



California Voter Guide

Get informed in minutes with our Voter Guide for California's March 5 primary election. Unpack ballot measures and compare candidates in the most important races on Bay Area ballots and learn the easiest ways to cast your vote.

- [U.S. Senate primary](#) and [Proposition 1](#)
- [Bay Area races and measures](#)
- [Democratic](#) and [Republican](#) presidential primary
- [Voting tips](#)



IMPORTANT DATES

Feb. 5

Voting begins.

March 5

Election Day: Polls open at 7 a.m. and close at 8 p.m. Results will be available starting 8 p.m.

Feb. 20

[Online voter registration](#) deadline.

April 4

Last day for county elections officials to certify election results.

TOP ELECTION NEWS



Find Your Early Voting Site or Ballot Drop-Off Location for the 2024 California Primary Election



How Do I Vote in California's Presidential Primary Election as a 'No Party Preference' Voter?

[More Election News Coverage](#)

Shape California's Future

Important choices are in your hands this primary election. You can decide on a once-in-a-generation U.S. Senate race, and a proposition to overhaul California's mental health funding, along with contests for state Legislature, and a slew of regional and local races and measures.

Voting FAQ

Do I have to request a mail-in ballot?



No – every registered voter in California will automatically receive a ballot in the mail. You can use that ballot to cast your vote (see below for where to return it when you're done) or you can forget that ballot and request a fresh one at a voting location. The one that arrived in the mail will be canceled. [Read more about finding a voting location near you.](#)

I'm registered as a No Party Preference voter. Can I still vote in the March presidential primary?



Yes – but the No Party Preference ballot you'll automatically receive in early February will not include the presidential contest, [so you'll need to request a new one.](#) If you want to vote for a presidential candidate in the American Independent Party, the Democratic Party or the Libertarian Party, you can [request a cross-over ballot](#) from your county elections office, or in person when you vote. If you want to vote for a presidential candidate in the Green Party, the Peace and Freedom Party or the Republican Party, you will need to [re-register online](#) as a member of that party – and if you don't do this before Feb. 20, you can do it at your county elections office or when you vote in person. [Read more about voting in the presidential primary as a No Party Preference voter.](#)

How do I return my ballot?



Ballots can be returned through the Postal Service (the return postage is already paid) or dropped off at a voting location or in a ballot drop box. Keep in mind that the Postal Service must postmark your ballot envelope by the end of Election Day for your vote to count – and the last collection at many mailboxes is 5 p.m. If it's getting late in the day on March 5, you might consider using a county drop box instead of a USPS mailbox. [Read more about returning your ballot.](#)

What if I make a mistake on my ballot?



Some counties will provide written instructions on how to correct a mistake on your ballot, such as voting for a candidate you didn't intend to. But if you clearly mark your intended choice – say, by x-ing out your mistake – your vote can still be counted. [Read more about correcting a mistake on your ballot.](#)

What if I made a mistake with my ballot signature?



Your ballot will not be counted if the envelope is unsigned or if the signature doesn't match the signature in your voter registration file. Typically, the signature on file is the same as the signature pictured on the front of your driver's license or state ID. County election officials can reach out to you to correct a missing or mismatched signature in order to count your ballot, even after election day. [Read more about common signature mistakes.](#)

How do I track my ballot once I've returned it?

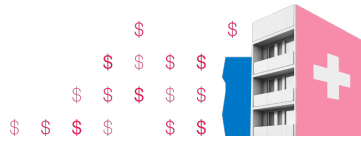


All registered voters in California can sign up for an online tool to track the status of their mail-in ballots for the November general election. "Where's My Ballot?" provides automated notifications via email, text or phone when your county elections offices have mailed out your ballot – and when your completed ballot has been received and processed. [Read more about tracking your ballot.](#)

Can I still vote in-person?



Yes. In Contra Costa, San Francisco and Solano counties, you will be assigned to a specific polling place for in-person voting, though some voting locations will be open to all voters. In Alameda, Marin, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Sonoma counties, you can cast your ballot at any vote center in the county. [Read more about where you can vote in person.](#)



Proposition 1

Should California issue bonds and change spending rules in order to build more housing for residents with behavioral health challenges?



Proposition 1 would issue \$6.38 billion in bonds to build supportive housing and residential treatment facilities. It would also amend the Mental Health Services Act (a 1% tax on personal income over \$1 million), allowing funds to also be used to help residents with substance abuse, not just those with mental illness. And it would set aside 30% of revenue generated from that tax to help house people — particularly veterans — with behavioral health conditions.

👉 Yes Argument

California should focus its resources on supporting residents who have severe mental health and substance abuse issues and keep them from living on the streets. Proposition 1 will provide a reliable funding source to build treatment facilities and it will dedicate over \$1 billion toward supportive housing for veterans with behavioral health challenges. The current rules of the Mental Health Services Act are too restrictive and should be changed to help people struggling with serious substance abuse issues.

👉 No Argument

Proposition 1 pulls revenue from the Mental Health Services Act in too many new directions. If you are increasing the amount of MHSA money going toward housing and residents with substance abuse issues, there will be less left for existing mental health services. Additionally, the bond money can be used to build locked facilities, which are a threat to civil liberties and will take California back to the era of involuntary treatment for severe mental illness.

Key Supporters ?

👉 In Support

- Gavin Newsom, governor, California
- California Hospital Association
- California Medical Association
- National Alliance on Mental Illness California

👉 In Opposition

- Disability Rights California
- Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association
- League of Women Voters of California
- Mental Health America of California

U.S. Senator



Why does this race matter?

A crowded field of candidates is running to fill the U.S. Senate seat held by the late Senator Dianne Feinstein for more than 30 years. It's a rare opportunity to represent the most populous state in the nation in the Senate. The March vote could decide a likely winner in November: If a Republican advances to the general election along with a Democrat, the Democrat would be favored to win the seat.

Why am I voting in this race twice?

