

# IRVINE WEEKLY

OCTOBER 29, 2020 • VOL. 2, NO. 26

## ELECTION 2020 VOTER GUIDE

INFORMATION AND PERSPECTIVE ON LOCAL AND STATE CANDIDATES AND BALLOT MEASURES.





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COVER: COURTESY BY ELEMENTS DIGITAL ON UNSPLASH



\*PHOTO BY AZUSA TARN

## WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE 2020 IRVINE CITY ELECTIONS

BY: IRVINE WEEKLY EDITORIAL BOARD

Irvine city elections are always eventful. There are often large numbers of diverse candidates, with wildly differing beliefs, seeking to hold office in our city. There are always familiar faces that seem to run every two years. There is always a surprise or two. And this year will be particularly historic given that we are voting during a global health pandemic and government-imposed lockdowns.

We know that most people in the city do not have time (or interest) to pay attention to the constant ebb and flow of Irvine politics so here is a quick primer on some important things you should know because politics in Irvine moves fast and a lot has changed in since we last voted:

### **Mike Carroll is a Current City Councilman on the Ballot for the First Time**

When Irvine voters look at their ballots, they will see one particular name for the first time: Mike Carroll. Yet, while Carroll is a first-time candidate, he is already a member of the Irvine City Council. That is because Carroll was appointed with bipartisan support on the council to fill a vacancy. The vacancy occurred when then-mayor Don Wagner won a special election to become a member of the Orange County Board of Supervisors. As a result, then-

councilwoman (and former mayor) Christina Shea was appointed to fill the mayor role leaving an open seat on the council which Carroll was appointed to.

While Carroll's name may be new to many voters in Irvine, his reputation among his fellow councilmembers led to his bipartisan support to the City Council. That is because at the time of appointment, he was serving on the city's planning commission and developed a reputation for a fair, community-focused approach.

### **Christina Shea is Running for Mayor**

Last time voters saw Christina Shea on the ballot she was running for City Council, for which she won. As mentioned above, she was appointed to mayor (a position she has served in before). Now, Shea is running for mayor of Irvine because she believes that the city needs steady leadership in such a tumultuous time. She has made public safety a cornerstone of her campaign as well as education, arguably the two issues most Irvinenites hold most dear.

Shea has a long history in Irvine and is one of the most recognizable public figures in the history of the city. She is popular, knows the issues and the players, and has won a lot of elections in the city.

While four candidates in total are running for mayor, the most formidable besides Shea is Farrah Khan, a currently elected member of the City Council. Khan is in her first term ever serving on the City Council and was elected two years ago in what some would call a surprise victory. She and Shea have been allies on the council, and even considered each other friends at one time. The race should be interesting to say the least.

### **Melissa Fox is Not Seeking Re-election to the Council**

Councilwoman Melissa Fox is not seeking re-election to the council in November. That is because she won the Democrat nomination for state Assembly where she is seeking to unseat former Irvine mayor and now-state Assemblyman Steven Choi.

When first elected to the council, Fox was a virtual unknown in Irvine politics. But she was devoted to an intense regimen of door-knocking and meeting with Irvine residents. She also started her own blog which provides a platform for constant commentary of political issues as well as a means to communicate with constituents.

### **At Least One New Member Will Join the City Council After the Election**

At least one new face will be elected to the Irvine City Council this fall. That is because Fox has decided not to run for re-election. But it is also possible that the council could elect two or even three new faces this election season. That is because if Councilwoman Khan wins the mayor's race, her seat would automatically go to the third-place finisher in the council election according to Irvine city rules. And, if Councilman Carroll were not successful in his bid for election to the council, the city dais would have another new member.

We will be following the city elections very closely in the pages of Irvine Weekly as well as our website [IrvineWeekly.com](http://IrvineWeekly.com).



## NOVEMBER 3 ELECTION PRIMER

### WE BREAK DOWN THE RACES FOR CONGRESS, STATE ASSEMBLY AND STATE SENATE THAT IRVINE RESIDENTS WILL SEE ON THE BALLOT.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

**F**or Irvine residents, the ballot for the November 3 election is packed. In addition to the race for Irvine City Council and mayor, president of the United States, and state ballot measures, Irvine voters will also have the opportunity to vote in a Congressional election, a State Senate race and two State Assembly races.

#### Election for Congress

In the battle for the 45th Congressional District, which includes Irvine, Villa Park, Laguna Hills, Lake Forest and North Tustin, first-term Democratic Representative Katie Porter is challenged by Republican Mission Viejo City Councilman Greg Rath.

Porter is the first Democrat to represent the 45th District since the district was formed in 1983. Porter has gained national attention with the use of a white board in Congressional committees, along with an interrogation-style method of questioning during Congressional hearings.

The congresswoman, a former Professor of Law at UC Irvine, garnered both acclaim and criticism on Capitol Hill for her questioning of the likes of JPMorgan

Chase Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon and Robert R. Redfield, Director of the Centers for Disease Control. Among the key message points of her campaign are gun control, housing affordability and health care. She has also been one of the top political fundraisers in all of Congress.

Considering the 45th District's Republican-leaning voting trend over the past decade, Porter's progressive-leaning politics will undoubtedly stand out in comparison to Rath's conservative viewpoints. Republicans have a slight voter registration advantage in the district, about 3,000 voters, which accounts for roughly 0.6% of voters.

Rath, a veteran with more than two decades of service in the U.S. Marine Corps, is the former mayor of Mission Viejo where he currently serves as city councilman. Coupled with the on-going conversation about building a veterans cemetery in Irvine, voters might find hope in Rath's mission to support veteran causes.

Rath, who defeated five other GOP candidates for this congressional seat earlier this year in the primary, is campaigning with a message of lowering

taxes, lowering health care costs and changing back-tax law to allow for state and local taxes (SALT) to be deducted, including mortgage deductions.

In terms of fundraising, Porter is ahead. Porter's re-election campaign generated more than \$8 million, according to OpenSecrets.org. While Rath's campaign raised less than \$1 million.

#### Election for State Senate

The 37th District of the California State Senate will feature a race between Republican incumbent Senator John Moorlach (R-Costa Mesa) and Democrat challenger Dave Min, an Irvine resident and UC Irvine law professor.

Moorlach has a rich history of political experience in Orange County. His career began in 1995, when he was elected Orange County Treasurer-Tax Collector. In 2006, the Republican was elected to the County Board of Supervisors, on which he served for nearly a decade. Moorlach went on to defeat current 3rd District Supervisor Don Wagner for the State Senate seat in 2015.

While Min has never held public office, his campaign has received endorsements from some of California's top democratic leaders, including Secretary of State Alex Padilla, current Vice Presidential Candidate Kamala Harris, and California Governor Gavin Newsom. The 37th District seat has been controlled by the Republican Party since redistricting took place in 2011.

One complicating factor in the race is that the California Correctional Peace Officers Association (the prison guard union) has committed to spend nearly \$1 million against Moorlach, according to state campaign filing reports.

#### Election for Two State Assembly Races

Voters will also have a chance to decide on California State Assembly elections for two neighboring districts in Orange County. In California State Assembly District 68, Irvine city councilmember Melissa Fox, a Democrat, will be running against Republican incumbent Assemblyman Steven Choi, who is a former Irvine mayor.

Choi has a long tenure of political dealings in Orange County, particularly Irvine. In 2004, Choi was elected to the Irvine City Council, then mayor of Irvine in 2012. This year, Choi is adamant about protecting the public from COVID-19, and improving health care. As one of his main points of emphasis, Choi co-authored Assembly Bill 251, which provides an income tax credit for

family caregivers, giving families the ability to purchase medical equipment, transportation and/or make needed modification to their homes.

Choi has endorsements from several public office holders in Irvine including Irvine City Councilman Anthony Kou, and current Irvine City Councilman Michael Carroll. Choi is also endorsed by Irvine Mayor Christina Shea, and has support from the Association of Orange County Deputy Sheriffs and the California Republican Party.

Fox is not seeking re-election to the Irvine City Council in November, instead trying to unseat Choi, who is running for a third-term. In Irvine, Fox has become well-known for her local political blog. Her campaign is focused on housing affordability, health care, education and a number of other issues. And she has made COVID-19 "response and recovery" her top priority in her message to voters.

Fox has received endorsements from both federal and state leadership, including U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Representative Katie Porter, California Governor Gavin Newsom, along with several organizations, including the California Democratic Party.

In Assembly District 74, which covers portions of Irvine, Costa Mesa and Huntington Beach, incumbent Cottie Petrie-Norris and Newport Beach Councilwoman Diane Dixon will compete.

The Democratic incumbent Petrie-Norris, a resident of Laguna Beach, has held office since 2018, after she defeated Republican incumbent Matthew Harper. This round, Petrie-Norris will be running with a focus on education and schools, along with a wildfire prevention and response program. Petrie-Norris will look to defend her seat against Dixon with endorsements from the Association of California State Supervisors, the California Professional Firefighters, California Governor Gavin Newsom and Senator Dianne Feinstein.

Dixon, a Newport Beach City Council member and former mayor, is working to defeat Petrie-Norris with a focus on financial stability, and a plan to decrease the state's unfunded pension liability. Dixon also has plans to create a Harbor Department to manage the harbor infrastructure in Newport Harbor. Dixon carries an endorsement from Orange County Supervisor and congressional candidate Michelle Steel, along with the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association and former California Governor Pete Wilson.

# OPINION

## CHRISTINA SHEA FOR MAYOR OF IRVINE

**SHEA'S LONG HISTORY OF LEADERSHIP WITHIN IRVINE WILL BRING STABILITY AND CONTINUITY TO THE CITY COUNCIL.**

BY: IRVINE WEEKLY EDITORIAL BOARD

Irvine is fortunate to have a capable and caring City Council at a time when our state and national political climate is unfortunately and unnecessarily chaotic. For our well-run



city to continue on a path of good-governance in such uncertain times, we need stability and continuity on the City Council.

That is why Irvine Weekly is endorsing Christina Shea for mayor of Irvine.

Shea has a long history of leadership in the city with numerous accomplishments under her guidance. Perhaps the most significant of which was delivering on the city's promise to build the Great Park. But there are many other virtues of the city to tout: Irvine is the safest city in the nation; Irvine has incredible public education; Irvine has a robust business community; and Irvine has tremendous open space with a deep commitment to environmental stewardship.

As both mayor and a former City Council member, Shea has long been involved in the city's governance and deserves credit for many of these accomplishments in Irvine.

