

SPONSOR: Candidates Committee

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SUBJECT: Endorsement of 7 candidates for statewide office

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE: For the last gubernatorial election (2022), we endorsed a slate of statewide "Left Unity Slate" candidates which included candidates from both the Green Party as well as the Peace and Freedom Party (P&F). For the upcoming 2026 election, we have been working toward a similar slate for most of the offices -- namely 3 P&F candidates for these 3 offices: Insurance Commissioner, State Controller, and Superintendent of Public Instruction, and 4 Green Party candidates for these 4 offices: Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, State Treasurer, and Secretary of State. (And we already endorsed Butch Ware for Governor at our previous General Assembly meeting). Also, as an "FYI", if a candidate for any of these statewide offices, except for Superintendent of Public Instruction, receives 2% or more of the statewide primary vote for that office, then that candidate's political party retains its ballot status for the next 4 years. The other way we can maintain our ballot status is if at least 0.33% of all registered voters in the state are registered as Green -- we currently have about 50% over that minimum percentage (at 0.49%, or 113,050 registered Greens).

PROPOSAL: That the Green Party endorse these 7 candidates: Eduardo "Lalo" Vargas for Insurance Commissioner, Meaghaan Adams for State Controller, Frank Lara for State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jaime Gutierrez for Lieutenant Governor, Marjorie Mikels for Attorney General, Glenn Turner for State Treasurer, and Gary Blenner for Secretary of State.

Please note that Peace and Freedom Party Lieutenant Governor candidate Alice Stek has also asked to be considered for endorsement. However, because Green Party candidates Butch Ware (for Governor) and Jaime Gutierrez (for Lieutenant Governor) are running as a team, the Candidates Committee recommends that we only endorse Jaime Gutierrez for the Lieutenant Governor position.

Info about each of the candidates is included in the "Timeline/Resources" section below and there will be brief presentations at the GA meeting from as many of the candidates as can attend. (Or statements will be read on their behalf if they're not able to attend).

COMMITTEE DECISION: The Candidates Committee sent each candidate a questionnaire which covered such subjects as campaign vision and strategy; biographical information, including activist experience; familiarity with the duties and powers of the office they're seeking; groups being contacted for endorsements; etc. After the completed questionnaires were returned, the Committee reviewed them to decide if they would recommend each of the candidates for endorsement. The Candidates Committee's consensus decision was to

recommend endorsement for all 7 of the candidates listed below. Therefore, we now present the candidates to you for your endorsement ratification.

TIMELINE/RESOURCES: The endorsements will be sent to our Liaison to the Secretary of State, who will then inform the Secretary of State about them, so they can be printed in the Voter Information Guide sent to all households with a registered voter. Info about our endorsements will also be published on our website, and the Candidates Committee will work with our Communications Committee on that.

Here is some info about each of the 7 candidates we recommend for endorsement:

Eduardo "Lalo" Vargas for Insurance Commissioner (*Peace & Freedom Party member*):

Lalo teaches biology and environmental science to high school students in Los Angeles. In 2022 he helped Pasadena tenants organize against evictions and form their own tenant union. And from 2014 until 2016, Lalo served as a volunteer firefighter and EMT-B in rural Ohio, providing direct care to patients in critical condition with severe traumas from car accidents, seizures, and potential OD's.

Lalo is running for Insurance Commissioner on a Socialist platform to end the stranglehold that private insurance has over the working class: He supports free and quality healthcare for all, holding insurance executives accountable for profiteering and exploitative practices, full compensation for fire victims, stopping the rate hikes, overhauling the California FAIR plan, saving our planet from capitalism, and abolishing insurance companies.

In 2024 Lalo ran for Los Angeles City Council, District 14 and obtained 4.7% of the vote in a crowded field. He was able to raise \$30,000 for that campaign and aims to double that amount for his Insurance Commissioner run.

Meghann Adams for State Controller (*Peace & Freedom Party member*):

Meghann has extensive union organizing experience and currently serves as President of SMART 1741, representing San Francisco and San Mateo school bus drivers and staff. She has also written about the need for a new political system that prioritizes people over profit through her contributions to the *Breaking the Chains* magazine, and she has served as an officer of the Peace and Freedom Party for over 10 years, and as an organizer for 20 years.

Meghann believes the State Controller should "shine a spotlight on the State's financial operations and fight for the needs of working people." Her program includes: ending tax evasion by the rich and their corporations, exposing corporate bribery in our state government, divesting the California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS) and the California State Teachers Retirement System (CalSTRS) from Israel, Medi-Cal for all, protecting California's environment while investing in green infrastructure and public transportation, public dollars for public housing, and fully funding our schools.

Meghann previously ran for California State Treasurer in 2022, with the endorsement of the Green Party.

Frank Lara for State Superintendent of Public Instruction (*Peace & Freedom Party member*):

Frank is the Executive Vice President of United Educators of San Francisco (UESF) and a member of the California Teachers Association (CTA) Financing Public Education Committee, shaping the union's stance on school funding legislation. He is a bilingual educator with over ten years of classroom experience, and in 2017 he received the

California Federation of Teachers (CFT) "Pride of the Union" Award.

Frank is running on a [Socialist platform](#) as an alternative to the Democrats and Republicans who have overseen the underfunding of our schools and the underinvestment in our communities. His campaign believes that a better education system in California is not only possible, but necessary to secure a future for the youngest Californians. He states that, "We can make California first in per-pupil spending if we have the courage to tax corporations and the rich. We can fully staff schools, and assure fair wages and working conditions for all educational staff, including paraeducators, nurses, academic workers, custodians, librarians, social workers, and much more if we take on the billionaire class."