When longtime California Sen. Dianne Feinstein died in September, Gov. Gavin Newsom appointed Laphonza Butler to serve the remainder of her term. Voters are now being asked to pick a senator to serve the short window from when the election is certified to when the term ends on Jan. 3, 2025, and also to pick a senator for the next full term, from January 2025 through January 2031.

Key Candidates ?



Steve Garvey
Former Professional
Baseball Player
Republican



Barbara Lee
U.S. Representative
Democrat



Katie Porter
U.S. Representative
Democrat



Adam Schiff
U.S. Representative
Democrat

Top Priorities

Steve Garvey:

- Tackling homelessness by addressing the mental health and substance abuse crises.
- Improving public schools.
- Holding criminals accountable and better fund police departments.

Barbara Lee:

- Providing health care for all through a single-payer system.
- Taking climate action, particularly in lower-income neighborhoods and communities of color.
- Protecting reproductive rights.

Katie Porter:

- Tackling corruption at corporations and in government, including by barring federal lobbyists from making campaign contributions.
- “Unrigging” the economy by investing in public services, climate action and health care and limiting corporate consolidation.
- Empowering workers through a higher minimum wage and making it easier to organize labor unions.

Adam Schiff:

- Expanding voting rights and eliminating the electoral college.
- Reforming campaign finance and ethics laws to make government more accountable.
- Reforming the Supreme Court by expanding it and imposing term limits.

Positions on Key Issues ?

Do you support a national abortion ban, national abortion limit or federal legislation codifying abortion access across the U.S.?

^

Garvey says he would not support a federal abortion ban or a federal law codifying abortion access, but wants to leave it up to the states as set out by the Supreme Court’s Dobbs decision. He says he’s personally opposed to abortion but wants to “honor” Californians’ overwhelming vote to maintain legal access to abortion.

Lee wants to end the filibuster in the Senate and codify Roe v. Wade’s protections into federal law. She speaks openly about risking her life to get a “back-alley abortion” when it was illegal and is co-chair of the Pro-Choice Caucus. She is coauthor of proposed federal legislation that would let people on government-sponsored health plans access abortion care, and wrote California’s Violence Against Women Act as a state Assembly member.

Porter supports federal legislation to guarantee abortion access in all states, including the Women’s Health Protection Act. She’s voted for legislation to strengthen protections for patients who travel across state lines to access abortion care and says she’s posed questions to companies like FedEx asking how they will ensure Americans can access medication abortion through the mail.

Schiff says he would “strongly and vigorously” oppose a national abortion ban or any other federal limitations and supports codifying Roe v. Wade’s protections into federal law. He says he will support the Women’s Health Protection Act, work to reform the Supreme Court in part by expanding its size and imposing term limits, and support a change in law so people on government-sponsored health plans access abortion care.

Do you support a cease-fire in the war between Israel and Hamas and do you want to see any conditions placed on U.S. aid to Israel? Do you support continuing financial and military aid to Ukraine?

^

Garvey says he does not support a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas and also opposes placing any conditions on aid to Israel, saying the U.S. should “unequivocally stand by Israel’s right to defend itself from terrorists.” He says the U.S. cannot fund the war in Ukraine forever and that future aid should be based on “some metric of success.”

Lee was the only member of Congress to vote against authorizing the wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq after 9/11. Lee supports an “unequivocal cease-fire,” and has since fall; she also believes that further assistance to Israel must be dependent on a “fundamental shift in its military strategy” and abide by U.S. and international law. She says the U.S. must continue to support Ukraine and its democracy against Russia.

Porter supports a “lasting bilateral cease-fire” contingent on “release of all hostages, durable security for Israel, and an end to Hamas’ control of Gaza.” She does not believe the U.S. should pledge unconditional military aid to Israel. She says any U.S. aid should be used to work toward a lasting two-state solution, and “must come with respect for U.S. and international law.” She supports continuing financial and military aid to Ukraine.

Schiff does not support a permanent cease-fire, saying it will perpetuate Hamas control over Gaza and that a two-state solution is not possible while Hamas controls the territory. He also opposes conditioning U.S. aid to Israel. He “strongly” supports additional financial and military support for Ukraine but opposes providing cluster munitions.

Would you use Community Project Funding requests (also known as earmarks) to steer funds toward California projects?



Garvey calls the current earmark system “flawed” and says it needs to be reformed to make sure projects are funded on their merits. He blames earmarks for inflation and the national debt, but says he would use it to deliver resources to California.

Lee supports earmarks as a “critical tool” to deliver results to constituents, particularly people of color and those who have low income. She touts millions of dollars in federal funding she has secured as a member of Congress for things like commercial revitalization, apprenticeship programs and mental health services.

Porter has long opposed earmarks and says she would continue to shun them as a Senator. She’s calling for reform to eliminate them entirely, saying they hurt people in low-income communities and communities of color. She believes federal spending should be decided by neutral policy experts and not be dependent on the connections of an individual politician.

Schiff supports earmarks and says elected leaders must fight for dollars to flow back to California, noting the state already sends more money to Washington, D.C., than it gets back. He says as a congressman he has brought back millions of dollars to combat homelessness and the housing crisis, strengthened wildfire prevention efforts and invested in mental health treatment for first responders.

Would you support changes to the asylum system or other immigration reform?



Garvey says the U.S.’s first priority should be strengthening the southern border but that he wants to “reward those who are seeking citizenship legally, including asylum seekers.” He is calling for an end to “chaos” at the border and for a streamlining of the immigration process.

Lee wants to abolish recent policies that have upended long-standing asylum protocols. She voted against the creation of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, and is calling for a 50% cut to Customs and Border Patrol funding. She supports a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants already in the U.S. as well as more investments in Central and South American countries from which many immigrants in the U.S. originate.

Porter says the U.S. needs to streamline its asylum process to make it easier for those fleeing political, economic and religious persecution to legally seek refuge in America. She calls our immigration system a “mess” and blames Republicans for blocking reform.

Schiff is calling for investing more resources into the immigration court system in order to address the backlog and speed up how long it takes to adjudicate asylum petitions. He wants to see comprehensive immigration reform and supports the U.S. Citizenship Act to create a pathway to citizenship for 11 million undocumented immigrants already in the U.S.