In the coming months and years, there will be a plethora of challenges that

the mayor will need to address. And having a leader with so many years of experience will serve our community well. From helping to rebuild the city's small business landscape after business shutdowns caused by Covid-19, to keeping Irvine the safest city in America, to building a veterans cemetery, the mayor will need to pull from an arsenal of relationships and resources developed over decades of service.

In dealing with these issues, Shea's plan includes creating a Mayor's Business Council to help businesses in the city bounce back; she is adamant that a veterans cemetery should be built with state funding as to not overwhelm the city's coffers; and she boasts a strong relationship with Irvine police, and in fact was endorsed by the police association.

Shea's current involvement in the city is admirable, and considering the hard road ahead in the aftermath of Covid-19, there is no need to replace Irvine's current mayoral leadership.

While we believe Shea deserves to continue on as mayor, one of her opponents for the post, current City Council member Farrah Khan, is also capable of tackling the enormous job and we believe she would someday make a good mayor in the future, perhaps even in 2022 or 2024.

In fact, Khan has already served the council well by providing an independent viewpoint on most issues the city is facing. Also, she serves as chair of the Great Park Board which holds tremendous responsibility. Regardless as to whether or not she wins the mayoral race this year, Khan will stay on the City Council. And, frankly, we believe that it will be a better governing body if both Shea and Khan are still on the City Council after the dust settles from the November election.

We respectfully endorse Christina Shea for mayor of Irvine.

## MIKE CARROLL FOR CITY COUNCIL

**CARROLL'S EXPERIENCE WILL PROVIDE LEADERSHIP THAT WILL BENEFIT ALL IRVINE RESIDENTS.**

BY: IRVINE WEEKLY EDITORIAL BOARD

There will be two elected seats, and potentially a third, open for the Irvine City Council in November.

With more than a dozen candidates running, voters in Irvine will have tough decisions to make. What's needed most after all the votes are counted is steady leadership.



That is why Irvine Weekly is endorsing Mike Carroll for Irvine City Council.

As the current Vice Mayor of Irvine, Carroll's experience has well-prepared him for the challenges the city will face over the next few years. These challenges include COVID-19 recovery, helping the local business community, and maintaining Irvine's status as the safest city in America.

Carroll has demonstrated a community-first attitude, which is evident through his active community engagement and the programs he has championed. For example, he helped to establish Irvine's Small Business Relief Program, in which more than 500 local businesses received financial support to assist in reopening safely.

Vice Mayor Carroll also worked to keep Irvine residents safe by spearheading the county's first free COVID-19 testing facility at the Great Park in Irvine, a tremendous accomplishment that demonstrated the importance of local leadership in helping combat the virus.

We also like that Carroll has worked closely with all of the members on the council and had bipartisan support for his own appoint-

ment to the council. Both Mayor Christina Shea and City Council member Farrah Khan, who are both running for mayor, voted to appoint Carroll to his current seat.

We were impressed with Carroll's real-world solutions for traffic, including his Three-Step Traffic Plan, that includes "Smart Traffic Control Systems" and reversible lanes.

Additionally, Carroll's experience as vice chair of the Irvine Planning Commission, and chair of the Community Services Commission, played in the endorsement selection. We feel that Carroll's experience will provide leadership that will benefit Irvine residents for years to come.

We respectfully endorse Mike Carroll for Irvine City Council.

### ABOUT IRVINE WEEKLY'S ENDORSEMENT PROCESS:

*Irvine Weekly undergoes a thorough study of the positions and backgrounds of each of the candidates running for City Council and mayor. As part of that process, we send questionnaires to all of the candidates to better understand their beliefs, values, vision for the city and the policies they would prescribe if elected. Irvine Weekly believes that Irvine is one of the most desirable places to live in Orange County because of its safety, quality education, strong business climate, commitment to open space and the environment and its diversity. Those guiding principles influence who we endorse for elected office here. We also realize that not everyone in our community shares the same beliefs or political positions, which is why we also provide information about all the candidates running so that each member of our community can make up their own mind about the candidates and support the candidate that best shares their values. We also welcome feedback and letters to the editor which may be submitted at [IrvineWeekly.com](http://IrvineWeekly.com).*

# OPINION ELECTION

## HONORABLE MENTIONS FOR IRVINE CITY COUNCIL

BY THE IRVINE WEEKLY EDITORIAL BOARD

**W**ith more than a dozen candidates running for a pair of seats on the Irvine City Council, there are plenty of things to take into consideration when choosing from such a deep pool of Irvine candidates.

In the event that Farrah Khan is elected mayor of Irvine, a third council seat will open. The vacant City Council seat will be decided by the candidate who receives the most votes – after the two seats are filled.

While we have formally endorsed Christina Shea for mayor and Mike Carroll for City Council, there are a couple of other candidates for City Council that caught our attention and deserve an honorable mention: John Park and Diana Jiang.



Irvine City Council candidate Diana Jiang shares Park's stance on the veterans cemetery, as building without state funding would be a burden to city taxpayers, she says. Jiang is a 26-year resident of Irvine, running to be an independent voice on the council. A mother of two, she is highly involved within the community, volunteering for the Irvine Children Youth, Family Advisory Committee and the UCI Social Science Foundation. Professionally, Jiang is a software engineer who believes Irvine is poised to become the economic hub of Orange County or "Silicon Orange." Jiang said she will use her professional expertise to bring innovation and develop technology into city government, by way of app-based software, to better prepare Irvine for the future and create a more open and transparent government.



John Park is a 21-year resident of Irvine, with experience as a vice president at two Fortune 1000 companies. One of his main priorities is to maintain a strong relationship with the Irvine Police Department. As a business owner, and a member of the Irvine Finance Commission, Park understands where Irvine is financially and has experience well-suited to guide Irvine into a stable economic future. Additionally, Park believes that the veterans cemetery in Irvine should be built but with funding from the state government.



## ELECTION PRIMER: IUSD BOARD OF EDUCATION

### HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE BOARD TRUSTEE RACE FOR IRVINE UNIFIED.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

**T**he upcoming November elections will give voters in Irvine the opportunity to select candidates for newly zoned Trustee Areas within the Irvine Unified Board of Education.

Voters should note that this will be the first election in Trustee Area 3 and Trustee Area 5 since IUSD transitioned to a "by-trustee area" election process from an at-large voting system.

The transition occurred in June 2018, when the Orange County Committee on School District Organization approved the by-trustee area election process, after the IUSD board's extensive three month review process, which involved six versions of new colored-coded trustee area maps.

The board decided to adopt the Purple IV map, which can be found here.

Voters will need to fill two seats on the Irvine Unified Board of Education – one in Trustee Area 3 and one in Trustee

Area 5. Trustee Area 1 incumbent and IUSD Board of Education President Lauren Brooks will automatically serve her second term due to a lack of competition.

For the first time, voters will need to select a candidate to represent Trustee Area 3, and will make the choice between four candidates. The race in Trustee Area 5 will be something for Irvine voters to keep an eye on as Irvine pediatrician Demetra Arvanitidis will look to defeat current Trustee Area 5 incumbent Paul Bokota.

Here's a look at the Trustee Area 3 and Trustee Area 5 candidate's statements for those who have filed them with the Orange County Registrar Of Voters.

### TRUSTEE AREA 3

#### Douglas Euper

I am first and foremost a father of two boys who have attended school in the IUSD for over 10 years. I am a

# ELECTION

teacher with over 20 years experience in the classroom teaching Economics, U.S. History, Civics, and World History. I have also been a youth baseball coach in Irvine for over 10 years. Events of this past year have motivated me to stand up and try to help my community by bringing my experience and perspective to the School Board. I feel the decision by the IUSD to take the grades of the students away this past spring and force them to accept a credit/no credit model was a disaster that was not well thought out and did great harm to our kids. This decision also undercut our teachers who should be trusted to make the decision of how to assess their students, especially during these difficult times. I am running to advocate for our kids and for our teachers, on this and the many other issues that come before our school board and Superintendent. Our students and teachers deserve better.

## **Bethany Huang**

As a graduate from Canyon View Elementary, Sierra Vista, and Northwood High, I have experienced first-hand how the IUSD curriculum and board policy have impacted students and their families. It is time for me to give back to and improve the school district that has prepared me for my future career!

As an intern for a State Senator for 2 years, I've worked with district representatives and other state legislators on various issues. I have specifically worked on promoting transparency and parent involvement in Irvine sex education. I value parental rights as much as faculty opinion and am passionate about representing both families and their teachers.

For far too long, Irvine students and parents have not been represented when deciding school curriculum, safety and even funding. If elected I will ensure and promote policy that:

- Allows honest and transparent communication between the board and parents about curriculum.
- Responds to parental concerns about child health and safety.
- Allocates funds to support teachers and promote student growth
- Fosters student and teacher creativity in the visual and performing arts.

Irvine education needs change, and to serve as your board member would be

an honor. We need young, innovative leaders. I appreciate your vote.

## **Sidney Wu**

I attended Orange County public schools, graduating from UC Irvine. My wife, Annie, and I bought our first home in Irvine, running our family business, raising our two children here, and sending them to Irvine Unified School District schools.

An active volunteer, I'm dedicated to strengthening Irvine and our public schools. I've served our community as:

- Member, Irvine Unified School District Finance Committee
- President, Vista Verde K-8 Foundation
- President, South Irvine Dolphins, Irvine Swim League
- Irvine City Commissioner

My grandfather was a principal, my mother was a teacher, and my parents were immigrants. A strong believer in education at all levels, I earned my MBA, and I currently administer a UC Irvine scholarship.

I'm not a politician, and I've never run for elected office. I'm a concerned citizen and parent who wants to give back to our Irvine public schools.

As your Irvine Unified School District Trustee, I will work to:

- Preserve our high academic standards
- Maintain and enhance our world-class schools
- Protect the health and safety of our students
- Retain and attract top teachers
- Ensure our taxpayer dollars go directly to the classroom, not administration

My service and experience have earned me endorsements from:

- Irvine Unified School District President Betty Carroll
- Orange County Supervisor/Former Irvine Mayor Don Wagner
- Irvine Vice Mayor Mike Carroll
- Irvine Councilmember Anthony Kuo

## **Cyril Yu**

I am your neighbor, an involved dad, long-time Irvine resident, and deputy district attorney in Orange County. I was born in California and attended public schools. I graduated from UC Berkeley, then earned my JD from UC Hastings College of Law.

My daughters attend Irvine public schools. I have served on the Irvine Unified School District's Finance Committee and the Irvine Green Ribbon Environ-

mental Committee.

