



Santa Clara POA Candidate Questionnaire

DUE DATE: August 7, 2020

- **Please return via email to: info@santaclarapoa.com**

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**Occupation (as it will appear on the ballot):
Retired**

Please answer the following questions:

City Budget

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a fiscal crisis for Santa Clara. The City has a budget stabilization reserve or "rainy day fund." Some people believe the fund should be kept at 20 percent of the General Fund. Others believe that we can spend more of the fund to save City essential services.

- **Would you keep the reserves at 20 percent?**
 - I usually don't subscribe to absolute numbers, but want to be able to assess immediate city needs, the outlook for revenues and costs, and where the greatest needs going forward will be. While we need to sustain services to residents, we also need to be sure that we hold some funds in reserve in the event of natural disasters, such as an earthquake or flood, or ongoing economic recession.

- If you're willing to spend more of the budget stabilization reserve and reduce it below 20 percent, what types of city services would you consider essential and, therefore, eligible for the funding?
 - The most important function of the City is to preserve public safety. That means the top priorities have to be police, fire, EMS, electric power, water and sewer, and streets/traffic infrastructure. In a lower tier would be those services that are helpful to mental and physical health, such as parks and recreation, libraries, and the senior and youth centers. Those employees who directly provide services to residents also should be prioritized.

Police Department

Our police department currently has 146 officers. Staffing studies suggest that we should have 250-350 officers to maintain public safety in a city our size. In the near term, it's not realistic to increase the number of officers given the budget challenges. But we think the number of officers is important to maintain public safety.

- Would you support maintaining our officer count at the current levels?
 - Yes.

Police Reform

There's a national movement to make changes in police departments. We're proud of our department. But we know that there's always room for improvement even in the best departments.

- What is your position on the calls to "defund the police?"
 - The use of "defund" is an unfortunate choice of words. The vast majority of Santa Clara residents are highly supportive of SCPD. We don't want to see reduction in service levels. But in fairness to SCPD employees, we need to recognize that Santa Clara doesn't have ready access to a range of community services, such as mental health counseling, rapid re-housing, and drug/alcohol recovery. Thus, our sworn and non-sworn SCPD employees have to deal with many social issues that shouldn't occupy as much of their focus as currently happens. I thought the idea behind the grant application that would fund a behavioral health specialist to work directly with SCPD was an excellent idea for a starting point. I believe we need to find resources to fund those community resources to allow our police to focus more on their primary mission. And a meaningful portion of the physical danger to our police comes from having to deal with these social issues.