Key Supporters

For Garvey

- N/A

For Porter

- Elizabeth Warren, U.S. senator
- California Labor Federation
- California School Employees Association

For Lee

- California Labor Federation
- Congressional Black Caucus PAC
- Reproductive Freedom for All (formerly NARAL Pro-Choice)

For Schiff

- Nancy Pelosi, U.S. representative
- California Labor Federation
- United Farm Workers

Additional Candidates



Eric Early **Attorney**

Republican. Early has previously run for Congress and Attorney General. He told KQED that he would vote for a national 15-week limit on abortions and opposes continuing financial and military aid to Ukraine.

U.S. Senator FAQ

What does a U.S. senator do?

California's two U.S. senators represent the interests of the state in the upper chamber of Congress. They write and vote on bills, pursue funding for projects and programs in the state, and decide on nominations for U.S. Supreme Court justices, federal judges, cabinet members and other federal officials.

What are the qualifications to be a senator?

Senators must be at least 30 years old, and have been U.S. citizens for at least nine years. They must also be residents of the state they're running to represent at the time of the election.

How many years do we elect a U.S. senator for?

U.S. senators are elected for six-year terms.

Supervisor, District 1



Why does this race matter?

San Mateo County District 1 Supervisor Dave Pine has termed out and is endorsing former U.S. Rep. Jackie Speier as his successor. Speier's sole opponent in the race is Millbrae Councilmember Ann Schneider.

What does a county supervisor do?

Supervisors govern county programs and departments and approve the county budget. Their largest area of spending is traditionally health care and human services. Supervisors are also responsible for local jails and elections, and they make decisions on law enforcement and housing in unincorporated areas of the county. If a supervisor candidate receives over 50% of the vote in the primary, they take office for a four-year term. Otherwise, the top two candidates face off in the November general election.

Candidates



Ann Schneider
City Council Member
and Former Mayor,
Millbrae



Jackie Speier
Former U.S.
Representative

Key Supporters ?

For Schneider

- N/A

For Speier

- Dave Pine, outgoing supervisor, District 1
- Anna Eshoo, U.S. representative
- Josh Becker, state senator
- Marc Berman, state Assembly member
- Service Employees International Union Local 521

Positions on Key Issues ?

How do you plan to approach the housing crisis hyper-locally and regionally on the Peninsula?

Schneider says her plan to boost housing affordability on the Peninsula involves using federal community development block grants to build new units and distributing those dollars more widely across the county. She also believes the county needs to rebuild tax revenues from industries like hotels that took a hit during the pandemic to fund development. She says “the county has to understand local economics, period.”

Speier believes that San Mateo County is underutilizing land that could be developed into affordable housing for public employees and other residents. She says that funding should come from a “mortgage-like instrument” rather than general fund financing. She also wants to see the county’s Measure K sales tax expanded and used to prevent evictions due to job loss or other emergencies.

Retail theft is top of mind for many business owners and shoppers across the Bay Area. What do you see as an effective strategy to safely reduce and respond to robberies?

Schneider says more job opportunities could help, so people don’t have to resort to theft. Secondly, she supports camera systems like license plate readers that law enforcement can use to pursue and arrest people after robberies. “We need to make sure there is an actual penalty for the crime,” Schneider says, pointing to flaws in Proposition 47, which lowered penalties for some retail theft. “It’s gotten to the point where people can steal almost with no penalty at all.”

Speier says she supports shutting down “open-air markets where stolen goods are sold” and wants to require proof of purchase from sellers. She sees prosecuting drug sales as part of the solution to theft. “I support the decision of the San Mateo district attorney to prosecute retail theft as robberies and not simply burglaries,” Speier says. She also wants to hold more public forums with law enforcement and merchants on solutions.

How would you improve traffic conditions for coastal and peninsula commuters?

Schneider says increasing local public transit is key to improving traffic. She wants to grow the county’s fleet of electric buses to reach residents living in the hills or other harder-to-access neighborhoods. She also wants to see regional transit authorities like BART and Caltrain improve safety and fare enforcement. “We’ve got to get people back on transit, but we also have to make transit safe,” she says.

Speier says she wants to “start the electrified Caltrain system and offer substantial financial incentives for several months for riders to take them.” She says there also needs to be more transportation choices, such as shuttles, for seniors and workers with low-income who commute on the coast.

Child care is increasingly unaffordable. How would you make child care more within reach for San Mateo working families?

Schneider sees federal community development block grants as a primary funding source for expanding child care and wants to see those dollars distributed to bring down costs for San Mateo County families. Schneider wants to activate underutilized spaces like parking lots to build child care centers, and says government bodies and corporations need to also expand child care services for employees. The council member also wishes to simplify the permitting process for new child care centers to open.

Speier sees a child care labor force shortage, limited facilities and scarce funding for providers as the three biggest barriers to affordable child care. She supports creating “county corps” programs where teenagers and young adults can begin career paths into child care, elder care, schools and other related fields. She also wants to offer low-interest loans to build new child care centers, and says child care providers should have the same eligibility for county-constructed affordable housing as public employees.

You and your opponent both have experience in elected office. How does your experience make you better prepared for this particular role on the Board of Supervisors?



Schneider says, “The difference that I have from Congresswoman Speier is eight years on the ground, in the trenches, trying to figure out how to pay to get things done and trying to figure out how to respond when priorities get changed for you.” Schneider adds, “I know exactly what has to be done in each of the cities in the district to make them climate resilient.”

Speier says “my extensive experience makes it much more likely that I will identify new opportunities to meet the needs of the public through my contacts and work at different levels of government.” Speier says her background working with federal and state agencies will help the county create solutions to mental health, homelessness and public safety challenges. “I am the candidate who has delivered on health care for tens of thousands of county residents over time,” says Speier.

Supervisor, District 4



Why does this race matter?