I understand the benefits of our excellent public-school system and recognize more hard work is needed to ensure continuing improvement.

These challenging times have depleted the school district's funds with the added challenge of reopening schools safely.

I want to:

- Partner with local health authorities, teachers, classified staff, and district leaders to ensure all children and staff are safe;
  - Bring more funding to Irvine schools;
  - Preserve academic excellence;
  - Enhance STEM programs, special education, athletics, integrated ethnic studies, and arts and music; and
  - Encourage parents, teachers, and classified employees to add their voices to the decision-making process.
- My parents and teachers made it possible for me to reach my potential. I want to ensure all Irvine children have the means to reach their potential.

I am proud to be endorsed by:

- Irvine Unified School District Trustee, Paul Bokota
- Irvine Unified School District Trustee, Lauren Brooks
- Irvine Unified School District Trustee, Sharon Wallin
- Irvine Unified School District Trustee, Ira Glasky
- Irvine Mayor, Beth Krom (Ret.)

## **TRUSTEE AREA 5**

### **Paul Bakota (Incumbent)**

As a trustee on the Irvine School Board I've always put students, teachers and parents first. My top priority is to continue improving the educational quality of our world-class schools, while keeping everyone safe. These goals require experienced board members.

During my terms on the school board, IUSD has:

- Continued as one of the top-performing academic school districts in the state/nation with numerous academic and performing arts awards.
- Invested approximately \$14 million in safety/security, including investments in hundreds of radios, cameras, access points and emergency preparedness.
- Allocated over \$15 million towards mental health, including increased mental wellness professionals at all levels.

• Built four new world-class schools and modernized many, including Northwood High, Irvine High, Brywood, College Park and Greentree.

• Helped ensure responsible spending and accountability of taxpayer dollars.

I hold a B.A. from Harvard, magna cum laude, and a J.D., magna cum laude. My wife, Wendy, and I have lived in Irvine for 22 years. Our three children have all attended IUSD schools.

I've served IUSD for over 15 years as a:

- IUSD Finance Committee member
- PTA President
- School Site Council member
- Irvine Public Schools Foundation Legacy Partner

I am honored to be endorsed by the Irvine Teachers Association, numerous current/former IUSD Board Members, parents and business leaders.

### **Demetra Arvanitidis**

I am a wife, mom of three children, and pediatrician with training in public health.

We live in unprecedented times ... circumstances that have changed the way we learn, live, work, and socialize not just locally but globally in just a few months. It's this unpredictability which leads to two main stressors, panic and fear, which in turn cause ill effects on our health and the safety of our community.

My priority is to have a physical plan in place that ensures the health and safety of our staff and children along with an educational plan that ensures that kids continue to receive a high standard education in every circumstance.

I believe that with my pediatric medical and public health background, I will add value to discussions and policy-making to put the health and safety of our staff and students first. The remedy for panic, fear and stress is a good dose of planning and preparedness.

My proactive, preventative health and educational plan:

- Reducing regular class size
- Regular compliance training of teachers/staff/students in preparedness protocols
- High standard, user-friendly online curriculum with adequate teacher/parent support
- Onsite school security/nurse checks
- Local control and parental choice



# Yes on 16

Prop 16 is about being on the right side of history. It levels the playing field for women and people of color.

## WHO'S FOR PROP 16?

Los Angeles Times



SENATOR  
KAMALA HARRIS



GOVERNOR  
GAVIN NEWSOM

ACLU

CADEM  
CALIFORNIA DEMOCRATIC PARTY

BLACK LIVES MATTER

MALDEF  
The Latino Legal Voice for Civil Rights in America

LOS ANGELES AREA  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF CALIFORNIA

CTA CALIFORNIA  
TEACHERS  
ASSOCIATION

CLIPPERS

LOS ANGELES  
FEDERATION  
OF LABOR

CALIFORNIA  
NUTRITION  
ASSOCIATION

Planned  
Parenthood  
Act. No matter what.  
Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California

AFSCME

SEIU

United Way  
GREATER LOS ANGELES

...and many more!

See our endorsements on [voteyesonprop16.org](http://voteyesonprop16.org)

## WHO'S AGAINST PROP 16?

THE CALIFORNIA REPUBLICAN PARTY

FORMER CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR (and current Trump supporter) PETE WILSON<sup>1</sup>

Anti-civil rights activist GAIL HERIOT, supported by MITCH MCCONNELL<sup>2</sup>

Anti-civil rights activist WARD CONNERLY, who has said that Latinos "want to see affirmative action policies remain so they can take advantage of them," and that the UC system is admitting unqualified Latinos "using race through the back door."<sup>3</sup>

Which side will you be on?  
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1. Source: "Pete Wilson endorses Trump, says president has very good judgment." Politico, October 1, 2020. <https://www.politico.com/states/california/story/2020/10/01/pete-wilson-endorses-trump-says-president-has-very-good-judgment-1319581>  
2. Source: The American Conservative Union. <http://acufoundation.conservative.org/policy-fellows/gail-heriot/>  
3. Source: "California Battles over Racial Identification." The Washington Post, September 13, 2003. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2003/09/13/california-battles-over-racial-identification/153f3519-e3a0-4e6b-95d4-0a3b902165ee/>

# ELECTION

## MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

### WE ASKED THE CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR IRVINE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL THESE 3 QUESTIONS ABOUT LOCAL POLICY MATTERS:

**Safety and Law Enforcement:** Irvine has been named one of America's safest cities numerous times. Considering the current social climate, how will you navigate the relationships between local law enforcement and local organizations calling to defund the police?

**Housing:** Irvine is thought of as one of the best places to live in the United States. So, naturally, there is a demand for housing here. What is your position and vision for housing in Irvine? How does affordability in terms of housing play into your view?

**Veterans Cemetery:** What is your position on plans to build a veterans cemetery in Irvine? Would you advocate for Irvine to build on a site without state funding?

Here are their answers:  
Mayoral Candidates

#### CHRISTINA SHEA

**Safety and Law Enforcement:** I took a strong stand opposing defunding public safety. I do not support this suggestion, and I believe it is an unwise approach to sustaining a safe community.

Irvine is one of the safest cities in America for 15 years in a row, and I am very proud of this accomplishment.

We have a very comprehensive public safety department with a mental health unit, a sex trafficking unit and we adhere to a "community-based policing program" that is a successful model to cities across America.

I am proudly endorsed by the O.C. Firefighters and our Irvine police for my election.

**Housing:** Our city is closing in on build out.

I helped create our Community Land Trust and for years now we have been providing affordable housing for our veterans, developmentally disabled, single moms and dads and those on the verge of homelessness.

Irvine provides more affordable units than most cities in the O.C.

We have a blend of low income, moderate income and high-end housing, which is why so many people love to live in our community.

We can do more to provide affordability to many who want to call Irvine home, and I look forward to balancing our housing needs, with maintaining

my history of balanced growth, yet providing workforce housing for our young people and struggling families.

**Veterans Cemetery:** I advocated for a veterans cemetery for years.

I brought forward the Strawberry Site which I believed was a superior location, but that idea was overturned by misinformation at the ballot box. Then I proposed the Golf Course Site as another superior site plan, to the ARDA site, a few years ago, as the most cost effective, and best location away from concerned residents.

The state law as of June 2019, now directs Cal Vet to come into Irvine and review both sites – the ARDA and the Golf Course Site – and give us a determination of which site they will recommend, no later than next May.

Cal Vet made it very clear the site which is the most cost effective will be chosen.

My hope is the Golf Course Site will be the final resting place for our veterans as this never-ending battle of misinformation and mischaracterization of facts has just continued to delay this much-needed project for years.

We can only move forward if we collaborate with the state and accept their determination as to which site is superior, then we will be granted \$25 million for startup construction costs.

It won't succeed without state dollars.

#### FARRAH KHAN

**Safety and Law Enforcement:** It's not a matter of "how will I navigate." I'm already navigating and building those

bridges. When the BLM protests occurred in our city, all peaceful protests by the way, I met with many of our Black community members. I brought them together for a roundtable discussion on issues that they were facing. The first meeting we held included our Irvine police chief and assistant chief where residents shared their experiences.

From those discussions, we set out some action plans which included expediting the implementation of body cams and our chief stated that he was open to having a speakers' series to further educate our officers in conjunction with the UCI African American Studies Department.

We have an amazing police department with dedicated officers that truly believe in working in partnership with the community, however, there's always room for improvement. Other meetings with this group have included discussions on employment and housing equity. This is what the local community is asking for and I'm delivering it. In a time of unrest, this is how leadership provides stability.

**Housing:** Many people do not realize that many of our developers have land that is already entitled for development from years ago. In addition, we do have state requirements in housing that we have to fulfill. However, what the current council can do is determine what that looks like.

It is important for us to maintain our Master Plan to provide a diverse portfolio of housing options: affordable, apartments, condos, senior living and single family homes. I'm a huge supporter of workforce housing, providing housing for people that work in Irvine. One of the best ways for us to reduce our traffic is to make sure that as we attract new businesses to Irvine, we provide housing for their workforce, thereby reducing the commuter traffic that basically doubles our population during business hours. Additionally, I would seek development

near transit, like the train station.

We are a growing city, but we need to grow responsibly. As a board member on the Irvine Community Land Trust, I fully support the development of affordable housing, especially those with support services for our homeless, veterans, people with disabilities and more. Irvine does an amazing job when it comes to providing affordable housing, however, we know the need is ever increasing. Recently, one of our projects with 68 units had over 5,000 people on the interest list.

**Veterans Cemetery:** Irvine leadership has failed our veterans. With years of flip-flopping, we have yet to deliver the promised veterans cemetery. I fully support the building of a veterans cemetery in Irvine and have worked hard to find solutions to move it forward, including meeting with our state representatives.

While I support the veterans cemetery, I also respect the cultural requirements of our residents, and there is no reason why we can't accomplish both. However, I cannot support building without state funding. Our city would not be able to financially sustain such a cost.

#### KATHERINE DAIGLE

**Safety and Law Enforcement:** The new age of protests, rooted in anti-establishment sentiments propagated by shrewd politics, walks on the faint line that lies in proximity to the propagandizing of our youth. We need to pay close attention to the agenda that underlies the clamoring for a structural breakdown of the entire system.

The service offered by the police is much needed to check on violence and crimes in our neighborhoods and our communities – it is needed to secure the city's integrity. You simply cannot dismiss the necessity of policing. For those aiming to destabilize the city and drive it down the road of anarchy and chaos, streets without a force to protect may be the ideal world or their "utopia."

