa Monica, and where I have introduced the highest living wage in the country (at the time), passed strong gun control measures, and authored aggressive climate action policies that have become policies elsewhere. My record on climate action is why Jane PAC, the Sierra Club, and Climate Action California have endorsed me.

You should endorse me because actions speak louder than words. I am committed to making you a partner in my decision making; I have built a strong coalition of support from across the 24th, which continues to grow each day, including local elected officials and community leaders; and I am the candidate in this race who has the kind of experience necessary to be an effective state senator, because I am the only candidate who has actually worked on the issues a state senator deals with. I have worked on regional policies with other cities in the district, including your SMRR-led City Council and my depth of knowledge and experience on improving housing and renters rights, on homelessness, on healthcare and public education, on climate action, and on creating safer communities (that are achieved not only by funding public safety but by fighting hate crimes—including taking the lead on combatting antisemitism, homophobia, especially among the trans population, anti Islamophobia and uplifting women).

I believe with everything this state and country face today, the 24th—and specifically SMRR—deserve a representative in the State Senate who has proven he is the kind of courageous and effective leader who will not stop fighting for what is right. Just like your SMRR-endorsed Councilmembers, I am not perfect, but I am prepared to learn and evolve. My support from California's teachers, nurses and firefighters (I just this week added CA Professional

Firefighters, the preeminent firefighters' union in the state) and labor groups like Unite Here Local 11 underscores my understanding of the challenges the entire state faces and my commitment to solving them. I will be a strong voice for Santa Monica in Sacramento and a champion of the working class who will deliver for them and take on corporate special interests who have gotten in the way of social and economic justice policies.

And I am going to be the #1 target of the California Apartment Association this November. Their bullseye on my forehead should tell you that I am a threat to their stranglehold on Sacramento politics, and I will work every single day to ensure the issues we agree on are not only advanced in the state legislature but have a champion. It should also be very telling about who they ARE supporting in the race (both through direct contributions and indirect ones).

In conclusion, I humbly believe you should support me because, all in all, we are fighting for the same things.

(I removed the Brian question to save space—your formatting did not allow me to answer my question, so it is on the next page)

[For John Erickson only] Your candidacy is being supported by California YIMBY, an organization that often takes positions contrary to SMRR positions. For example, California YIMBY supported the original version of SB 79 (which did not contain anti-displacement and anti-demolition protections for renters and rent-controlled housing stock), and supported AB 736 (which sought to gut the funding for homelessness prevention and affordable housing creation provided by voter approved citizen initiatives Santa Monica Measure GS and Los Angeles Measure ULA, without providing any replacement funding).

a. Have you ever publicly taken a position contrary to a position taken by California YIMBY? If so, when, where and what position(s)?

Yes, I do not support AB736, and I have pushed and advocated publicly for them to include anti-displacement and anti-demolition protections for renters and rent-controlled housing stock. I approach my housing policies with a “yes, and...” approach. We need to build more housing, especially more affordable housing, and I knew, much like many other elected officials who supported SB-79, including the Santa Monica City Council, that the original version of the bill would never pass. I worked behind the scenes to ensure these types of amendments were included. That’s why individuals like Assemblymember Matt Haney (and many others) are supporting me because they know I can reach across the aisle and work with everyone to ensure the policies are done right, and that’s why it’s critical to have a housing champion like me in the State Senate, so on day one, these amendments are already part of the bill and not at a later date. Plus, while I could not vote on ULA or GS, since I am a registered voter in West Hollywood, I did support them against YIMBYs.

b. Are there any positions of California YIMBY which you would not support if elected to the State Senate? I will not support bills that weaken renter protections and encourage displacement or the removal of affordable housing from the market. I don’t take positions on hypotheticals, and it would be irresponsible to do so as I don’t know what their legislative agenda would be when I am elected. I approach every bill and policy one at a time and judge them based on my values,

background, and facts. I have pushed back and worked with them on issues related to impact fees and how that would hurt local cities. What I do know is I will be in the room on day one working with them to ensure local cities as well as tenants are protected, and we get housing policies right from the get-go, something we do not have right now in the SoCal delegation. And I will work with you to make sure things are done right.

Tenant Protection Act (TPA)

If elected, would you vote to extend the TPA (AB 1482), currently scheduled to sunset as of January 1, 2030 (see Civil Code § 1947.12(o))? **YES.** Explain.

