

2016 LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE



Candidate Name: Van Le Position You Are Running For: State Assembly District 27 San Jose

Political Party Affiliation: Republican Are You an Incumbent: Yes No

INTRODUCTION: Candidates for the state legislature in 2016 are respectfully requested to answer these questions relevant to the respective and often complementary roles of the state and city governments in California. While the League does not itself endorse candidates, the responses to this questionnaire will be shared with elected city officials in each legislative district for consideration in their own endorsement decisions as well as posted on the League website. Thank you for your participation. Please email your response to Bismarck@cacities.org or fax to 916-658-8240 by no later than March 31. If you have any questions, please contact: League Public Affairs Director Bismarck Obando at Bismarck@cacities.org or 916-658-8273.

LOCAL CONTROL. The relationship between the state and cities functions best as a partnership where major policy issues are approached by the state with careful consideration of the varied conditions among the state's 482 cities and an appreciation of the importance of retaining local flexibility to tailor policies to reflect local needs and circumstances. Still, at times, cities have to respond to state legislation they believe undermines the principle of "local control" over important issues such as land use, housing, finance, infrastructure, elections, labor relations, and other issues directly affecting cities. What is your perspective on local control and state preemption of local control? (*Please explain*).

My experience as a school board member has demonstrated to me multiple times the problems created when the state tries to shoe-horn in a one-size-fits-all policy that fails to recognize the challenges of East Side School District are different from those of Saratoga High. My philosophy has always been that issues are best resolved at the most local level, where the impact is made and the results can be measured more effectively. The state - and even more the Federal government - should not intervene or impose "solutions" unless there is an overriding need or state-wide issue. When the state does impose, we need to ensure that mandates come with full and clear funding. My biggest objection to the local-state relationship is that too often the state balances its budget by shifting responsibilities to local government or "borrowing" funds from schools and local government funding sources.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING. Cities and countries are struggling with a \$78 billion, 10-year maintenance funding deficit for the local streets and roads system. This amount is needed to simply maintain existing infrastructure; delaying these repairs by just 10-years would increase the deficit to \$99 Billion. Meanwhile, millions of cars, trucks, busses and other vehicles have been added to California, utilizing our already over-burdened transportation network. At the same time, gas tax revenues (that benefit both the state and local system) have not been raised since 1994; they have been eroded by inflation, expanded use of electric and more efficient vehicles, and more recently declined 26% since Fiscal Year 2013-14. How would you support addressing this infrastructure funding deficit?

- Additional Gas Tax **NO**
- Additional VLF **NO**
- Expanded Local Authority to raise taxes YES (with limits and proper protections for taxpayers)
- Return Transportation funding & reform CalTRANS **YES**
- Combination of approaches **YES** (I would be willing to explore options)
- Other approaches? *(Please explain)*

We should be looking for a means to dedicate a portion of the funds generated from the AB32/Carbon Tax auctions to fund local transportation projects. I would also like to explore the idea of a local fund, similar to the Redevelopment Funds that the state took from local government to balance their budget, to fund local projects using tax-increment financing; but this fund would have broader local applications, like transportation, housing or other vital projects. I would also like to see more pragmatic use of existing public funds. In addition to CalTRANS reforms, I would like to see the funding being pushing towards High Speed Rail be invested in more immediate and proven transportation needs; I am confident voters would support an initiative to redirect funds towards desperately needed local or statewide projects.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING. With the loss of \$1 billion in redevelopment funding that previously went to affordable housing and the exhaustion of past state affordable housing bond funds, California has virtually no resources to construct affordable housing. Affordable units often require additional public subsidy to that rents and/or purchase prices can be made affordable to low and moderate income households. What is your solution to the affordable housing crisis?

- Allocate a portion of state generation fund for affordable housing **YES**
- Establish new permanent source of affordable housing funding, such as \$75 Tax on real estate **NO**
- Establish a local-state matching program. **YES**
- Reduce the regulatory burden on housing production imposed by CEQA. **YES**
- Combination of these. **YES**
- Other approaches. *(Please explain)*

CEQA reform is a critical need for housing and other projects. I believe there is a bill now being developed that would help by speeding CEQA lawsuits to reduce delays. I think the one-size-fits all approach is a problem for the Bay Area, which has among the highest housing costs in the state — not just in exclusive enclaves, but for even entry-level housing or rentals. We need to reform the State Housing Element rules to allow greater local flexibility in planning for affordable housing goals, and create new mechanisms or credits for local communities that pursue innovative solutions.

WATER CONSERVATION AND STORM WATER. Faced with the ongoing drought and increasing federal and state clean water regulations, local governments have struggled to enforce water conservation requirements and remove contaminants from stormwater and urban water runoff without reducing funding for public safety and other general fund commitments. How should the state assist cities with this challenge?

- Providing increased grants through state bonds financed from the General Fund
- Providing cities and other water agencies with increased flexibility to implement water conservation rate pricing and raise funds locally.
- Combination of these approaches **YES**
- Some other approaches. **YES** (*Please explain*)

I think we need consider an Enterprise Fund to invest in water and recycling technology, as well as creating funding for existing infrastructure. We also need more flexibility to meet high-standards; not by reducing water quality standards, but by allowing more innovative methods for achieving them. Wetlands treatment has been successfully used in other states, but our ability to utilize non-standard methods are limited.

Candidate Signature: _____