What needs to be done? Anything but defunding serves the purpose of bettering the system of policing for good. One can perhaps devise a well-suited method of hiring new recruits. An increase in pay will also attract the

deserving candidates into the service. Police academies can be transformed into well-rounded centers for development. These are feasible solutions.

**Housing:** Identify a new design infrastructure for new communities and revitalize the old ones in ways that promote physical and mental health for our communities. Irvine needs a revitalization plan.

Promote effective transportation flow. Work with ICLT on affordable housing alternatives and state government land use for additional outreach projects utilized by the county.

Currently, the pandemic has caused so much personal, financial and economic hardship across Orange County, it will take time to recover. Irvine has retained a high quality of life but we also have seen disruption at the university level and first-time home buyers. We will come back because this city is a hub of economic boom even today. People want to live here and work here and business thrives. We will do well as we roar into 2021.

**Veterans Cemetery:** I will immediately begin working with the state of California to transfer the ARDA site to CalVet so that the Southern California Veterans Cemetery can be built without delay.

## LUIS HUANG

**Safety and Law Enforcement:** Pilot program: Fewer armed police officers, hire additional part-time unarmed peace officers that patrol Irvine and get to build trust and relationships with neighbors and small businesses.

**Housing:** Creation of a Renters' Rights Commission and more housing.

**Veterans Cemetery:** n/a

## City Council Candidates

## DIANA JIANG

**Safety and Law Enforcement:** Irvine is one of the safest cities of its size, in large part because of our law enforcement team. I do not support defunding our police. Police officers are there for us and we should be there for them! Irvine has a great community engagement program, CERT. We should keep the program and provide diversity training to our officers.

**Housing:** Irvine already has the highest number of affordable units in the

county. With only 6 percent of Orange County's population, we are scheduled to have 32 percent of the county's affordable housing units. The state asks us to do more and we should, for two good reasons. Without some entry-level housing, our own children will not be able to live in the city in which they were raised. Without the next tier of workforce housing, our teachers, nurses, firefighters and police can't live in the



community they protect. It would be a shame if we can't fix that problem.

The challenge is to solve these needs and still preserve our neighborhoods, property values and quality of life. There are no easy answers. I don't support turning single family neighborhoods into an ocean of triplexes. We can do more to streamline the permitting process for projects that conform to our plan. The state should share part of their sales tax as an incentive for cities that meet the housing goals. Changes in our city should complement, not disrupt, our careful planning.

To increase housing supply, we should stick to our city's General Plan that outlines Irvine's development goals. Housing affordability improves if there is more of it. Building what we promised in our General Plan will keep prices more affordable.

We should explore converting commercial offices that are vacant, because many people will continue working from home when the pandemic has ended. If feasible, converting some commercial space into residential has the potential to help with our housing shortage while preserving our existing neighborhoods.

We need to keep land use decisions local, but we can only do that if we creatively work together to address our

housing needs.

**Veterans Cemetery:** Our veterans, who have put their lives on the line for our country, deserve an appropriate resting place in honor of their sacrifices. The veterans cemetery was approved by the City Council and initial funding was approved by our governor. I do not advocate building any new amenity without a funding source identified

to build or maintain it. I do commit to working with neighboring communities to make sure their voices are heard during the design and construction phases.

## LAUREN NORRIS-JOHNSON

**Safety and Law Enforcement:** I will make sure that our diverse residents have a seat at the table and I will act as a liaison and promote open dialogue and collaboration. We already are the safest city of our size in the country, so let's build on the strength of successful community policing and also provide social services to our most vulnerable residents. Through education and supportive services for homelessness, substance abuse and mental health, we can better meet our residents' needs.

**Housing:** Our city, county and state face a housing crisis and our leaders must step up to help solve the problem. I support the master plan we have in Irvine, which includes a diversity of housing within each village and incorporates affordable housing. We should build on the successes of the Irvine Community Land Trust and provide middle-income and workforce housing. We also cannot leave state or federal money on the table and must bring funds back to Irvine to support these endeavors.

**Veterans Cemetery:** My husband is a United State Coast Guard veteran and both of my grandfathers served in World War II. My mother will retire this year after 20 years working for the VA, serving our most vulnerable veterans. It is time for us to honor our promise to veterans through the building of a veterans cemetery and memorial park. The residents of Irvine have spoken and they overwhelmingly support the ARDA site for the cemetery. We should begin demolition as soon as possible. Veterans are dying every day without a final resting place to be buried in Orange County. Should I have the honor to be elected to the Irvine City Council, I will see that we deliver on our promise to them.

## CARRIE O'MALLEY

**Safety and Law Enforcement:** I will work hard to build good relationships between local organizations and the police department. To do this, it is vital that there is a forum for open communication and dialogue. I will initiate forums where these local organizations can meet with the police in an informal setting to discuss issues and continue to dialogue regarding any issues they may want addressed.

I believe the key to working together is to always have open lines of communication. I will foster these open communications between law enforcement and local organizations by scheduling sit-down meetings and forums to discuss any issues that the local organizations would like to discuss. I have strength in bringing people together. During my campaign, I have done a variety of public service zoom calls, online gatherings, and other virtual meetings and events.

Through my years working professionally in public policy at the local level, I have developed good working relationships with law enforcement and our public safety leaders. I have communicated well with our public safety leaders through the years. I also have very good relationships with many organizations. Through open communication, dialogue and meetings, we can all work together to promote unity and harmony in our city.

**Housing:** We are blessed in Irvine to have many options in the housing market. There are all types of housing and apartment options that currently exist throughout our city. It is important that Irvine offers this variety in types of housing so that there are options for residents to choose from. I strongly



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believe that we need to stay within our Master Plan of Irvine and that we should not over-develop. Affordability is also important. This is why Irvine has the Irvine Community Land Trust which designates a certain percentage of housing to affordable housing options throughout our city.

**Veterans Cemetery:** I am in favor of building a veterans cemetery in Irvine. It is important that we honor our veterans and their families. The Irvine voters have voted by a strong majority (68 percent) and have shown their preference for the ARDA/the original site. As a councilmember I will represent the will of the voters – those who are electing me. I will work hard to make the veterans cemetery in Irvine a reality. My long-time professional relationships with state and local officials and my policy know-how will enable me to work with our state and local leaders and entities to build a veterans cemetery in Irvine. I believe there will be some state funding; however, even if there was not immediate state funding, there are other funding mechanisms through grants sought, working with non-profit entities, and through working with the federal government in order to bring the veterans cemetery to fruition.

## MIKE CARROLL

**Safety and Law Enforcement:** Irvine is the safest city in America of its size, for the 15th year in a row. Ensuring we remain the safest city in America is a top priority.

I am the only candidate running for City Council that is endorsed by the Irvine Police Association. I am proud to have their endorsement. I am also endorsed by our firefighters.

The men and women of our Police Department are the reason we enjoy a safe community where we can thrive. They work to protect us 24/7. They are a caring organization, devoted to Irvine, and I fully support them. If elected, I'll continue to work closely with our police chief and provide support whenever and wherever needed.

Cutting our public safety budget would undermine the investments our community has made, for many years, in making this city a safe place in which to live, work and play. That doesn't mean we ignore transparency, mental health, homelessness and other concerns. For me, it means this: Let's not undo something that's working very well for this great city.

**Housing:** Homeownership affordability is one of the most critical concerns facing the residents of Irvine. For this city to remain vibrant and strong, young families need to be able to afford a home and raise their family and work here. The promise of Irvine depends on this city's ability to attract and retain families to the community. If Irvine becomes a place too expensive to live in, before long people young and old will have to leave. Our record on encouraging builders to provide housing that working families can afford has been good, but we can and should do a lot more.

**Veterans Cemetery:** I fully support the establishment of a veterans cemetery on the grounds of the former El Toro Marine Corps Air Station. There is no better place to honor the men and women who have served our country, than right here, in Irvine, on the former base. The people of the city of Irvine are contributing, by far, the largest and most valuable part of the puzzle: over \$100 million worth of raw land. We are giving it to the state of California, for free, to construct the veterans cemetery. The state of California takes in over \$100 billion in tax revenue a year. They have already earmarked funds for cemetery construction, and they must do their part.

## JOHN PARK

**Safety and Law Enforcement:** I will NEVER defund the police. The Irvine police have earned our respect by their continuous level of excellence. They are great partners to the communities and residents. We should all work hard to keep it that way.

**Housing:** As you allude to in your question, it is a matter of supply and demand. Our average rent in the city is just under \$2,000 a month. Considering what you get with that amount in Irvine, it is still a much better value than cities like Los Angeles. However, we do need to think about students, young professionals and seniors. I am for innovation in this area. As an example, we should explore micro apartments. These are apartments that are under 400 square feet. Another area we can innovate is possibly infill/redevelopment opportunities in some older parts of the city to bring in more housing without creating additional burden on traffic especially in residential areas. Irvine needs to welcome all people at all stages of life. I will work towards that goal.

**Veterans Cemetery:** I fully support a veterans cemetery in Irvine but it is now in CalVet's hands to determine which location – ARDA or the Golf Course Site. I do not support a veterans cemetery without state funding. Post-Covid, we cannot take on a project of such magnitude without State funding.

## MARK NEWGENT

**Safety and Law Enforcement:** NEVER DEFUND POLICE!!! I SUPPORT OUR POLICE!!!

Groups that want to defund the police are radicals and do not represent our population at large. The overwhelming majority of people understand defunding the police, especially in Irvine, is wrong and ludicrous.

We shall maintain our current police force and improve as needed based on feedback from the residents of Irvine and the Irvine Police Department. The Irvine Police Department is regarded as one of the best in the country and I trust them to keep me and my family safe. I think Irvine police should look at exporting their best practices to other departments across the country to teach them how to be like Irvine.

I am a retired Military Police Captain with years of real-world law enforcement experience. I have seen the good, the bad and the ugly. In my professional opinion as a law enforcement expert I think Irvine police are doing far better than many departments across the country. I am continually impressed with the professionalism of our officers and their outstanding results in keeping us the safest city in America.

**Housing:** If we grow anymore, it needs to be very controlled so that the infrastructure and schools do not get more overwhelmed. In the past, Irvine grew too fast, causing traffic issues and school overcrowding.

