

1. Outline at least one priority you plan to accomplish during your first term that will benefit Santa Cruz County's low-income residents.

My concern for low-income residents is not limited to one priority. All of my priorities are targeted to benefit the whole community, and, by extension, success in this regard will necessarily address the pronounced needs of low-income residents, who as a segment of the overall population, are most dependent on a responsive and effective county government.

2. Growing income inequality is placing a burden on the services that form Santa Cruz County's social "safety net?" How do you plan to strengthen those services to keep more families and individuals from "falling through the cracks" if elected?

I would prefer to omit from the dialogue of this campaign "growing income inequality" and other concepts that presuppose that our community should be divided and that some segments are benefiting at the expense of others. Divisive notions of "class warfare" are ultimately not helpful and are in fact counterproductive.

As for the "safety net," I support maintaining a suitable safety net for those individuals in need of support, but, bigger picture, the solution is not to grow the capacity of the safety net while conceding that a large portion of our community will always be dependent on that "safety net" when the real focus ought to be on creating stable employment for the community by fostering private sector employment for local industries such as agriculture and tourism, and also ensuring that our local community is able to capture its fair share (and hopefully more) of emerging industries. As a member of the Santa Cruz County Board of Education, I recognize firsthand that vocational education programs are of paramount importance in launching those who temporarily rely on the "safety net" to transition to self-dependence, which in turn will allow the finite resources of the "safety net" to be applied to those who continue to need its benefits.

3. What will you do to promote and execute the development of Santa Cruz County's Local Playbook for California's Master Plan for Aging?

I understand the goals of the statewide plan, as reported on the State of California's public website. Obviously, implementation is where the rubber will meet the road. I will work collaboratively with my local Santa Cruz County colleagues to assist the State of California and the other 57 counties in realizing the objectives of the plan, which to date is entirely aspirational.

4. Community needs always seem to be competing for funding with one another. Organization's that serve various populations can often be caught in the middle. What will be your funding priorities and do you see anyways that funding might be expanded across vulnerable groups and needs?

Competition among organizations is not necessarily bad. In fact, competition can be a very good thing. As a County Supervisor, I will gladly favor those organizations that have a proven track record and/or a realistic operational plan over those organizations whose hearts may be in the right place but which may otherwise miss the mark in demonstrable "deliverables." The possibilities include carefully examining the management of the respective organizations for competency and results and scrutinizing their audited financial reports. As with public charities competing for support from the general public, these organizations should be scored on a scale which emphasizes programmatic spending over "administrative expenses." For example, Community Bridges has revenue approaching \$20 million per year. Verifying how and to what effect those sizeable resources are applied will help distinguish one organization from another.

5. Housing and transportation are frequently cited as two of Santa Cruz County's biggest challenges. The relationship between the two is obvious – communities that lack affordable housing contribute to traffic congestion by forcing more of their workforce to commute in. How will you address these two important challenges for Santa Cruz County?

It is better for our community as a whole when people work where they live. This builds wealth within our community, and our wealth is the people of our community. Additionally, it is better for our environment. We accomplish this through economic development, which increases job growth within our community, and sustained living wages for our community members.

6. Nonprofit wages have reached a critical low. Many full-time non-profit employees, including those who have lived here for decades while serving their community, must now depend on public assistance themselves in order to survive. What will you do to address the wage and retention crisis that is affecting the nonprofit agencies contracted by the county to provide services so that our community's nonprofits can continue to recruit and retain staffing to operate our services?

Candidly, I am not independently aware that "non-profit wages have reached a critical low." Likewise, I am not independently aware that substantial numbers of decades-long "non-profit employees are on public assistance." As noted above, Community Bridges has nearly \$20 million in annual revenue. If inflows of that magnitude among credible non-profit organizations still will not allow for reasonable compensation to the average employee, then that problem must be addressed. Setting aside six-figure salaries and benefits for management-level employees, the hands-on workers must be taken care of---or the mission of the entire organization is jeopardized.

7. Nonprofit organizations are funded by many sources bringing in massive financial resources to the county and making up the 4th largest sector in the state and a primary employer. Yet nonprofits do not always have a seat at the table equivalent to county departments. Given their willingness to step up as first responders in times of crises, what role do you think they need to play in relation to the Board and how would you make this happen.

In my observation, non-profit organizations have a "virtual" seat at nearly every table. In the aggregate, their constituencies are well-informed, are vocal, and carry substantial weight with the Board of Supervisors and the county departments. Unlike a single member of the public, non-profits and their constituencies have substantial influence in setting policy at the county level—as well as at the state and federal levels. By way of illustration, Community Bridges alone directs several hundred thousand dollars a year toward "lobbying activities." Assuming every other non-profit makes a proportionate expenditure on lobbying, the magnitude of dollars dedicated to lobbying the County on behalf of non-profits is substantial and perhaps even dwarfs, the lobbying carried out on behalf of any labor or business organization.