Frank also was a Peace and Freedom Party candidate for Congress in 2014.

Jaime Gutierrez for Lieutenant Governor (*Green Party member*):

Jaime is a civil rights attorney who has sued multiple law enforcement agencies for their abuse of authority, including but not limited to Immigration Enforcement, L.A.P.D., the L.A. County Sheriff, etc. He has defended pro-bono activists with BLM-Pasadena, Anonymous, Uhuru, Union del Barrio, etc.

His campaign for Lieutenant Governor will focus on the environment, health care, education, and housing. He will fiercely defend the migrants targeted by ICE and defend the dignity of those racially profiled by ICE, with the consent of the Supreme Court.

Jaime volunteered for two years at the United Farmworkers headquarters, working on multiple political campaigns, and where he worked with Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta. He was student body president at East L.A. College and received his bachelor's degree from U.C. Berkeley, followed by graduation from the New College of California School of Law. He has also been a Brown Beret and a member of the American Indian Movement.

Jaime believes that the Green Party agenda is universal, and as a Spanish-speaking Chicano, he'll work to communicate it to a broader base of voters.

Marjorie Mikels for Attorney General (*Green Party member*):

Marjorie previously was a social worker, but after earning a Juris Doctor Degree from UCLA, she was certified to practice in the courts of California, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeal, and the U.S. Supreme Court. She has represented many activists charged with ridiculous crimes arising out of exercise of free speech, and was a joint initiator of a county ballot initiative against the Ward Valley Nuclear Dump, while serving as counsel for PARD (People Against Radioactive Dumps).

Marjorie is planning a campaign to help enlighten people to possible social transformation, "giving rise again to hope instead of despair." The theme of her campaign is: "Justice for ALL' and revolution through accountability."

She also previously was a candidate for US Congress, and for State Senate, and has served as Secretary and a board member for the Peace and Justice Committee of Pomona Valley, and traveled extensively, across Europe, North Africa, and through West, South, and East Asia.

Glenn Turner for State Treasurer (Green Party member):

Glenn is an activist and former small business owner. She's involved with Family Advocates for the Seriously Mentally Ill (FASMI) and for the past decade, with Berkeley Copwatch. She ran a sole proprietor retail shop in Oakland for 32 years with 6 employees and did all of the quarterly and yearly reports with some help from a bookkeeper, and in 2020 she sold it to employees and retired.

BDS (Boycott, Divest, Sanction) is a high priority for Glenn, and that will be central to her Treasurer's campaign. In particular, the State Treasurer sits on the Boards of the 2 big state pension funds (CalPERS and CalSTRS), which have over 3 billion dollars invested in companies which do business with Israel, so Glenn will demand that those pension funds divest from those companies. Glenn will also call for divestment from fossil fuels, and from Pentagon weapons manufacturers, as part of her campaign.

Glenn has also worked with climate action groups, including the Climate Emergency Mobilization Task Force, founded by Berkeley City Councilmember Cheryl Davila, and the Public Bank of the East Bay, being developed as a partial alternative to for-profit banks.

Gary Blenner for Secretary of State (Green Party member):

Gary has taught government and U.S. history for 32 years in the Sacramento area and is active in his union, the San Juan Teachers Association. He served on the Center Joint Unified School District Board from 2006 to 2010, where he worked on expanding student services and community engagement, and in 2012 and 2016 he ran for the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors. His career "combines classroom experience, elected service, union activism, and hands on campaign work.... always with the same goal: a democracy that reflects and serves the people."

His "Plan to Strengthen Our Democracy" includes: Proportional Representation (moving the State Assembly and congressional races to multi-member districts elected by proportional representation); Instant-Runoff Voting (Ranked-Choice) for statewide, legislative, and local elections; and Clean Elections and Transparency (pushing public campaign financing, robust disclosure, and open data dashboards so the public can follow the money and the votes.)

In 2022, Gary ran for Secretary of State with the endorsement of the Green Party.

Candidate **not** recommended for endorsement *(Per the info further above, because Green Party candidates Butch Ware (for Governor) and Jaime Gutierrez (for Lieutenant Governor) are running as a team, the Candidates Committee is recommending that we only endorse Jaime Gutierrez for the Lieutenant Governor position.):*

Alice Stek for Lieutenant Governor *(Peace & Freedom Party member):*

Alice Stek has served as a practicing physician at a safety net hospital, a researcher and educator in high-risk obstetrics and HIV, and a university faculty member for over three decades. Alice was previously elected to her neighborhood council and for more than 2 decades she was repeatedly elected to the State and LA County Central Committees of the Peace and Freedom Party, as a member and an officer.

As a physician and community organizer, Alice is running for Lieutenant Governor to put the needs of Californians ahead of corporate profits. She states that, "Healthcare is a human right; we can achieve high-quality universal healthcare in California." She will also "focus on ensuring access to quality higher education, which should be free." Her campaign will "host people's forums to engage directly with the working class and launch a robust media effort to popularize this vision."

In 2004 Alice ran for Congress in California's 36th District, earning 6,105 votes. "Now, two decades later, her strengthened connections, proven experience, and dynamic team position her to far surpass that previous result."