My own son was displaced for three years to a school across town due to school overcrowding. After three years of waiting to get into the school across the street from our house we just ended up moving near the overflow school. During this time, we contributed to the traffic problem having to drive four miles one way to school for daily drop off/pick-ups for our kids. This also has a negative effect on the children themselves. It's not fair to kids for them not to be able to attend school literally across the street from their own homes because of bad planning by corrupt politicians. As of now, the community wants to

slow growth. I have been told many times by countless residents to stop the out-of-control growth in the city. I agree we need to fix our traffic and school overcrowding first.

**Veterans Cemetery:** As a veteran with over 20 years of service in the U.S. Army, many of my fellow veterans' names are on our North Park Memorial Wall that did not make it back. I will work harder than you can imagine to get the cemetery done as fast as possible, whatever the location that the state decides on.

Certain political candidates in Irvine blatantly lie and say they can get the cemetery done at a location they decide, etc., etc. The fact is that as of now, the state is the decision maker on this issue.

As far as the funding questions, I would have to see the state's final assessment and proposal before commenting.

## TAMMY KIM

**Safety and Law Enforcement:** Having leaders who respect our police department and the difficult work they are called to do, but who also understand and have the ability to work with the many local constituencies who want us to admit and address our weaknesses and strategically deploy resources to address issues like mental health, homelessness, domestic violence, substance abuse and other social service needs. Currently 40 percent of our residents are foreign born and 50 percent speak a language other than English. Public safety is built on trust – trust between the community and its police. I want to make sure that we continue to build upon this trust by ensuring that they have strong relationships with our diverse residents. This means making sure they are hiring more police officers who can speak languages other than English and have cultural competency to work with our diverse global community.

I would hope that the Irvine Police Department, which has been a model in so many ways, would want to work with city leaders to explore how best we can meet these needs. Ignoring any challenge ensures it will become a bigger challenge. I'm an optimist. I always approach issues on the assumption that we are all working towards a common objective.

**Housing:** Land use decisions should be by design, not default. My vision for Irvine is a city where planning is based on the most innovative and sustainable models for community design and where we produce housing for all in-

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come levels. More than half our residents are renters and many of the young people who grew up in Irvine cannot afford to return. We need to create housing opportunities for every income level. We also need to create workforce housing programs for mid-salary professionals such as teachers, nurses, police officers, firefighters and social workers, who add to our community, but are priced out of the existing housing market. We are a big city. We are a business hub. We need a vision that developers help us realize, not a strategy that allows developers to create impacts and leaves the city responsible for addressing them.

**Veterans Cemetery:** Our veterans are an integral part of the history of El Toro – and their sacrifices should be honored. As a Korean American, I feel a personal connection to this project and am grateful for the support American service-members provided during the Korean War. The City Council has already adopted keeping the cemetery at ARDA into an ordinance.

## HAI LIANG

**Safety and Law Enforcement:** Irvine is a very safe community and our law enforcement has done a tremendous job of helping to keep our community safe. I understand the current social climate and can appreciate how our law enforcement has performed and maintained their professionalism. As a retired soldier, I believe in having local authority to enforce laws which contribute to local stability.

I must support the police budget and ensure our law enforcement professionals have all the training and tools necessary to accomplish their tasks safely. I will listen to local organizations and help local law enforcement improve trust and cooperation. The focus is our community and serving our community as a team. Therefore, it is important for more public engagement between the police and the community in order to build more trust. So, I would propose multiple events where the police could directly interact with the public with the main purpose being educating the public about police protocol and how the public should respond in order to avoid tension and conflict. At the same time, I would engage the “defund the police” community to learn their concerns and make sure police training is updated to reflect those concerns.

**Housing:** I envision an Irvine where anyone that wants to live here can. I

don't support artificially manipulating home prices, but I do support building more low income housing. But more importantly, I would support out-of-the-box options that loosen zoning requirements that would even allow dormitory-like living opportunities for people who are willing to pay less for less space as long, of course, that we consider the need for adequate parking.

**Veterans Cemetery:** My position is that I support our veterans and those that paid the ultimate sacrifice and deserving of our honor and respect. With or without state funding, this veterans cemetery is a worthwhile endeavor and must be built without delay. As an Army soldier, I have personally witnessed others sacrifice their lives for our country. But I would seek to secure funding for the cemetery, so it doesn't add any extra burden to our local citizens, especially during this Covid climate.

## ABIGAIL POLE

**Safety and Law Enforcement:** “Defund the Police” is such a hot button rallying cry, more than that: it's unnecessarily divisive. We live in a city with amazing police officers who serve us, but it might be time to re-imagine their role. It doesn't make sense to ask officers to be a social worker for the homeless people who show up in our community, a mentor for the kids who are simply running a muck, and a teacher for the people who don't know any better, and asking them to be a caseworker for those with mental health issues. We need to prevent problems that create crime before they become problems in our city. That is why I'm committed to re-imagining our public safety budget. In addition, in the interest of transparency and accountability, I support the notion of requiring the police department to hold open meetings with the community. And a system that immediately removes an officer for wrongdoing.

**Housing:** I want to reimagine the zoning laws in Irvine. That way we are able to create more housing. That being said, as we continue to build we must do so in sustainable ways including using solar energy and protection of the environment.

**Veterans Cemetery:** California has the second largest population of veterans. Our honored citizens deserve a place to rest in respect. I will not let it be taken from them, especially after the citizens

of the city have voiced their support.

## DYLAN GREEN

**Safety and Law Enforcement:** In short, I believe that the IPD is operating at at least a serviceable level at the moment. For example, the police chief at a recent City Council meeting indicated, I believe, that there were only two officer-involved shootings in the past year. Two in a city of 300,000 is well, well, well below what many cities in the U.S. are experiencing. I'd like that number to be zero, if possible. What I would like to see is some oversight to ensure that police spending is going to the right places. Once we've done some oversight I see two courses of action:

1) IPD money is being spent effectively to cover the city. In this case I would be in favor of increasing the funds to IPD but only for the purpose of increasing police training, including racial sensitivity training. IPD officers already (unless I am mistaken) have to have a bachelor's degree to become an officer, which is a good step.

2) If the funding is not being spent effectively, we decrease funding and reallocate it elsewhere, to programs to aid and assist the police department such that they can work efficiently. Things like social workers, mental health programs, and so on. I should note that case number 1 does not eliminate my proposal to fund these programs, it just would indicate that the funding for those programs would be *in addition to* rather than a replacement of.

This is my opinion on how to balance the efficacy of the police force with the calls to defund. Make sure the money is being spent well. If it isn't, we reallocate it to improve the efficacy of the police force. If it is, then we fund additional improvement programs, so that in the future we may rely less on the police department. Irvine has an effective police force with well earned trust in the community. We just need to make sure that they're spending their money as effectively as possible. And there's always room for improvement. I would be fully in favor of funding social workers and mental health services not only for the purpose of reducing incidents of this type, but also so that they may ride along with officers when responding to call outs that would require these services. This is how we can even further improve our police force.

**Housing:** Affordability of housing is one of my main goals when it comes to houses. If I were to be elected to the City

Council, one of my first and foremost goals would be increasing access to affordable housing. Part of this includes stemming development projects that take prime and quality land that could be used for affordable, low-income housing developments. I think the Irvine Master Plan absolutely has space for building these kinds of housing developments, and providing for our community at large.

Affordable housing actually ties in to my plans for the business climate of Irvine. We currently have half a dozen office buildings that currently lie empty and unrented, and businesses are constantly moving out of inner-city areas like UTC and the woodbridge center because the Irvine Company keeps raising rent, and now there are empty units! We need to start focusing on getting businesses to move in rather than out, to bring more economy and money into the city. This starts at the lowest level. If we want people to work at these buildings, in these shops, or for these companies, we need to make sure that they have access to affordable housing within Irvine. This benefits us two fold. Firstly, as the workforce will be here for companies that move into Irvine, companies will be more enticed to move here, and secondly, people that live in Irvine are much more likely to spend their hard-earned money back in the local economy, which helps the city in uncountable ways. Affordable housing is absolutely a must.

**Veterans Cemetery:** I am 100 percent for a veterans cemetery, and my primary goal for a VC would be building it at the ARDA site that has been approved multiple times at the city level. As far as I am aware, the state has pledged to manage and take over the site once it's built, with the understanding that if they do not fund the demolition themselves, they will reimburse the city for the demolition and construction of the site. With that understanding, I would move forward with construction as soon as possible.

Our veterans deserve full honor and respect with a place to be laid to rest here in Irvine. The VC is one of the subjects that really pushed me to run, first two years ago when I first started to seriously consider running, and then again this year when I realized that I've just sat by and continued to watch the VC get stymied at the council level for years without doing anything. So I figured it was time to take matters into my own hands. Again, this plays into my hold on new development, as the VC has been approved half a

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dozen times at least, and yet we continue to give companies like FivePoint alternate contracts that they then focus on instead of building the VC like we should have done 5 years ago.

## LARRY AGRAN

**Safety and Law Enforcement:** When I was previously mayor of Irvine (2000-2004), we made major improvements to the Irvine Police Department: All officers are now college-educated; we dramatically increased the number of women officers; we made sure that our police force reflected the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of our city; and we reinforced policies that emphasize community policing, respect for First Amendment freedoms, and de-escalation of potentially violent confrontations.

We should continue to earmark funds within our public safety budget for expanded social service programs, including treatment for mental health problems, as well as drug and alcohol addiction. In 2012, I wrote and personally gathered thousands of signatures in support of a city-wide initiative that continues to provide city funds to pay for resource officers in IUSD high schools. The program has been remarkably successful in helping to keep high school students on a positive path through counseling and public safety education. In fact, the program has been so successful that it has been extended to middle schools, and I continue to support the school resource officers program.

**Housing:** I have always been a strong advocate for a variety of affordable housing programs in Irvine, including the establishment of the Irvine Land Trust to ensure the availability of ample tracts of land on which affordable housing will be built.

No changes in the Irvine Master Plan are needed; instead, we need councilmembers who are determined to add to the 5,000+ affordable housing units (mostly apartments) in the city. Historically, Irvine has done more than its regional "fair share" to provide affordable housing, but we need to do even more.

**Veterans Cemetery:** In my final year on the council, I drafted and secured unanimous council approval for a plan to establish a beautiful state-built and state-operated Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery on the former El Toro Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS).

Since 2014, Irvine voters have repeatedly expressed their strong support for

that plan.

Ignoring the will of the voters, the current council majority has spent years scheming with developers to delay, derail and defeat our veterans cemetery. They want the site for massive development projects that will add thousands of additional cars to our already overcrowded Irvine streets every day.

