

# OREB Endorsement 2024-7

This is part of the OREB endorsement process. Please complete this form. Questions 7 through 40 require a **SHORT** (no more than 800 characters) explanation as part of your answer. Click the button below to start. There are 13 sections. After launching, please click the "NEXT" button at lower left to go to the next section. If you have concerns, please contact Carol Coyote or Michael Cheng.

Email \*

jolene.gazmen@gmail.com

## I. Campaign information

1. Name

Jolene Gazmen

2. Preferred Pronouns

she/they

3. Position Running For

Albany School Board Member

4. Email Address

jolene.gazmen@gmail.com

5. Phone number

(562) 881-4754

## 6. Campaign website

N/A

## II. Campaign finances and support

### 7. Who has contributed to your campaign?

No one as of now

### 8. Other than individual donations, who do and will you receive donations from? List all groups, unions, businesses (especially those doing business with the entity in which you seek to hold office).

None as of now

### 9. Please list persons and organizations who have endorsed you.

Robin Lopez- Vice Mayor of Albany, Cassandra James- Solano County Supervisor, more to come

### 10. Please list PACs, Super PACs, and independent expenditure committees supporting you.

N/A

### 11. List any/all industries, organizations and people that you will decline donations and endorsements from, please be inclusive.

Anything having to do with law enforcement, far right-wing endorsements, organizations that are intertwined with religion.

## III. Crime and law enforcement

### 12. What do you think about the use of force by police? What and when is appropriate and what is not?

By now, we have all seen footage of the use of force by police, how it is doled out arbitrarily, and how it is often used to target minority and historically disenfranchised communities with little to no repercussions. In terms of when it would be necessary to use force, I would say that it would be necessary if there is an immediate threat to the public at large (like school shootings). But far too often guns are drawn in situations that do not warrant the use of force, especially deadly force. Police force should be few and far between, since it has been proven time and time again that there are alternative routes to resolving conflict. And that method should come with greater vetting and training of police in order to ensure that force is only used as a last resort.

13. Do you support banning private prisons? Please explain.

I completely support the banning of private prisons as there is no real benefit to having these structures of mass incarceration that incentivizes the locking up of innocent people, or individuals whose sentence is not proportional to the "crime." Private prisons rack up high costs, are contracted by governments, and gain money based on the amount of inmates they house, meaning that we as taxpayers are footing the bill, and the prison industrial complex feeds off of convicting even the most innocuous of indiscretions. This model also reinforces the money bail system, which in turn leads more people into debt as they try to borrow money for exorbitant high bail costs. And those who cannot afford bail are placed into a system where their very being and bodies are exploited for cheap labor.

14. Do you support abolishing cash bail? Please explain.

Yes, I support the abolition of cash bail. It has no bearing on people with the means, lending to them being able to be bailed out fairly easily. Meanwhile, it's a system that penalizes the poor, keeping them stuck in the system without any means to post bail, which can have severe psychological ramifications and traumas, especially since our court systems don't always work expeditiously and can have a person waiting days, weeks, months or in some horrific cases even years. And even as an alternative, bail bond companies charge a large bond premium and will come after you if you don't have the money to pay them after the fact. It's a heavily discriminatory system that especially penalizes the lower classes and it needs to be abolished immediately.

15. Do you support decriminalizing (and/or legalizing) all drugs? Please explain.

I support the legalization of most drugs, not all. However, I support the decriminalization of all drugs, because those who are addicts do not need to be criminalized, but rather offered support in order to help them through their addiction. Someone who battles with the mental distress of addiction should not also have to face the distress of criminal charges, which would only further uproot their lives and which would be harder to recover from both physically, mentally and financially. If anything, these folks do not deserve jail or prison time for drug use, but interventions and rehabilitation.

16. Do you oppose the use of capital punishment? Please explain.

Yes, I strongly oppose the use of capital punishment. There are too many people that have been sentenced to death for crimes that are highly contested and have not been proven beyond a reasonable doubt that they are guilty. More than that, there seems to be no purpose for sentencing someone to death as opposed to sentencing them to life in prison, other than to serve as a kind of spectacle for others or to cause fear. Both of those reasons are not sufficient enough to warrant taking a person's life.

17. Should convicted felons and prison inmates be granted the right to vote? Please explain your view.

Yes, they should be granted the right to vote. It does not make sense that districts are allowed to count prison inmates and convicted felons in their population count, but do not allow them to vote. How is it that they are allowed to count system impacted people in their population in order to garner more funds, but do not allow them to actually have a voice? Aside from that, folks who are incarcerated or previously convicted felons are or have already served out their punishment. Again, it goes back to "cruel and unusual punishment" as there seems to be an excessive penalization for the crimes in which these individuals were convicted, allowing for no sense of a fresh start or redemption.