Whoever wins the District 4 race will have the opportunity to shape policy across San Mateo County, from policing to jobs to flooding. The county is dealing with significant development, the growing impacts of climate change and the need for more attention on public safety issues.

What does a county supervisor do?

Supervisors govern county programs and departments and approve the county budget. Their largest area of spending is traditionally health care and human services. Supervisors are also responsible for local jails and elections, and they make decisions on law enforcement and housing in unincorporated areas of the county. If a supervisor candidate receives over 50% of the vote in the primary, they take office for a four-year term. Otherwise, the top two candidates face off in the November general election.

Candidates



Antonio López
Mayor, East Palo Alto



Lisa Gauthier
City Council Member,
East Palo Alto



Celeste Brevard
Project Manager



Paul Bocanegra
Nonprofit
Manager/Counselor



Maggie Cornejo
Youth Nonprofit
Director

Key Supporters

For López

- Ro Khanna, U.S. representative
- Aisha Wahab, state senator
- David Canepa, supervisor, San Mateo County
- Noelia Corzo, supervisor, San Mateo County
- Housing Action Coalition

For Gauthier

- Warren Slocum, supervisor, San Mateo County
- Diane Papan, state Assembly member
- Ray Mueller, supervisor, San Mateo County
- Josh Becker, state senator
- Martha Barragan, City Council member, East Palo Alto

For Brevard

- N/A

For Bocanegra

- David Canepa, supervisor, San Mateo County
- Satvik Nori, San Mateo County Board of Trustees
- Local SEIU 521
- John Pimental, trustee, San Mateo
- Community College District
- Lissette Garnica-Espinoza, vice mayor, Redwood City

For Cornejo

- Christina Corpus, sheriff, San Mateo County
- Noelia Corzo, supervisor, San Mateo
- Ruben Abrica, City Council member, East Palo Alto
- Hugo Torres, trustee, San Mateo County Board of Education
- Elmer Martínez Saballos, City Council member, Redwood City

Positions on Key Issues ?

San Mateo County is the most at-risk California county to sea level rise, with your district at the heart of flooding issues. If elected, how will you push to prepare for the looming crisis?



López says with more than \$150 million in needed infrastructure improvements in communities like East Palo Alto, “It is critical that the county be a frontline defense, not only in terms of the purse strings but also on the political connections necessary to be able to once again get these projects done.” López also worked to get housing and payments to tenants whose homes flooded during the 2023 storms.

Brevard says the effects of climate change on San Mateo County are a big part of why she’s running. She says since climate change is a global issue, leaders need to think of climate effects regionally and locally. When it comes to the rise of the sea level, she says, “We can’t just build the walls and hope that the sea level moves around it.”

Cornejo grew up with flooding in North Fair Oaks. As a county legislative aide, she remembers mobile home parks and neighborhoods underwater. “It’s important that we create buffer zones and analyze where they would be best placed,” she says. As a supervisor, she would help the county invest in education and emergency preparedness to minimize damage.

Gauthier says as a longtime District 4 resident, she has witnessed the effects of flooding multiple times. She is a founding member of the county’s flood and sea level rise resiliency district and has spearheaded climate projects, including one on raising levees. “It is important for me to be a part of that solution,” she says. Gauthier also served on the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority, which aims to protect East Palo Alto from flooding.

Bocanegra says the county needs to do more to prevent future sea level rise impacts. This could include seawalls or a series of gates that create a temporary lagoon in the bay, protecting the city when tides are high. He is worried that solutions could have detrimental effects on the environment. “In one of the most incarcerated populations, climate injustice seems to be number one on all of the issues,” he says.

San Mateo County is home to tech giants like Meta. The company is near lower-income communities like East Palo Alto and North Fair Oaks. As a leader who will work in both parts of the economy, what is your plan for economic development and creating job opportunities?



López says as a mega-regional and hyper-local issue, it is vital to balance the needs of residents with those of tech companies. “At the end of the day, their biggest asset and weakness is their location; the proximity to Silicon Valley puts an enormous economic burden on the most low-income residents. As supervisors, we have to be able to leverage the appetite for development,” he says.

Gauthier says creating equal career opportunities for all starts with education and partnerships with regional companies and colleges to develop internships, trade unions and job placement opportunities. “We must ensure that the economic benefits of businesses locating here are enjoyed by the broadest number of people possible,” she says.

Brevard would like to work with businesses and nonprofits to provide job and career pathways for District 4 residents. “We could work with companies like Meta to provide programs like internships, apprenticeships and job training initiatives,” she says. But more significantly, Brevard says she would like to make sure big tech companies are paying their share of property taxes compared to what residents pay.

Bocanegra is aware not all residents are prepared to enter the tech industry, and the county needs to provide career opportunities to the working class. “Blue-collar jobs need to come with prevailing wages,” he says. Bocanegra says the county needs to incentivize companies to provide sustainable and equitable transportation for workers. “I believe in sustainability for these workers, and that’s what I will fight for,” he says.

Cornejo says she would invest in job training and education. “Training opportunities will help our community grow, but also help establish a living wage.” Cornejo wants to thoroughly analyze the local cost of living “with a focus on implementing a competitive wage floor.” She says the minimum wage should be “no less than \$25 an hour.”

Affordable housing is an issue across the Bay Area, but specifically on the Peninsula, it’s growing with development pressures. How will you endeavor to create housing opportunities for all? What work have you done on this issue in the past?



López says housing is one of the top issues in San Mateo County and that housing units for all incomes are needed to address the crisis. “That way, a tech worker isn’t going to displace a low-income undocumented worker.” López touts his experience working with affordable housing developers and says that during his time on the East Palo Alto City Council, around 200 affordable housing units have been built.

Gauthier says that during her time on the city council and as a former mayor, she supported policies for new accessory dwelling units, adopted an inclusive housing ordinance, and worked on the city’s housing element update. She says public and nonprofit partnerships are needed to create affordable housing; and as a council member, she helped establish a new apartment complex in her town with 185 affordable homes. “I will seek such opportunities,” she says.