Our long-promised Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery was scheduled to become operational last Veterans Day (November 2019).

I've prepared a plan – written in the form of an official Irvine City Council Resolution – to address how we immediately move forward with our Veterans Memorial Park & Cemetery on the ARDA site at the Great Park. (The full text of the plan is available on my website, LarryAgran.com, under the "Priorities" heading.)

If I am elected, I will be working on behalf of the citizens of Irvine, not huge corporate developers. I will fight to make sure that the policies coming out of City Hall are focused on improving the lives of Irvine residents, not increasing a developer's bottom-line.

## LAURA BRATTON

**Safety and Law Enforcement:** I believe now is the time to have open effective communication with Irvine PD. If we as residents of Irvine must be accountable for our actions so does Irvine PD. Our talks need to end with real change, and I think having a committee to ensure change is happening is vital.

**Housing:** I came to Irvine on the low-income program. I do not believe there is an issue in Irvine right now. Irvine already allocates 10 percent of apartments to low-income families. Over building apartment complexes, shopping centers and office buildings is the primary issue. I think we should slow down on the building so we can figure out how we can improve things in the near future.

**Veterans Cemetery:** Yes, I have no problem advocating for a veteran cemetery. Once I'm elected: Collectively we should brainstorm and come up with ways to fund the park if we do not have state funding that will not affect taxpayers.

**Christine Dillard and Anshul Garg did not submit responses to our candidate questionnaire.**

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# ELECTION



## A GUIDE TO THE 2020 CALIFORNIA BALLOT MEASURES

In addition to selecting a candidate for president of the United States, state Assembly and state Senate, along with local elected offices, California voters will also decide the fate of a dozen ballot measures in this upcoming election. By now, Californians have seen the political ads pop up, asking for the public's "Yes" or "No" vote to support a specific proposition.

Still, without balanced information on both sides, it may be difficult to gain a clear picture of what a vote in either direction will impact.

With ballot measure topics ranging from reinstating the voting rights of convicted felons to repealing affirmative action laws from 1996, there is plenty for voters to understand prior to casting their votes.

Now, with less than two weeks until Election Day, this Proposition Guide offers an explanation on each of California's 2020 ballot measures, in order to help voters better understand what

those "Yes" or "No" votes will actually mean in the real world.

### **Proposition 14: Stem Cell Research Institute Bond Initiative (2020)**

Prop. 14 would distribute \$5.5 billion to the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), California's primary stem cell research agency. Of the \$5.5 billion CIRM would borrow from taxpayers, \$1.5 billion would be allocated for research for Alzheimer's, Parkinson's Disease and stroke, along with other degenerative diseases.

The CIRM was established in 2004, when California voters passed Prop. 71, in response to a federal funding ban on research using embryonic cells – a critical component of stem cell research. In doing so, the state allocated \$3 billion, along with the constitutional right to conduct stem cell research in California.

However, the CIRM is now running low

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER AND ISAI ROCHA

on funding – with approximately \$132 million at hand – and has paused all projects and research, as of July 2019.

If passed, the funds will be paid through California's General Obligation Bonds – non-collateral bonds issued by a creditor to municipalities based on creditworthiness – with the belief that funds can be regenerated through taxation. The initiative's fiscal impact is estimated to cost California taxpayers \$260 million per-year for 30 years.

Supporters of Prop. 14 say CIRM research has led to medical breakthroughs, along with thousands of jobs in the biotech industry.

Those who oppose the proposition say that while research is useful, it has yet to produce ground-breaking cures for degenerative diseases. And now that federal funding for embryonic research is no longer banned, California should look into federal funding options.

**Yes:** Allocates \$5.5 billion through general obligation bonds for the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine.

**No:** Opposes allocating \$5.5 billion through general obligation bonds for the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine.

### **Proposition 15: Tax on Commercial and Industrial Properties for Education and Local Government Funding Initiative**

Prop. 15 looks to raise property taxes on commercial properties in order to create more funding for schools and local government. Currently, commercial and industrial properties in California pay property taxes based on the purchase price. Each year after that, the property's taxable value is adjusted for inflation by up to 2 percent. However, Prop. 15 would amend the California Constitution and require commercial and industrial properties to be taxed on their current market value.

This is an attempt to institute a "Split Roll Tax," defined by the process in which the state assesses taxes on commercial and industrial properties at market value, while the taxes on residential property taxes are assessed by purchase price.

The state would make exemptions for farm land and for small businesses with less than \$3 million in holdings in California. If passed, Prop. 15 would also define small business by independently owned companies on state property, with 50 employees or less.

Supporters include current Vice Presidential Candidate Joe Biden, California Governor Gavin Newsom, and the California Teachers Association. A "Yes" vote would increase property taxes on commercial businesses, a move that could potentially generate between \$6.5 billion to \$11 billion in new tax revenue annually.

The Prop. 15 opposition, which includes the California Chamber of Commerce and the California Association of Retailers, feel the economy must strengthen prior to adding massive taxes on commercial properties amid the financial hardships and uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Yes:** Supports a Constitutional amendment to require commercial and industrial properties – with an exception for properties that are commercially-zoned for agriculture – to be taxed based on market value, rather than purchase price.

**No:** Opposes the constitutional amendment. Commercial and industrial prop-



erties would continue to be taxed based on purchase price.

## **Proposition 16: Repeal Proposition 209 Affirmative Action Amendment**

Affirmative Action was known as a set of social policies and resources aimed at helping advance the employment and opportunities of minority groups.

In 1996 California voters passed Prop. 209, which stated that California “shall not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting,” which essentially eradicated Affirmative Action practices.

Considering the heightened climate due to social injustice across the nation, Prop. 16 has received more than \$16 million in support from organizations like the California Teachers Association, and Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and Hospitals, as supporters want to see Affirmative Action policies reintegrated into the workforce and public education.

The Prop. 16 opposition looks to keep the policies the same, and claims that the meaning of true equality is based on the non-preferential treatment of all individuals.

**Yes:** Repeals Prop. 209 (1996), which states that, “the government and public institutions cannot discriminate against or grant preferential treatment to persons on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in public employment, public education, and public contracting.” Repealing Prop. 209 would allow government and public entities to use affirmative action to grant preferential treatment based on race, sex, and ethnicity when it comes to public education, employment and public contracting.

**No:** Keeps Prop. 209, prohibiting the state from granting any individuals preferential treatment based on race, sex or ethnicity.

## **Proposition 17: Voting Rights Restoration for Persons on Parole Amendment**

By state law, those who are convicted of a felony in the state of California need to complete prison and parole sentences, prior to regaining the right to vote. Prop. 17 would change the rules by allowing people on parole to vote – and run for office, as long as the crime

committed did not result in a perjury or bribery conviction.

Supporters say Prop. 17 will lead to more civic engagement from convicted felons, which could have a positive result on rehabilitation.

However, the opposition for Prop. 17 emphasizes that voting is a right that’s earned and the right will still be available to individuals once rehabilitated.

Prop. 17 has received nearly \$1 million in funding from supporters. There are no major donors in opposition of Prop. 17.

**Yes:** Supports a constitutional amendment to allow individuals convicted of a felony or who are on parole the right to vote.

**No:** People on state parole would continue to be unable to vote in California.

## **Proposition 18: Primary Voting for 17-Year-Olds**

A “Yes” vote on Prop. 18 would allow 17-year-olds, who will turn 18 by the following general election to vote in primaries and special elections.

Currently, more than a dozen states and Washington D.C. allow 17-year-olds to vote in the primary election, as long as they will be 18 by the next general election.

California voters will now have the opportunity to lower the voting age in their state. However, there are mixed emotions behind lowering the voting age. Supporters argue that individuals are already paying taxes prior to the age of 18, so giving them a right to vote should be an incentive for those in the workforce and already contributing to society.

Those that oppose say that 17 years old is too young to be tasked with civic responsibility. Additionally, many teens are impressionable and lack the resources needed to make informed decisions about the real world – without parental supervision.

**Yes:** Allows 17-year-olds, who will turn 18 by the following general election, to vote in primaries and special elections.

**No:** No one younger than 18 years of age may vote in any election.

## **Proposition 19: Property Tax Transfers, Exemptions, and Revenue for Wildfire Agencies and Counties Amendment**

For homeowners over the age of 55, homeowners suffering from severe disabilities, and victims of natural disasters, a “Yes” vote on Prop. 19 would make them eligible for a tax assessment trans-

fer, in the event they buy a new home.

Considering the unforgiving nature of California Wildfires and the potential for other natural disasters like landslides and earthquakes, this proposition would allow homeowners to seek new property anywhere in the state, even to a more expensive home.

Prop. 19 would also limit the tax benefits for certain transfers of property between family members, including inherited property.

There is major support for Prop. 19 from the real estate industry, including the California Association of Realtors, the California Association of Realtors Issues Mobilization PAC and the National Association of Realtors.

In terms of funding, Prop. 19 have received more than \$37 million from supporters. On the opposition side, donors are scarce, as less than \$25,000 have been raised for a “No” vote on Prop. 19.

**Yes:** Allows all homeowners 55 and older, along with the severely disabled or those affected by natural disaster, to buy a newer home anywhere in California with an incentive for lower property taxes, even on a more expensive home. Only inherited properties used as primary homes or farms would be eligible for property tax savings.

**No:** Some homeowners who are over 55 (or who meet other qualifications) would continue to be eligible for property tax savings when they move. All inherited properties would continue to be eligible for property tax savings.

## **Proposition 20: Restricts Parole for Non-Violent Offenders. Authorizes Felony Sentences for Certain Offenses Currently Treated Only as Misdemeanors.**

Over the last decade, there have been two props (47 and 57) and one bill (AB 109) that passed with the intention to reduce California’s inmate population. The initiatives took several non-violent, non-serious and non-sexual crimes, and made them misdemeanors.

Prop. 20 seeks to repeal the classifications in those initiatives, and return the option to charge some of those crimes, such as car theft and shoplifting, as felonies. It would also restrict early parole for those inmates. Additionally, the proposition would lead to DNA collecting for certain misdemeanor property crimes.

The increase in jail population would have an estimated fiscal impact in the tens of millions of dollars a year, both at

the state and local levels. There would also be an increase in court-related costs in the millions, annually, as well as millions in costs for collecting DNA samples.

The measure is supported by Assemblyman Jim Cooper and several law enforcement agencies in California and is openly opposed by former Gov. Jerry Brown, as well as organizations such as the ACLU and Black Lives Matter Los Angeles.

