

State Assembly/Senate

Annie Oliva

California State Senate District 13

Businesswoman/Millbrae City Councilwoman

Top 3 priorities citywide

1. **Housing and Homelessness:** The defining issue in our region and the state is housing affordability. I'm the only candidate in this race who works every day to help residents find homes and I understand in the deepest sense the economic and social benefits of helping families realize their dream of home ownership. Too many Californians can no longer afford to buy a home and housing costs are so high that many of our friends, family, and neighbors are being forced out. We need to build more housing by working with our local communities, incentivizing them, and holding them accountable. As we work to put more families into homes, we must also do more to help our homeless neighbors off the streets and into shelters, treatment facilities, and stable housing. And by "more" I mean much more than the often empty rhetoric we hear now. We need, as the Mayor of Sacramento has proposed, both the right to shelter and the requirement that individuals use that shelter if it is available. We need, as State Senator Scott Wiener and others have proposed, the ability to help those who are a danger to themselves or others by keeping them in treatment. We need, as the Governor has said many times, more than 3 million new homes in California. I will work to make these programs and goals a reality- as my very highest priorities.
2. **Traffic and Transportation:** The "super commutes" that have become all too common in the Bay Area are a threat to our environment and our quality of life. The transportation sector is responsible for 41% of greenhouse gas emissions and the Bay Area leads the nation with 120,000 people commuting three or more hours every day. We need to do a better job of investing in reliable public transportation and build housing near transit and job centers so people can work in the same communities they live in. I'll ensure we invest in safe and reliable public transportation up and down the Peninsula and help take cars off our freeways and halt the snarled traffic. We can start by making sure we have the reliable funding we need to build and maintain new transit, including electrified and frequent Caltrain service and BART to San Jose. We can continue by making sure that our various systems are fully coordinated and by making housing near transit our highest priority.
3. **Environmental Sustainability:** Climate change and the resulting sea level rise is a major threat to our neighborhoods and small businesses in communities throughout the Peninsula. Most scientists predict that within a matter of years many of our cities will experience flooding, including to our major infrastructure like San Francisco Airport. This district and Silicon Valley in particular will be some of the hardest hit communities in California – that's why we need to work the hardest right now to address the pressing issue of sea level rise.

1. Who is your Campaign Manager?

Kelly Bernal

2. What is your Campaign Budget?

I plan to accept voluntary spending limits and will raise the maximum \$930,000 in this race.

3. Please share your Top Ten Endorsements:

1. San Mateo County Treasurer Sandi Arnott 2. San Mateo County Supervisor David Canepa 3. Pacifica Mayor Sue Vaterlaus, 4. Former South San Francisco Police Chief Mark Raffaelli 5. Executive Director of San Francisco Unified School District Kim Coates 6. Former Mayor of Daly City Jim Tucker 7. Former Mayor of Millbrae Marge Colapietro, 8. Former Mayor of Millbrae Robert Goltschalk 9. Former Mayor of Millbrae Reuben Holober 10. Millbrae Planning Commissioner Cathy Quigg

4. *Would you support or oppose a 3 county ballot initiative for a permanent 1/8 cent sales tax to fund Caltrain?*

Support

Too many parents are spending time away from their families to sit in traffic along 280, 101, 680, 880, and other freeways stretching across the 9 Bay Area counties. We need reliable public transit running up and down the Peninsula, especially if we are going to convince the public to build more housing. But unlike other Bay Area transit systems, Caltrain does not have a designated permanent funding source. If such a measure - with support as high as 72% of likely voters - were to be included on the ballot, we would have the opportunity to make long overdue improvements to Caltrain and take tens of thousands of cars off our roads. This is so important because more than 41% of greenhouse gas emissions come from the transportation sector. Greater investments in Caltrain, along with transit-oriented development and innovative first/last mile solutions, will be key to tackling this challenge. I will also do all I can in the State Senate to see that the critical Caltrain electrification project is done as quickly and safely as possible.

5. *Do you support funding to complete a valley to valley connection through high speed rail?*

Support

As I said above, to reduce transportation emissions, we need to invest in current transit systems and build more housing next to transit. That includes pursuing forms of transit like high-speed rail that not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions but power our local economies and enhance our quality of life. Given the potential benefits of high-speed rail for our community, we should pursue private and federal funding alternatives if state resources are focused elsewhere. I also believe we need to link the Central Valley to Silicon Valley— and that should be the start of high-speed rail, not Bakersfield to Merced. The plan is not complete and I don't support it. The Governor has said he is working on that key leg— the leg to Diridon Station in San Jose. And I wait that plan before I would give my support.