Brevard says the county “needs to start regulating to innovate.” That could include limiting vacant units, implementing housing price regulations, and considering the best use of empty land. She imagines creating a database and “hub for people to find a place to live” that prioritizes affordable housing.

Bocanegra calls affordable housing a “word of the past.” He advocates for a social housing model where people of all incomes can live in the same neighborhoods. He also thinks the county could turn vacant properties into livable spaces for unhoused people.

Cornejo supports zoning regulations allowing additional housing units in vacant spaces and buildings that the county can transform into housing. She would also like to simplify the ADU process. In a previous county job, Cornejo worked on a tenant protection ordinance and would like to continue that type of work.

What is your plan to make sure public safety applies to residents of all means in your district?



López says in 1992, East Palo Alto was labeled the murder capital of the world, but last year, the city recorded zero homicides. López would like to expand that trend to the rest of the county. He says this was partly due to council decisions to increase the salaries of police officers because the department was underfunded. He would like other steps, like rehabilitation for at-risk youth, to be better funded across the district.

Brevard says the district's high crime rates are due "to a lack of resources and productive outlets for the community." She says the county could solve crime through community-centered job programs and fixing transportation issues. Brevard is also in favor of community policing focused on relationship building instead of solely on police presence.

Cornejo says public safety is a top priority because she repeatedly hears that "people want to feel safe" in their communities. She supports working closely with the sheriff's office on educational initiatives, leveraging the expertise of the sheriff's office to create impactful programs that focus on community building, crime prevention and emergency response.

Gauthier says public safety is every citizen's fundamental right and responsibility. For her, successful public safety includes prevention, intervention and accountability. She applauds the San Mateo County pilot program for de-escalating 911 responses while providing "appropriate, compassionate care for non-violent individuals." She believes investing in data tracking, community policy and transparent communication is vital to supporting a public safety approach that improves interactions with residents and law enforcement.

Bocanegra says he is "a firm believer in strengthening public safety, advocating for victims, as well as advocating for rehabilitation and prevention for our youth." He believes law enforcement could benefit from a civilian oversight model. He also says "smash-and-grabs" won't disappear until the county "gets in front of the issue" by providing housing, fair wages and safe transportation.

San Mateo County is the wealthiest county in California, while yet a third of the population of your county lives below the self-sufficiency standard. What are your plans and experiences in addressing poverty?



López says addressing poverty starts with education. That's why he plans to work with community colleges to create pathways for a free education. "I don't just want to see us as a janitor or as people cleaning up the trash," he says. "I want to see us inside the cubicles and executive positions."

Brevard says to help close the poverty gap, the county needs "to tackle it head-on by providing job training programs for all levels of employment." She would like to establish groups where people can learn English and other skills. She supports more job training opportunities, including rigorous programs that provide apprenticeships and internships with regional businesses.

Cornejo has witnessed the extreme wealth gaps between neighborhoods. "It's really important to foster economic mobility and job creation," she says. Cornejo would also like the county to invest in affordable housing. "Almost everyone's income goes to housing, so if we can alleviate some of that stress, that would go a long way," she adds.

Gauthier believes addressing poverty comes down to housing. "Homeownership is where families can create generational wealth." She says job training and transportation to work need further development in the county. She applauds the county's minimum wage ordinance but says the county can better provide access to high-paying jobs "that will sustain them in this region as prices continue to go up."

Bocanegra says the idea of equity in the district seems to be "slipping further and further away." He says gentrification of marginalized communities will only occur by "creating programs that allow them to be able to stay intergenerational in the place they call home." He supports programs for homeownership and universal child care and believes they can only benefit the community.

U.S. House of Representatives, District 16



Why does this race matter?

When U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo announced in November that she would not run for reelection after more than three decades in Congress, high-profile Democrats from across the South Bay jumped at the chance to represent reliably liberal communities from Pacifica to San José.

What does a U.S. representative do?

Representatives are your local community's voice in the U.S. House of Representatives. Members of congress write and vote on bills, including the federal budget. The top-two finishers in this primary election, regardless of party, will face off in the November election. The winner will serve a two-year term.

Key Candidates ?



Peter Dixon
Technology
Entrepreneur
Democrat



Rishi Kumar
Former City Council
Member, Saratoga
Democrat



Sam Liccardo
Former Mayor, San José
Democrat



Evan Low
State Assembly
Member
Democrat



Julie Lythcott-Haims
City Council Member,
Palo Alto
Democrat



Joe Simitian
Supervisor, Santa Clara
County
Democrat

Key Supporters ?

For Dixon

- Jason Crow, U.S. representative
- Don Davis, U.S. representative
- Jared Golden, U.S. representative
- Pat Ryan, U.S. representative
- Mikie Sherrill, U.S. representative

For Kumar

- Arjun Batra, City Council member, San José
- Nora Campos, former state Assembly member
- Kansen Chu, former state Assembly member
- Lydia Kou, City Council member, Palo Alto
- Our Neighborhood Voices

For Liccardo

- Matt Mahan, mayor, San José
- Congressional Hispanic Caucus

For Low

- Laphonza Butler, U.S. senator
- Ro Khanna, U.S. representative
- Eleni Kounalakis, lieutenant governor, California
- California Labor Federation
- South Bay Labor Council

For Lythcott-Haims

- Cory Booker, U.S. senator
- EMILY's List

For Simitian

- Dev Davis, City Council member, San José
- Anna Eshoo, U.S. representative
- Sergio Jimenez, City Council member, San José
- Pat Showalter, mayor, Mountain View
- Greer Stone, mayor, Palo Alto

Positions on Key Issues ?

Do you support a cease-fire in Israel's war with Hamas in Gaza? Would you support additional U.S. military aid to Israel?

Dixon says in his time as a Marine he served alongside the Israel Defense Forces and oversaw a Palestinian refugee camp in Iraq. "I appreciate the intent behind calls for a cease-fire but I think what is more effective in this case is the creation and the safeguarding of civilian evacuation corridors so that Palestinian civilians on the ground have more than one direction to get out of the line of fire," he says.