**Yes:** Categorizes additional crimes as felonies and restricts early parole, similar to pre-2011.

**No:** Keeps the current system as is.

## **Proposition 21: Expands Local Governments’ Authority to Enact Rent Control on Residential Property.**

Prop. 21 seeks to decrease the landlord’s power over rent and allow local governments to enact rent control. The initiative would replace the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act of 1995, which exempted certain residential units from rent control ordinances, giving landlords the power to set the rental rates.

A similar rent control proposition (Prop. 10) was rejected in 2018, that would have given full rent control to local governments. Prop. 20 would only enact rent control on properties over 15 years old and exempts people who own more than two homes.

Passing the proposition could lead to a reduction in state and local revenue by tens of millions of dollars per year over time.

The campaign is sponsored by the AIDS Healthcare Foundation and supported by the Democratic Party, although Gov. Gavin Newsom is opposed to the proposition, as is the Republican Party.

**Yes:** Allows local government to enact rent control for properties over 15 years old.

**No:** Landlords keep their current abilities to name rental rates.

## **Proposition 22: Exempts App-Based Transportation and Delivery Companies from Providing Employee Benefits to Certain Drivers.**

Prop. 22 seeks to keep application-based drivers classified as “independent contractors” instead of “employees.”

In 2019, California passed Assembly Bill 5, which created three factors in deciding whether third party drivers should be classified as independent contractors or not. The bill led companies such as

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- Protection of our Senior's Care
- Expanded Affordable Housing opportunities for struggling families, students, veterans and our disabled
- Support for our Youth sports activities, soccer, baseball, softball, volleyball, and cricket organizations
- A Veterans Cemetery to honor those that defended and died for our Country

# ELECTION

Uber and Lyft to a legal battle where they were deemed to be misclassifying employees. The 2019 bill would require the app companies to treat its drivers as employees, measuring their hours, providing health benefits and providing occupational insurance.

The proposition is being funded by Lyft, Uber and DoorDash, each putting \$30 million into the initiative. The Democratic Party opposes it, including Senator Kamala Harris and presidential candidate Joe Biden.

**Yes:** Would keep the status quo for app delivery drivers, where they get paid as independent contractors and manage their own work rate.

**No:** Would make the app companies comply with AB 5 and classify their drivers as employees.

### **Proposition 23: Establishes State Requirements for Kidney Dialysis Clinics. Requires On-Site Medical Professional.**

Prop. 23 would require at least one licensed physician on-site during treatment at outpatient kidney dialysis clinics. It would also require clinics to report dialysis-related infection data to state and federal governments, prohibit clinics from closing or reducing services without state approval and would prohibit clinics from refusing to treat patients based on the source of payment for care.

The measure is supported by the Democratic Party and opposed by the Republican Party, as well as the two leading dialysis companies, DaVita Inc. and Fresenius Medical Care. The dialysis companies argue that the proposition would lead to the closure of centers and services, although in the language of the initiative, it is written that a center cannot close without state approval.

The fiscal impact on state and local governments is estimated to be tens of millions of dollars annually.

**Yes:** Requires dialysis centers to have a licensed physician on site, report infection data and prohibits reduced services, or closure of clinics without state approval.

**No:** Opposes the above requirements on dialysis centers.

### **Proposition 24: Amends Consumer Privacy Laws.**

Prop. 24 seeks to expand and/or amend the California Consumer Privacy Act of 2018 and not allow businesses to correct violations before being fined.

As with 2018's CCPA, businesses would not be allowed to share a consumer's personal information and must provide consumers with an opt-out option for having their sensitive personal information used or disclosed for advertising or marketing.

The proposition is supported by former presidential candidate Andrew Yang, the California NAACP and the Consumer Watchdog organization. It is opposed by the Green, Libertarian and Republican parties, as well as notable organizations such as ACLU of California, the California Small Business Association, Black Lives Matter and the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, believing that the proposition would still allow social media platforms and big tech companies to misuse personal information.

An estimated increase in state costs of at least \$10 million annually are expected for the state to oversee and enforce consumer privacy laws.

**Yes:** Keeps businesses from sharing personal consumer data and allows businesses to be penalized for the violating privacy laws.

**No:** Allows businesses to amend privacy violations before being penalized and continue to share consumer demographic data.

### **Proposition 25: Referendum on Law that Replaced Money Bail with System Based on Public Safety and Flight Risk**

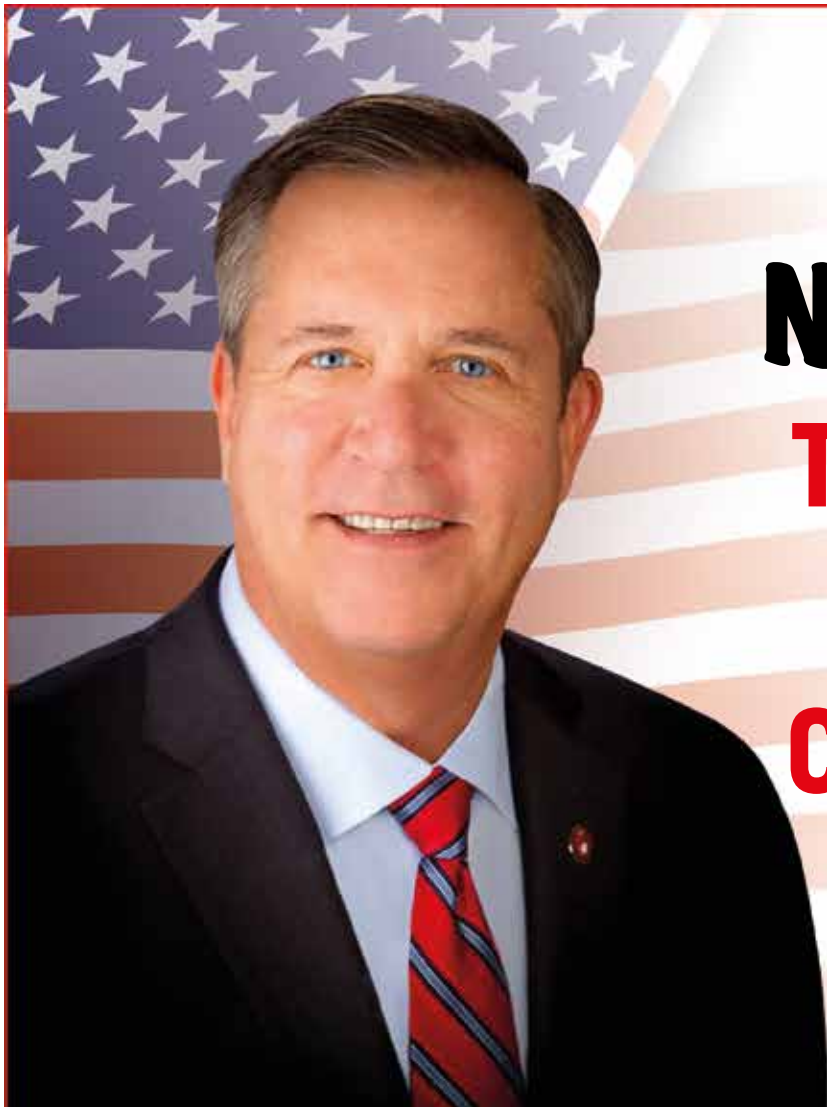
Prop. 25 seeks to uphold Gov. Brown's 2018 Senate Bill 10, which was meant to eliminate cash bail in California before trial, with "risk assessment." The risk assessment for SB 10 would require superior courts to determine if a suspect is a "low risk, medium risk or high risk" to fail to appear in court, or be a risk to the public.

The proposition is supported by the California Democratic Party, and is opposed by both the Republican Party of California and the Orange County Board of Supervisors. It is also opposed by BLM-LA, saying, "If passed, it will end cash bail and subject defendants to racial profiling by replacing it with racist/classist 'risk assessments' algorithms to imprison defendant before trial."

Passing the proposition would have an annual state and local fiscal impact of hundreds of millions to release people before trial.

**Yes:** Approves AB 10's bail elimination and creates a risk assessment process.

**No:** Rejects AB 10.



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**- Greg Rath**

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# ENTERTAINMENT

## HAUNTED TV

### BLUMHOUSE SCARES UP NEW NARRATIVES IN THE STREAMING SPACE.

**"I**t's not just about the monsters under the bed, but also the things that keep us up at night." According to Blumhouse Television's president, Jeremy Gold, these words have become a mantra for production, helping the company broaden and evolve as the proliferation of streaming TV services and mainstream interest in dark genre entertainment has grown. The company best known for creepy and clever cinematic takes on horror (*Paranormal Activity*, *Get Out*, etc.) has been spreading its wicked wings with a provocative vision that's taken over our TV screens as of late, with major presence on Hulu, Showtime, Netflix, and just in time for Halloween 2020, a slate of new films on Amazon.

It's an exciting, if somewhat ironic, moment for Blumhouse – contending with the public's very real fears amid pandemic by providing escapist distraction that often taps into the exact kind of dread and distress we're all feeling right now. Melding the harsh realities of humanity with supernatural and/or sinister new narratives, Blumhouse has cornered the market on eerie entertainment from top-notch writers and directors. But do we actually want to feel fearful at home when a deadly virus looms everytime we venture outside? Apparently, yes. Horror and stories from the darkside happen to be hotter than ever, especially this month, as trick or treating, haunt experiences and seasonal soirees are cancelled across the country. But the company isn't about to play it safe or churn out predictable paranormal clones now that it has the spotlight.

"For the majority of our fans, Blumhouse is synonymous with horror, but in television we have been able to expand the company's purview beyond genre and horror with provocative and acclaimed scripted and unscripted series," shares CEO and founder Jason Blum, who's become a household name thanks to his talent for recognizing

films that thrill and chill audiences." A primary goal – with so many broadcast networks, cable networks and streamers buying shows – was to expand our scope beyond genre and horror since there is a much larger appetite for television content and we knew a real opportunity existed."

Though Blum and company refuse to be pigeon-holed, the brand's menacing material remains some of its most successful. Films such as *Insidious*, *The Purge*, *Happy Death Day*, *Sinister*, *Truth or Dare*, and *Unfriended* pretty much defined a new wave of contemporary horror, utilizing realism devices such as "found footage" formats popularized by the *Activity* movies and docu-style direction with touches of black comedy and inventive gore. The brand is also great at marketing (remember those commercials showing freaked audiences walking out of the theater for their films?). Angelenos might even remember when the company opened an interactive haunt experience in Downtown called "Blumhouse of Horrors" several years ago or more recently, its multi-movie themed maze at Universal Studios' Halloween Horror Nights.

