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Political Beliefs – *good wrap up of progressive beliefs*

Political Philosophy

Before I describe my political philosophy, I should point out that the office I am running for is a nonpartisan office. It's nonpartisan for a reason. The Water District's job is local and technical and party affiliation is not necessarily relevant. I'm a Democrat, and I consider myself progressive. But as a board member it will be my responsibility to listen to and consider the views of all segments of the community, and that's what I will do.

My political philosophy

Extreme concentration of wealth and power is a threat to democracy.

I believe that extreme disparities in wealth, and concentration of wealth and power in a small segment of the population, endangers democracy. I think we are in danger of losing our democracy right now. We must protect our democratic institutions -- imperfect as they are. If we succeed, we must reverse the growing concentration of wealth and power in a few hands.

I think "the power of money in politics" is one aspect of this problem. The power of money in politics is out of control. We see it at all levels, down to the local

level. It is very hard for those with little money to compete in the electoral process and lobby government. The Supreme Court's decision in *Citizen's United* made the problem worse. One of our goals should be to reverse this decision legislatively, as soon as possible.

As an attorney at the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for 15 years, I saw the power of money up close. Large, politically connected companies regulated by the CPUC pour enormous resources into lobbying at all levels of government, up to the very top, and often get what they want that way. Companies neutralize feisty community organizations with “charitable” donations. The “revolving door” enables them to influence the regulatory agency from both the inside and the outside.

Commission staff could tell when a sitting commissioner was headed for a lobbying job. Those commissioners established their lobbying credentials while still in office.

I saw the power of money at the CPUC up close because I worked there, but it isn't hard to find “captured” agencies all across the county at the state and federal levels. Captured agencies do not fulfill their core mission: to protect the public.

We must get government to do as much good and as little harm as possible.

I support measures to improve the quality of life and financial stability of those who are struggling. We should raise the minimum wage, provide health care to all, and invest in public education, including early childhood education for families who want it.

I reject the mindset that “government is not the solution, government is the problem.” We have to be free to criticize our government – very important! – but we need government to do certain things that only government can do: protect us from dangers like wildfires, pandemics (!), and criminal activity of all kinds. We need government to run safety net programs like Social Security, Medicare, and unemployment insurance. We need government to protect public health and safety, to make sure our food, medicine, toys, cars, and airplanes, are safe. We need government to protect the environment, consumers, workers, children, and

precious wild places. We need government to build roads, bridges, and water systems, and to invest in people through public education.

We all know that government makes mistakes, sometimes with terrible consequences. Government needs to be watched like a hawk – one reason the press is so important. But political engagement boils down to getting government to do as much good as possible, and as little harm as possible. When we find out about government misconduct – corruption, illegal surveillance, and other violations of civil rights, police brutality – we have to speak up and demand that it stop. We have to hold government accountable, not destroy it.

It is imperative that we address systemic racism.

Since the murder of George Floyd, people have been crying out for our country to address our history of systemic racism. So many Black people have been murdered in our country, but the murder of George Floyd brought white people out into the streets in large numbers along with Black people and other people of color. I support Black Lives Matter because they are right – systemic racism has been part of our history from the beginning and it has never stopped. And it's intolerable. Police brutality is one horrifying manifestation of racism, but systemic racism impacts Black people in so many ways -- housing, health care, education, psychological impact. Racism plays a poisonous role in our society and racist views are manipulated politically to devastating effect. So we need to learn about this part of our history that most of us never learned much about. We need to really understand how pervasive systemic racism has been, and what the consequences are. Meanwhile we can start repairing the damage by identifying and eliminating institutional racism in education, housing, the criminal justice system, and elsewhere.

John Lewis used to say, “We all live in the same house.” Some people in our house have been mistreated for far too long. We cannot let it go on any longer.