18. What is your view on immigrants and immigration? What new legislation is needed? And what laws should be removed?

Immigration and immigrants are crucial to the growing success of our nation and I believe that we should accept most anyone who tries immigrating to the States. That being said, we need to strengthen policies that help people to transition into living in a new country. Legislation like the DREAM Act as a pathway to citizenship would be a good start. We also need to create opportunities for jobs and housing in order to help create security. We need legislation that seeks out the best in people, rather than assuming the worst; we need to take the money allocated to programs like ICE and place them into programs that help to create stability and growth, which will in turn help our society as a whole.

## V. Infrastructure issues

19. What kind of health care insurance system do you support? And why?

I support universal healthcare because I have seen how not having insurance negatively impacts people; the heartache of having to figure out if it's worth it to call for help, to wonder if calling for an ambulance is the right move— should not be something that people have to worry about in times of emergency. Even giving birth can rack up thousands of dollars that people just don't have; and that kind of stress on a postpartum parent is simply cruel. Funds should absolutely be allocated for something as universal as people's health; it's a no brainer for me.

20. Do you support public banking? Why or why not?

I support public banking. I am all for programs and initiatives that either give power to the collective, or flows to directly benefit the whole rather than a select few. The fact that people rather than shareholders are able to help make decisions on where the flow of money goes is a huge benefit in my eyes. So rather than having the people be beholden to private banks and nameless powers-that-be, I would rather move to a public bank system where there is more transparent accountability and where there is more of a mission to serve the public good.

21. Do you think public transit should be free?

Public transit should be free, especially considering how carbon emissions affect our environment and ultimately our existence. Particularly here in California, places are spaced out to the point of inaccessibility without some sort of transportation. By making public transit free, it will encourage those with cars to instead consider saving money by taking free transit, thereby cutting down on some of the emissions placed by the exorbitant amount of cars on the road. Furthermore, it would allow for accessibility for all (making sure that people are not land-locked or stuck in a certain area) and decriminalize petty crimes like failure to pay public transportation fares.

## VI. Labor

22. What do you think the minimum wage should be in California? Nationwide? What does a “living wage” mean to you?

I think the minimum wage should be proportional to how much it costs for a single person to work full time and still be able to afford basic necessities such as food and shelter. To me, that is the marker of a living wage: the ability to afford basic items and still feel as though you have enough to be okay until the next paycheck. The way that prices have inflated versus the set state and national minimum wage is laughable– it’s as though they want to force most all of us into destitution. Homeownership for a lot of people seems like a dream that might never be achieved. These are all things that a living wage even a few decades prior were able to get you plus groceries without the fear of breaking the bank, and candidly that is how it should be.

23. How would you protect workers not covered by the National Labor Relations Act?

24. Would you propose to tax the companies that rely upon contract workers? And how?

## VII. Housing

25. What are the causes of the housing crisis in California and the Bay Area?

One of the main causes for the housing crisis here in California and specifically here in the Bay Area is the lack of regulation as to who can buy properties. Corporate giants (like real estate developers) buy out housing in the area, outbidding regular people, flipping it, and selling it for much more than what they paid. They do this over and over, causing the prices in the market to skyrocket while leaving the individual buyers without any ability to fight them due to their unlimited funds. Another cause comes from multiple property owners, who buy up units and rent them out for “disposable income.” Airbnb and others like it are some of the biggest culprits. This landlord/slumlord greed has pushed many into having unstable living conditions, and are also pushing many into homelessness.

26. What do you propose to protect renters? Please comment on laws/acts, such as Costa Hawkins and others, to be repealed, and added/legislated?

I think renters, especially as of late, need to be protected by the ever rising costs of rent that is creeping up at an untenable rate. The Costa Hawkins Act placed a lot of power in the landlords’ hands, allowing for rent increases on single family homes, dwellings and apartments built after 1995, and the ban of vacancy control so landlords could raise the price of a vacant unit. This is an Act that needs to be repealed in favor of more rent control, especially seeing how prices on housing and food have risen exponentially, but wages have not done the same. We need legislation that limits the powers and prices that real estate giants and landlords can impose on renters, and we need fair prices rather than these hyper-inflated rents– prices that are proportional to standard wages.

27. Do you support the repeal of all laws that criminalize or punish homeless persons? What will you do to protect our unhoused communities?