Blum tells *Irvine Weekly* his personal interest in certain subject matter has led him to seek out more diverse fare, including non-horror, such as he did when he acquired book rights for titles such as *The Loudest Voice*, *The Good Lord Bird* and *A Wilderness of Error*. "The team really took the ball and ran with developing them into excellent television series," he adds.

Regardless of genre, Blumhouse's productions maintain a signature feel because they keep many directors in their ecosystem. Filmmakers like Sophia Takal and Gigi Saul Guerrero, who made movies for Hulu's *Into The Dark* anthology series, have also crossed over to develop projects with the film company (Takal with the *Black Christmas* remake and Guerrero on *Santa Muerte*). Meanwhile, on-screen talent such as Jamie Lee Curtis (who reprised her iconic

scream queen role in Blumhouse's new Halloween films) made a first look deal with Blum across film and television to develop and direct projects.

"It's great because they know the company, they know our sensibility and they have a really strong point of view to tell the stories they want to tell, and we love that," Blum explains. "And of course, the company's horror DNA comes out on television too. It's a continued branding effort for the company [and] it's what die hard horror enthusiasts love from us."

Though Covid-19 has slowed down production pace for Blumhouse, Blum says development at the company hasn't missed a beat. Gold concurs. "We were fortunate at the beginning that many of our fall releases had completed shooting so it was more about figuring out innovative solutions in the post-process to finish and deliver the shows," he says. "Later we were able to restart a couple of unscripted projects where crews are small or we could figure out how to film remotely. Most recently, we restarted filming in Los Angeles and New Orleans on a couple of Blumhouse Television projects working within industry, city and our network and distribution partners' guidelines."

Gold points to the company's Fall releases as exemplifying the breadth of what the television studio can do. "For Blumhouse it starts with the material," Gold adds. "It's all about the storytellers and what they have to say. We are always looking for the best material to work with, and then to partner with the most creative and talented writers, directors, filmmakers. We're starting with the incredible brand the film studio built on horror and genre, and expanding the aperture to make shows and streaming movies that entertain a broad audience."

Check out our guide to Blumhouse's best TV productions available to stream now:

### "WELCOME TO BLUMHOUSE" (AMAZON)

#### The Lie

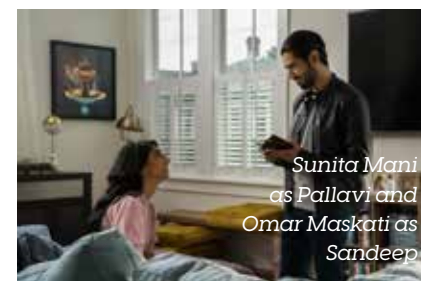
How far would you go to protect your child? This is the question at the heart of Veena Sud's thriller, *The Lie*. When Kayla (Joey King) confesses to her parents Jay (Peter Sarsgaard) and Rebecca (Mireille Enos) that she pushed her best friend off a bridge to her death, they're forced into morally corrupted territory few suburban parents have navigated. The titular "lie" not only refers to the heart of the mystery, but the refusal to



Tilda Cobham-Hervey in *Am Woman*

see evil within our own homes and families. As Jay and Rebecca start to cover up their daughter's crime to the local police and even her deceased friend's father, they begin to disintegrate. And like the best horror and suspense films, *The Lie*'s narrative is driven by the characters' needs and desires, not just an extenuating circumstance. Ultimately, *The Lie* is a tight, cold meditation on how a web of deceit can create its own prison. (C.B.)

#### Evil Eye



Sunita Mani as Pallavi and Omar Maskati as Sandeep

With its traditional use of allegory and metaphor, horror films can sometimes shine a light on social conditions and ailments better than most genres. This definitely is the case in Elan Dassani's and Rajeev Dassani's new film *Evil Eye*, which examines India's tradition of misogyny. Initially, Usha Khatri (Scarita Choudhury) is over-joyed her daughter Pallavi (Sunita Mani) met a boyfriend in New Orleans, and he's Indian to boot. However, Pallavi's new beau Sandeep (a creepy Omar Maskati) reminds Usha of an abusive lover from her own youth in Delhi. Soon, Usha must do whatever is necessary to save her daughter from the ghost of her buried past. Both a family drama and supernatural thriller, *Evil Eye* delves into such subjects as tradition, the immigrant experience, hidden wounds and the importance of family. (C.B.)

#### Nocturne

Perfection is a killer, just ask any classical musician. When piano prodigies Juliet (Sydney Sweeney) and her more accomplished twin sister Violet (Madison Iseman) are accepted into the same elite music academy, Juliet's sense of failure takes on supernatural proportions. After the academy's best

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solist plunges to her death in a mysterious suicide, Juliet discovers her music book, filled with medieval drawings and Satanic musings. Soon, Juliet enters a Faustian contract to overshadow her sister and become the academy's next chosen one. Director Zue Quirke's debut is an allegorical nightmare about pressure, sibling rivalry and the insatiable need to achieve greatness. (C.B.)

### Black Box



In his electrifying debut, director Emmanuel Osei-Kuffour utilizes traits from classic science fiction and horror films to explore the baffling power of memory, or lack thereof. Nolan Wright (Mamoudou Athie) is a single father struggling to live a normal life after losing his wife and a good part of his memory in a tragic car accident. Nolan is forced to use post-its to remind himself to perform basic tasks. As things begin to slip in his daily life, Nolan undergoes treatment from an experimental scientist, Dr. Carter (Phylicia Rashad), who uses a form of hypnotherapy called the black box which will help him

reclaim lost bits of memory. However, once Nolan submerges into his subconscious mind he encounters visions of a disturbing past he never knew existed. Sometimes suppressed memories are better left untouched. *Black Box* is a philosophical and horrific ride that redefines the idea of battling your demons. (C.B.)

### INTO THE DARK ANTHOLOGY (HULU)

When it hits, *Into the Dark* represents some of the most inventive and twisted television you can find anywhere, and when it misses, it's still pretty darn demented and fun. The horror anthology produced for Hulu put Blumhouse on the subscription service map in some ways – even though it had a presence previously – thanks to its consistency and creativity. Premiering in October of 2018 with "The Body" (a wild Halloween episode about a professional hitman who is forced to lug around the plastic-wrapped carcass of his recent victim, pretending it's a part of blood-splattered costume as he gets roped into hanging with a group of Halloween revelers) the series staked its claim on weird rompy TV from the start. Eleven more feature-length episodes later, *Into the Dark's* macabre yarns for every month of the year, provided themes and situations

centered around holidays that tickled us with terror. When the second season kicked off in 2019, it also seemed to get more inventive with standouts including "Pilgrim," (for Thanksgiving) "A Nasty Piece of Work" (For Christmas), "Delivered" (for Mother's Day) and "Good Boy" (for "Pet Appreciation Week"... OK). Whether subtly referenced or the central theme of each film, *Into the Dark's* cultural commentary and audacious style made for binge-worthy bites. (L.L.)

### A WILDERNESS OF ERROR (FX FOR HULU)

Based on iconic documentarian Errol Morris' 2012 book about the 1970 case against Jeffrey MacDonald (an Army physician convicted of brutally murdering his family), FX's *A Wilderness of Error* isn't your typical true crime doc. Director Marc Smerling not only painstakingly deconstructs every facet of the case in hopes of showing that MacDonald never received a fair trial, but also immerses the audience in a stylized, noirish experience – a cinematic bravura created by Errol Morris himself with films like *The Fog of War* and *The Thin Blue Line*.

On the night of February 12, 1970, police arrived at MacDonald's house in Fort Bragg where they discovered a scene of indescribable horror. MacDonald's pregnant wife was in the living room, dead from multiple stab wounds, while their two daughters met the same fate in their bedrooms. MacDonald was superficially wounded with a slight puncture to his abdomen. The word "Pig" was written in blood on the wall. MacDonald claimed a few hippies and a woman with a floppy hat broke in and chanted, "Acid is groovy, kill the pigs," before attacking everyone in the house. It was a scene strangely similar to the Manson murders which occurred only a year prior. MacDonald's story was suspect from the beginning, and investigators quickly set their sights on him as the main suspect. Although there were accounts of a woman with a floppy hat near the scene, including the woman herself, Helena Stockley, claiming she had something to do with the murders, MacDonald was convicted in 1979. To this day, he's still behind bars, proclaiming his innocence.

This thrilling five-part series is a multi-layered deconstruction of a narrative that seemed set in stone due to the 1982 Joe McGinnis book and TV movie, *Fatal Vision*, which painted MacDonald as a sociopathic, callous murderer, and led to what many think was a biased trial and conviction.

Whether you believe MacDonald or not, *A Wilderness of Error* doesn't necessarily convince us of MacDonald's innocence, as much as reveal the power of reasonable doubt. (C.B.)

### THE GOOD LORD BIRD (SHOWTIME)



With fire in his eyes and a beard that would make ZZ Top blush, Ethan Hawke delivers an impassioned and raucous performance as John Brown, the famous fire and brimstone preacher and abolitionist who was determined to singlehandedly take down slavery in Blumhouse Television's affecting *The Good Lord Bird*. Hawke's John Brown is the performance of the decade, but he is surprisingly matched by newcomer Joshua Caleb Johnson. Johnson plays Henry, a young shoe shiner that ends up being swept up in Brown's band of abolitionist rebels. Brown thinks Henry is a girl, referring to him as Onion, so Henry wears dresses and avoids bathing to just remain in the fold. Based on the 2013 James McBride novel, the story is told through Onion/Henry's eyes as we watch Brown and his troupe of harried soldiers run rampant through the South, laying waste to slave masters and plantation owners alike. Brown's aim was to start a civil war, and by God, he kind of did.

You'd think a story about John Brown would be as deadly serious as the headlines in the papers today, but *The Good Lord Bird* is as satirical as it is poignant. Through this seven-part episodic journey, we meet several historical figures such as Frederick Douglass (a hilarious Daveed Diggs) and Harriet Tubman (Zainab Jah). Brown is portrayed as a mad revolutionary, but also an extreme humanist. His zest for petting animals and quoting scripture is only matched by his bloodlust to kill slave owners and rattle the cage of humanity. Ultimately however, this is Henry's story. With his wide innocent gaze and perpetually mystified expression, Henry witnesses the indignities of slavery, and soon understands his place in a world that's gone completely mad. (C.B.)

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