Liccardo supports a humanitarian pause in the Israel-Hamas war in order to bring aid into Gaza, but adds, "I fundamentally agree with the notion that you cannot negotiate with a terrorist organization that has just killed 1,200 members of your own community." He says the U.S. should engage with other Arab nations to find a new civil authority for Gaza. "It cannot be one that's simply bent on the destruction of Israel."

Lythcott-Haims is for a "bilateral humanitarian cease-fire," while adding, "It's not that simple — how do you negotiate a cease-fire with a terrorist organization like Hamas?" Lythcott-Haims says as a mother "whose children are half-Jewish, I explored my anguish for what Jewish people and Israelis are experiencing at the hands of Hamas." She fears Israel's response is fomenting the "creation of hate toward Israel, because kids are losing their parents and parents are losing their children."

Kumar opposes an immediate cease-fire "because I think the hostages are trapped," he says. "We have to forge a path for peace, but it begins from dismantling Hamas." Kumar supports continuing the U.S. relationship with Israel and wants the countries to further collaborate in order to prevent cyberattacks on the U.S. "That partnership is very, very important," Kumar says.

Low says, "Let us recognize that Hamas is a terrorist organization, and that we must do everything that we can to completely dismantle that terrorist organization. But number two, recognizing that we as taxpayers have an obligation ... that we must help ensure that this cannot be sustained for a long period of time." He says the U.S. commitment to Israel is critical because of Israel's leadership in the Middle East on LGBTQ rights.

Simitian says, "Whatever you call it, we want an end to the violence as soon as possible," while adding, "I understand and support the desire of Israel to essentially remove Hamas from Gaza." He supports America's involvement in pursuing a two-state solution.

What immigration policies would you support in the House? How should Congress respond to the record number of apprehensions of migrants at America's southern border?



Dixon says, “I also served with folks who were immigrants to the country and who believed in the American dream to the extent that they were willing to volunteer to go overseas and fight for it and not all of them came back.” He adds, “If we lose that, we not only lose the fundamental essence of what makes us American, but we lose a lot of the secret sauce of Silicon Valley itself.”

Liccardo supports providing a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants “who have been working here and living here for decades, building lives and families and communities.” Liccardo points to his experience prosecuting drug smuggling and human trafficking as a U.S. attorney. He opposes changes to the asylum system, such as limits on parole authority and “credible fear” standards, which he says “are beyond those that I would consider negotiable.”

Lythcott-Haims wants to ease the processing of asylum claims and adds that “I hope that this country will always be a place that welcomes the tired, huddled masses.” She thinks that “there are a lot of people skeptical about brown immigrants. So when they’re crossing the southern border, certain folks have concerns. When they’re crossing in from Canada or Western Europe, they don’t have those concerns. Let’s call that what it is: It is racism.”

Kumar supports changes to the country’s asylum system. “What’s happening at the border is unsustainable. ... Our borders cannot be open because everything we do, we do it legally. So why are we permitting something illegal?” Kumar also wants to protect workers in the H-1B visa program from abuse and remove per-country limitations on employment-based visas. “I think we need to attract this type of talent, but we do it legally,” he adds.

Low is in favor of expanding the immigrant workforce for engineering and agricultural jobs. “We simply just don’t have the type of workforce to fill the pipeline that is so required,” Low says. “Why would we educate someone here coming as an international student and then kick them out to become a job creator and a startup in another place?”

Simitian supports American engagement in Central and South American countries where migrants are fleeing from. He also supports increasing judicial staff to deal with asylum claims. “The whole system is broken in terms of simply an inadequate judicial corps to manage those issues,” he says. “So part of the solution, not particularly flashy, is to simply ramp up the ability of the system to deal with the level of demand.”

What policies have you supported and will you support to reduce carbon emissions and help residents deal with the effects of climate change?



Dixon says, “As I think about the world that I want my daughters to inherit, or this next generation to inherit, the habitability of the planet, it’s in question right now, and we have an opportunity to do our best — but it’s right now.” He supports investments in climate-resilient infrastructure and providing job training for clean energy careers.

Liccardo wants Congress to enact low-cost financing for homeowners to make climate-friendly investments in their homes, such as rooftop solar, energy storage or home hardening, which makes homes more resistant against fires and storms. As mayor, he helped launch municipal electricity generation supplier San José Clean Energy and supported a ban on natural gas infrastructure in all new construction. “We worked really hard on a strategy that would really decarbonize our grid,” he says.

Lythcott-Haims touts Palo Alto’s climate goals, such as the city’s push to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. She supports programs to help residents pay for clean energy upgrades through charges on their utility bills. “So you can pay for your own transition to electric and you can contribute to a pot of money that is going to allow those who can’t personally afford it to make the same transition.”

Kumar vows to invest in technology to combat climate change, such as carbon capture systems. He blasted the California Public Utility Commission’s decision to reduce payments to homeowners with solar panels in order to fund new incentives to help residents purchase rooftop solar systems. “We talk about climate change on one hand ‘Oh, we are so progressive,’ but on the other hand, you’re hurting the solar industry.”

Low says the district’s representative should keep the climate goals in mind “that we, of course, have reflected in the state of California [while] also using homegrown technologies to get us to that point.” He has voted to extend California’s cap-and-trade program to limit greenhouse gas emissions and a bill banning new oil and gas wells near schools and homes.

Simitian says Congress should work on ensuring the nation’s electrical grid is prepared for a transition to clean energy sources. “You’ve got to make sure we have battery storage so that renewables can be captured and then used when the demand is there,” he says. “These are all things where the federal government can and should play a key role.”

How have you helped and/or how will you help the Bay Area's transit and housing needs as a member of Congress?



Dixon proposes to tap empty land controlled by the federal government for housing, such as Moffett Field, near Mountain View. “One of the particular talents that I have is being able to go and free up money out of the Pentagon, which has the responsibility still in part for that land and make sure that we get the resources necessary to set the stage to build not just hundreds, but thousands of homes,” he says.