As the only renter and renters' rights advocate in this race, I know how essential it is to extend the TPA and also to amend SB79 to include the same renter protections advocated by your city council, including: 1) strengthening anti displacement measures, per the pledge I signed with SMRR previously, for long-term renters and sensitive communities, building on the foundation of the Housing Crisis Act (Government Code Section 66300 et seq.). These safeguards are critical to protecting displacement in high opportunity neighborhoods. 2) not only increase the amount of low-income inclusionary housing required in transit-oriented projects but also require oversight that such housing is build and remains affordable in perpetuity.

If elected, would you vote to amend the TPA to lower the maximum annual rent increase from the current 5% plus the increase in the Consumer Price Index (subject to a 10% cap) (see Civil Code § 1947.12(a)(1), (g)(1), (g)(3))? **YES.** Explain. **We are facing a serious affordability crisis, and as a state senator, I will do everything in my power to make housing more affordable--which goes beyond production and includes amending the TPA to limit rent increases.**

If elected, would you vote to amend the TPA to place some limit on the size of a vacancy increase authorized under the TPA, rather than the full vacancy decontrol currently authorized by Costa-Hawkins (see Civil Code § 1947.12(b))? **YES.** Explain. **Same answer as above.**

Costa Hawkins

If elected, would you vote to amend Costa Hawkins to allow local governments generally to impose rent control on multi-family housing that was issued its certificate of occupancy more than 15 years ago (as is true under the TPA, see Civil Code § 1947.12(d)(4))? Explain. **Yes. I believe Costa Hawkins is the single biggest reason for the affordable housing crisis. I have been a longtime supporter of amending Costa Hawkins and am on record of this personally and initiated the motion for my city to go on record too. I have endorsed every measure to do so and vow to be a champion for amending and eventually, if possible, eliminating it. Given how this fails repeatedly at the ballot box, as with Props 10 and 33, I believe the clearest path to victory is through the legislature. Of course, key to this is electing more proven renter advocates to the legislature who will work with you to broaden the coalition needed to get this passed. I am the only candidate in this race who has stated support for this. Not only when I am in front of renters' rights groups, but everywhere.**

If elected, would you vote to amend Costa Hawkins to allow local governments to impose rent control on separately alienable housing (i.e., single-family homes, condominiums, townhouses, etc.) when owned by a corporation (including an LLC with a corporation as a member) or a Real Estate Investment Trust (as is true under the TPA, see Civil Code § 1947.12(d)(5))? **YES.** Explain. **Today, corporations, like private equity firms and real estate investment trusts, are building single-family homes en mass and operate in the same way a landlord of an apartment building does.**

They control the rental market in the same way that corporate landlords do, and legal protections should follow the tenant, not the type of housing one rents. Renters, no matter what type of dwelling they live in, need the same protections and face the same housing instability and affordability challenges regardless of the type of housing they live in.

If elected, would you vote to amend Costa Hawkins to allow local governments to place some limit on the size of a vacancy increase, rather than the full vacancy decontrol currently authorized? YES.

SB 79 and Other State-Mandated Upzoning

If elected, would you vote to amend SB 79 to incorporate the same more comprehensive exclusions for sites that contained in the past 10 years rent controlled and other rental housing as the Legislature previously has included in AB 2011/2443 (Wicks) (streamlining and upzoning of commercial boulevards) and SB 35/423 (Weiner) (streamlining in jurisdictions not meeting RHNA housing targets) (see Government Code §§ 65912.121(h)(1)-(2), 65913.4(a)(7)(A)-(B))? Explain.

YES. The Legislature has already decided what the right standard looks like. AB 2011 and SB 35 both carry a full ten-year lookback covering rent-controlled units, deed-restricted affordable units, housing subject to any form of price control, and sites where tenants have lived in the last decade. Transit-oriented development is exactly where our oldest, most affordable, most tenant-occupied buildings sit, so if anything the case for the stronger standard is greater here, not smaller. Every unit of rent-controlled or naturally occurring affordable housing we demolish takes years and public subsidy to replace, and the family who lived there is gone long before the replacement opens. I signed your pledge because I believe this, and I will carry or co-author the amendment to bring SB 79 in line with AB 2011 and SB 35.