I do support the repeal of all laws that criminalize or punish homeless people. It should not be a criminal offense to not be able to afford housing. Especially when the cost of living is unattainably high, and so much of the population is a couple paychecks closer to homelessness than they are to ever being a part of the 1%. In order to help protect the unhoused community, I would ban all homeless sweeps. I would also try to find actionable ways in which to help, such as employing a housing first model, which would place unhoused individuals into homes and provide them with services such as counseling and job placement.

28. How do we provide/develop more affordable and low-cost housings?

Speaking from someone who lives in a bigger city, there are a number of avenues that we can approach this from. One of the most logical would be to turn abandoned lots into affordable or low-cost housing. There are also a large number of units or even whole complexes that are no longer being used, which can also be turned into affordable or low-cost housing.

29. Do you support social housing? How do you propose to create it?

## VIII. Education

30. What is your opinion about charter schools?

31. What is your opinion about no cost public college and university?

I love the idea of no-cost public colleges or universities, and think that there should not be a barrier in order to obtain a higher degree. Nowadays, you see posts for entry level jobs that require higher degrees of education; this is a major barrier. Yet, seeking out a degree can be very expensive and still does not guarantee landing a job with a higher income - so some people see going to college as a greater financial risk that they are not willing to take on. By offering no cost public colleges or universities, you remove the barrier of high tuition and will undoubtedly open the door for highly qualified people to gain their degree and be eligible for these positions.

32. Do you support the cancellation of all student debt?

Absolutely I do! There is no reason why a person should have to take out a loan to pay for their schooling and for the promise of a better life, then spend years paying off that loan, and be made to pay (often) significantly more than what they borrowed. We have the funds to help cancel out student debt (as evidenced by the use of funds for war recently, or even just the existence of billionaires within our society). The model of student loans leave far too many in crippling debt for the simple act of trying to pursue higher education.

33. How do you propose to make universal public pre-K free?

Universal public pre-K can be made free by divesting from the copious amount of taxpayer money that is allocated to police and the prison industrial complex or the military, and instead invest that money into social programs that would help families overall.

34. Do you support “strengthening” Title IX?

I absolutely support the strengthening of Title IX. As a person who returned to college as a student-parent and graduated recently, it was not too long ago that I stood with our student-government to help champion the expansion of Title IX. It is such an important piece of legislation, for girls, women, transgender and non-binary folks, survivors and so many more. It holds these large entities (school districts, colleges, etc.) accountable and makes sure that there is an equality in the treatment and the protection of all persons regardless of sex or gender-identity.

## IX. Environmental

35. What do you think, broadly, a “Green New Deal” should contain?

36. Do you support banning fracking?

Yes, I support the banning of fracking. The pursuit of more profits has led to many environmental and even personal health hazards. Fracking has been linked to higher amounts of seismic activities, wastewater in our freshwater, cancer, and more. These should not be the consequences the public at large has to deal with in order to gain the country more money; the people should not be expendable byproducts for the dollar.

## X. Election

37. Do you support public financing of elections?

I support public financing of elections, especially if it helps to place people into political positions that are not bought and beholden to the ultra-wealthy.

38. Do you support ranked choice voting for your office, and in general?

I support ranked choice voting and believe that there is merit in making sure that our voices as voters are heard. With RCV, a voter's ballot and preferences can be wholly taken into account in order to decide who truly would be preferable for the majority of voters. Additionally, it would make elections run more efficiently seeing as run-off votes could be decided based on the preference given on the ballot. One thing I will say though is that in order to make ranked choice voting work to the full extent of its intended purpose, there should be a conscientious effort to make sure that voters understand how RCV works. This will ensure that voters take into consideration what they truly want their voting preferences to be, and will (hopefully) lead to more contented constituents.

## XI. US foreign policy

39. Do you support the international campaign of BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions)? And what should the US policy be on Palestine/Israel?

I whole-heartedly support the BDS movement. The US policy should not include funding anything that actively harms an entire innocent population, much less a genocide. Instead, we need to stop funding Israel, stop sending arms, and stop making excuses for our abhorrent behavior. After acknowledging our hand in the atrocities that have gone on thus far, the US should send aid to Palestinians, and actively assist with/allow for the safe passage and care of refugees that seek to relocate here to the States.

## XII. Anything else?

40. And if you have chosen not to answer some questions, please explain why.

There are a few questions that I did not answer because I felt as though it was out of the purview of my knowledge, and before answering, I would want to research a bit more in order to give more thoughtful, meaningful responses.

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