Liccardo pushed for temporary homes for the homeless during his time as mayor. To help pay for the sites, he is proposing that residents of interim housing be allowed to use federal housing vouchers. He also supports incentives for converting vacant office buildings into housing “in the downtowns where people have access to transit.” He led a campaign to pass the Measure RR sales tax in 2020, creating a dedicated funding source for Caltrain.

Lythcott-Haims wants the federal government to increase investments in affordable housing and help fund the operations, not just the capital projects, for Bay Area transit systems. She touts her work in Palo Alto expanding safe parking for people living in their vehicles and raising height limits on residential buildings to increase density in some areas of the city. “There are all kinds of ways in which we are as a city saying, ‘You know what? We do welcome everybody here.’”

Kumar says he would use the power of the federal purse to make significant changes to transit in the district. He wants to shut down the VTA light rail (“we are burning cash every day with that, nobody’s using it”) and pivot funding from the state’s high-speed rail system toward regional transit needs, such as improving commuter rail between the South Bay and Tri-Valley communities such as Pleasanton and San Ramon.

Low says, “I am a millennial, and I struggle to be able to afford to live in the community that I currently represent.” In the Legislature, he voted for bills to streamline the approvals of new housing, and in 2019 he voted in support of Assembly Bill 1482, which enacted eviction protections and established caps on rent increases.

Simitian touts his work on the board of supervisors supporting an affordable housing project for residents with developmental disabilities and orchestrating the purchase and preservation of the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park. “I said ... let’s think about how we hang onto that supply of affordable housing and prevent 400 people from being out on the street.” He also pushed to redirect local sales tax funding from the BART extension in San José toward other transportation projects.

What do you see as the role of Congress in regulating AI? How will you approach regulation of the tech industry?



Dixon launched his campaign with an AI-assisted video and the political organization he founded, With Honor, is advocating for the U.S. and its allies to develop a shared AI strategy. “The society that creates the rules has to be baking its ethics into it,” Dixon says. “And I would much rather have that be us as Americans versus somebody else, like the Chinese Communist Party.”

Liccardo says, “It’s critical that Washington [has] a champion for the innovation economy.” He believes Congress, not European governments or state legislatures, should be taking the lead on tech regulations. “You can’t expect leaders in the innovation economy to navigate a thicket of 50 different laws to determine what exactly the rules are around privacy or AI.”

Lythcott-Haims brings experience as an intellectual property litigator in Silicon Valley. She says regulations on AI should be tailored so that they are not too onerous on startups. “We want innovation and we want guardrails so that our amazing inventors, disruptors, futurists can really guide us toward what’s next and do so in a way that tries to ensure that we’re behaving ethically and in a manner that doesn’t harm humans.”

Kumar believes Congress needs more representatives with experience in the tech industry. “We see the congressional tech hearings and they become spoof videos in a nanosecond.” Kumar supports regulations that prevent a select few companies from monopolizing the development of artificial intelligence. “We have to ensure that every small startup that is probably happening right now will actually be the next Google,” he adds. “And so I think we cannot create competitive advantages here.”

Low says, “Silicon Valley must send the most ardent supporter of technologies” to Congress, but says he will also focus on “some of the perilous challenges that exist as well, which is that of the displacement of workers and jobs.” In the Legislature, he voted for the California Consumer Privacy Act, which gave residents more control over the collection of their personal information by businesses.

Simitian says Congress will have to “thread that needle” on AI regulations. “How do you foster the innovation and yet protect people against potential harms?” In the state Senate, he served as chair of the Senate Select Committee on Privacy, and in 2002 he wrote the first law in the country mandating entities with databases containing sensitive personal or financial information to notify individuals about a data breach.

Additional Candidates



Joby Bernstein **Climate Investor**

Democrat. Bernstein is pursuing an MBA and MS in Climate Science at Stanford. He is focusing his campaign on climate change, touting his "experience, stamina, and commitment to be part of the generational transition that ensures America is prosperous for the next 30 years."



Peter Ohtaki **Former Council Member, Menlo Park**

Republican. Ohtaki touts his work balancing municipal budgets in Menlo Park and says in Gaza, the U.S. "must stand by Israel against Iran-backed terrorists."



Greg Lin Tanaka **City Council Member, Palo Alto**

Democrat. Tanaka supports policies to boost the use of nuclear and renewable energy and wants to reduce airplane noise in the district.



Ahmed Mostafa **Women's Rights Attorney**

Democrat. Mostafa was the first candidate to call for an immediate ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas War. "I would not support additional military aid to Israel," he says.



Karl Ryan **Small Business Owner**

Republican. In 2020, Ryan won a seat on the Santa Clara County Republican Party Central Committee, the board of local officials who work to elect Republicans in the county.

State Assembly, District 23



Why does this race matter?

This is a liberal district with some of the nation's most expensive zip codes, such as Atherton and Los Altos Hills. Lydia Kou's sharp critiques of incumbent Marc Berman, a fellow Democrat, have the chance to turn this race into a referendum on policies passed by Democrats in Sacramento.

What does a state Assembly member do?

State Assembly members represent communities at the California Legislature in Sacramento. The 80 members of the state Assembly write and vote on state bills, serve on policy committees and vote on the annual state budget. The top two finishers in this primary election, regardless of party, will face off in the November election. The winner will serve a two-year term.

Key Candidates ?



Marc Berman
State Assembly
Member
Democrat



Lydia Kou
City Council Member,
Palo Alto
Democrat



Gus Mattammal
Chair, Midcoast
Community Council
Republican

Key Supporters ?

For Berman

- Gavin Newsom, governor, California
- Alex Padilla, U.S. senator, California
- California Democratic Party
- Planned Parenthood Advocates Mar Monte

For Mattammal

- California Republican Party
- San Mateo County Republican Party
- Santa Clara County Republican Party
- San Francisco Log Cabin Republicans

For Kou

- Ed Lauing, vice mayor, city of Palo Alto
- Lynette Lee Eng, council member, city of Los Altos
- Stan Mok, mayor, town of Los Altos Hills
- Greer Stone, mayor, city of Palo Alto

Positions on Key Issues

What do you make of the state government's push for local governments to approve more housing? Has the legislature gone too far? Not far enough?