If elected, would you insist as a condition of your support that any future State mandated upzoning incorporate the same more comprehensive exclusions for sites that contain or contained in the past 10 years rent controlled and other rental housing as the Legislature previously has included in AB 2011/2443 (Wicks) (streamlining and upzoning of commercial boulevards) and SB 35/423 (Weiner) (streamlining in jurisdictions not meeting RHNA housing targets) (see Government Code §§ 65912.121(h)(1)-(2), 65913.4(a)(7)(A)-(B))? If not, what protections against the temporary displacement of renters, the permanent displacement of renters, and the destruction of naturally occurring affordable housing for lower income, moderate income, and middle income renter households would you insist upon as a condition of your support? Explain.

YES. The AB 2011 and SB 35 exclusions are my floor, not my ceiling. I will not vote for a state upzoning mandate that does not carry a lookback protecting rent-controlled housing, deed-restricted and price-controlled units, and sites that have housed tenants in the past decade. We need to build, and we need to stop treating displacement as an acceptable cost of building, and those two things are only in tension if you write the bill carelessly. As the only renter in this race, I will be in the room from day one making sure the language is right, and will bring you into that conversation.

AB 1740 And Trailer Bill Issues

If elected, would you vote against legislation that provides exemptions to the Coastal Act for housing development? For commercial development? Explain. Give Santa Monica their local coastal plan (LCP). That lets Santa Monica decide how it wants to treat development in the coastal zone, and it should be decided by their local elected officials and community.

Local Taxation

If elected, would you vote against any measure or bill seeking to override voter-approved citizen initiatives Santa Monica Measure GS and Los Angeles Measure ULA? YES 100%, I would vote against with an unqualified commitment. Explain. First, the voters have spoken! I could not vote on either bill as a resident of West Hollywood, but I did support them wholeheartedly: in the case of GS, it is an important mechanism to generate funding for more affordable housing, homelessness programs, and your public schools. While the money generated still isn't enough to solve the housing and homelessness crisis, it gives the city critical funding, especially as it struggles to recover from "fiscal distress." ULA also plays a similar role.

If your answer is other than an unqualified commitment to vote against any such measure, would you vote against any such measure that did not provide an alternative, permanent, ongoing source of funds to make up for any funds lost by Santa Monica and the City of Los Angeles due to any State override of Measures GS and ULA? Explain.

State Funding for Emergency / Ongoing Assistance to At-Risk Renters

Would you vote to increase State funding for emergency and/or ongoing assistance to at-risk renters?

Explain. YES, and I have supported emergency rental assistance in my community during COVID, after COVID, and in the ongoing way through Jewish Family Services, Bet Tzedek, JVS, and many other organizations. I have also supported tenant counseling services through the Coalition for Economic Survival (CES); although it does not provide rental assistance directly, it has helped renters obtain free advice on how to navigate services available to them through the city. Additionally, during COVID, we had an exclusive program with the National Council for Jewish Women Los Angeles (NCJWLA), which provided direct cash assistance to individuals to ensure their rent was paid. By expanding our Aging in Place policy, I have helped at-risk renters remain in their rent-controlled units. With a proportionately large population of seniors, unemployed actors, and older gay men who have AIDS (left without savings because they spent well years ago thinking they'd die young), I understand the importance of programs that help keep people housed during trying times and believe they should be funded on the state level.

State Funding for Affordable Housing / Social Housing Creation

Would you vote to increase State funding for affordable housing production, including, but not limited to, creating revolving bond or other funding for social housing programs? YES. Explain. It is part of my platform, and I have a record in my own city of supporting our nonprofit housing corporation, which was modeled after CCSM, helping to create 100% affordable housing projects, despite tremendous resistance from people who don't want "poor people" in their neighborhoods. I am a big supporter of social housing creation. In addition to more state funding for nonprofit housing corporations, I support state housing land trusts and funding to help repurpose abandoned buildings and convert them to affordable housing. While there have not been any buildings to repurpose in West Hollywood, I am supportive of this work and would welcome it in my city and champion it across the state. This is also why Assemblymember Alex Lee has endorsed my campaign as well.

State Land for Affordable Housing / Social Housing Creation

Would you champion or vote for State land to be dedicated to creating affordable housing or social housing (e.g., the Santa Monica DMV site at Cloverfield & Colorado)? YES, 100%