Berman voted for zoning reform laws to streamline the approval of housing at the local level, such as Senate Bill 35 in 2017 and a bill last year (Senate Bill 423) to extend that law. He says the housing and homelessness crises are a result of “decades of inaction and decades of failure, frankly, at every level of government to build the housing that we need to support the really robust economy that we have.”

Kou opposes the zoning reforms passed in Sacramento and says as a council member, “I find it harder and harder to represent my constituents — mostly because of the state laws and state mandates that come forward that have really usurped our local land use and zoning laws.” Kou supports more funding from the state government to preserve and maintain existing affordable housing.

Mattammal says, “We cannot change the rules on people who have invested their lives and their hard-earned dollars by taking control of their neighborhoods away from them, and I will oppose or seek to undo any policy that does that.” He is proposing to allow “dramatically expedited” development along busy roads such as El Camino Real and Stevens Creek Boulevard. “This would significantly increase available housing, but not in our residential neighborhoods,” he says.

What would you do to improve public safety for residents? Do you support any changes to Proposition 47?

Berman says the state should focus on combating criminal organizations running retail crime rings “as opposed to locking up somebody who steals a couple of hundred dollars worth [of] goods for multiple years.” He points out that California’s threshold for when theft becomes a felony (\$950, set by voters with Proposition 47) is already one of the strictest in the country. “I think the solution is to enforce the laws that we currently have,” he adds.

Kou points to changes she voted for on the city council to reform police practices in Palo Alto, such as banning chokeholds and requiring de-escalation techniques. She says the Prop. 47 theft limit should be changed so more thefts are felonies instead of misdemeanors. She says current law “incentivizes people to go and say ‘I’m not responsible for anything and ... I’m just going to go and get it from the store.’”

Mattammal says he has used his voice on the Midcoast Community Council to push for expanded broadband access for coastside San Mateo County residents, in order to ensure reliable internet during emergencies. On Proposition 47, Mattammal says, “I am always open to a discussion of thoughtful, well-designed criminal justice reform, but Prop. 47 is not that at all, and I would repeal it in its entirety.”

How would you approach regulation of the tech industry, and specifically artificial intelligence, as a member of the state Assembly?



Berman wrote the first law in the country to regulate the use of deepfake technology in elections. This year, he proposed outlawing child sexual abuse material created by AI. “We actually had law enforcement agencies who saw the work that I’ve done around AI over the past five years, they came to us and they said, ‘We are arresting people that have sexually explicit material of children, but those images were created by technology.’”

Kou supports regulations that mitigate the harms of social media and artificial intelligence on youth. She wants the state to mandate that a certain level of employees work remotely, to ease demand on housing and transportation. Kou also wants to encourage companies to move outside of the district. “Make some incentives for companies to have their headquarters other places versus just all gathered here,” she says. “Why is it only focused on Mountain View and Palo Alto?”

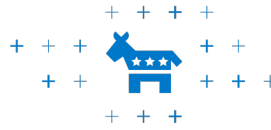
Mattammal says he is worried that regulations on business drive companies out of the district. On artificial intelligence, he says, “What we need is disclosure. In today’s society, the biggest challenge many people face is identifying what is real and believable, so in my view, AI should be allowed in just about anything, but should always be disclosed so that people can easily assess what is real from what is artificially produced.”

Additional Candidates



Allan K. Marson
International Attorney

Republican. Marson has experience as an attorney working for U.S. companies in Taiwan and China.



Democratic Presidential Primary



How does the presidential primary work?

California will send 496 delegates to the Democratic National Convention, of which 277 delegates will be allocated by congressional district to each candidate who finishes with at least 15% of the vote in each district; 147 delegates will be divided among each candidate who finishes with at least 15% of the statewide vote; and 72 delegates will be state and party officials not pledged to a candidate through the primary vote.

Who can vote in this primary?

Voters registered as Democrats, along with voters registered as No Party Preference. No Party Preference voters will need to request a crossover ballot from their county elections office to vote in this primary.

Key Candidates ?



Joseph R. Biden Jr.
President, United States of America
Democrat



Dean Phillips
U.S. Representative
Democrat



Marianne Williamson
Author
Democrat

Key Supporters ?

For Biden

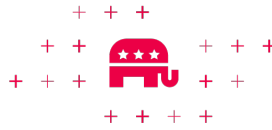
- Gavin Newsom, governor, California
- Alex Padilla, U.S. senator
- Nancy Pelosi, U.S. representative

For Williamson

- Maebe A. Girl, neighborhood councilor, Silver Lake

For Phillips

- N/A



Republican Presidential Primary



How does the GOP presidential primary work in California?

Last year, the state Republican Party changed its rules for selecting delegates. Under the new rules, if a candidate gets more than 50% of the statewide total of Republican votes cast, they get all of California's 169 Republican delegates. If no candidate manages to get a majority of the votes, delegates will be awarded in proportion to the share of the statewide vote that each candidate receives.

Who can vote in this primary?

The California Republican Party holds a "closed primary," meaning only voters registered as Republican can vote to choose the party's nominee. If you wish to vote in this primary and are not a registered Republican, you can re-register [here](#). After Feb. 20, you can change party registration, up until election day, in person at your local polling place, a vote center or your county elections office.

Key Candidates ?



Nikki Haley
Former Governor,
South Carolina/Former
Ambassador, United
Nations
Republican



Donald J. Trump
Former President,
United States of
America
Republican

Key Supporters ?

For Haley

- Lanhee Chen, fellow, Hoover Institution
- Tim Draper, Silicon Valley venture capitalist
- Jeff Gorell, supervisor, Ventura County
- Suzette Martinez Valladares, former state Assembly member

For Trump

- Shannon Grove, state senator
- Darrell Issa, U.S. representative
- Kevin McCarthy, former House speaker
- Michelle Steel, U.S. representative