6. *Would you support a measure dedicated to build and operate a world class, seamless integrated transit system to better serve Bay Area residents, funded through a one cent sales tax, to better serve the transit dependent and those of us still in our cars?*

Support

First of all, because over the long run this kind of fundamental investment in infrastructure more than pays for itself. We can't keep growing our economy if we are choking on traffic and the pollution that comes from traffic. We can't attract the very best and brightest workers from around the state, nation and world if they see that the must make terrible commutes to take jobs in our region. As a businesswoman I understand this – smart investments have strong Return on Investment and I will make sure to closely calculate the ROI on all the votes I take and polities I support.

Beyond our immediate economic need, we must do our part to lower climate-changing GHGs. And as noted, we are now seeing the plurality if not already the majority of our GHGs coming

from transportation. July 2019 was the hottest July on record. The last five Julys are the five hottest Julys on record. We are in an era of change when empty words and token gestures are not enough. We need big solutions to address the interconnected challenges of housing and homelessness, transportation gridlock and climate change. We need to look at every transportation policy to make sure we are prioritizing those that are most effective. If local leaders determine that the most effective way to improve our transit systems, get tens of thousands of cars off the road, and dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation is to work together to build a world class, seamless integrated transit system for the Bay Area, then I support it.

7. *Would you support state legislation to facilitate and encourage TOD within a half-mile of fixed-rail development, including streamlining housing approvals and establishing minimum zoning standards/heights?*

Support

The affordable housing crisis in California can be felt more acutely in District 13 and throughout the Bay Area than nearly anywhere else in the state. Nowhere else are people regularly commuting hours one way to work and back home again and that trend is simply unsustainable. On the city council I championed smart growth policies that encouraged more mixed-use development. While I believe in local government continuing to make land use decisions, I absolutely support state policies that encourage building more affordable housing and transit-oriented development, especially for veterans and seniors. That said – the details matter. I think, for example, that SB50 has the right goal but needs to be modified so it is not a one-size fits all solution.

8. *Do you support reform of CEQA?*

Support

As a current Millbrae City Councilwoman, I understand firsthand the protection CEQA provides for local communities from environmental harm, particularly our communities of color. The public benefits greatly from the community meetings and notices the law requires and the level of sunshine it provides on projects. Californians have a right to understand the impacts development will have in their cities and towns.

I do think CEQA should be thoughtfully reformed – so it can't be abused and so we can build housing and transportation projects faster.

9. *Would you support a ballot measure, such as Prop 8, that regulates the amount that healthcare providers may charge for services?*

Oppose

Prop. 8 wasn't really about healthcare, it was about a fight between a union and an industry, so I don't take that as an example of a ballot initiative about healthcare. I take it as an example of partisanship and special interests hijacking our political system for their own specific needs. When people get sick, or when people lose their insurance, or can't afford insurance, they don't think of themselves as Democrats or Republicans, Moderates or Progressives, they are just people looking to get well. Healthcare is a human right – and I will treat it as such – not as a political football.

10. *Do you support requiring all new buses purchased with federal funds be zero-emission beginning on October 1, 2029 (which is California's deadline for transitioning all transit bus purchases to zero-emission buses)?*

Support

As we invest in improved public transit that will get tens of thousands of cars off the road, we can make our efforts more effective by emphasizing zero-emission public transit options. We should also continue to build out our EV charging network so electric vehicles are a logical and affordable choice for consumers.

Just as we need to encourage innovative new technologies in human transportation, we must invest in the development of cleaner transportation of goods throughout California. I support incentivizing the development of rail technologies that could help us lower the amount of goods moved by semi-trucks and other gas and diesel vehicles.

11. *Will you work with the Leadership Group and your Bay Area state legislative colleagues to develop a "Baylands Caucus" focused on a regional vision and plan of action for sea level rise, as well as funding to address our shared vulnerabilities?*

Support

We have long known that rising sea levels will endanger our wetlands and habitats, infrastructure, homes, and businesses all along the Peninsula. However, a recent study by the U.S. Geological Survey estimates that - once tides, storms, and erosion are accounted for - the damage could actually be triple what's been previously predicted.

In Sacramento, I will ensure we continue our efforts to protect and restore the Bay with a key focus on flood protection and mitigation projects across the nine county Bay Area. Of course, that will include working closely with my Bay Area colleagues in the state legislature to develop regional solutions to our shared challenges.

12. *Do you support or oppose a proposed amendment to Proposition 13?*

Oppose

I support closing the loopholes in Prop. 13 that are being used by large corporations to avoid reassessment when properties are sold or transferred.

I do not support the so-called split roll proposal. It is a massive tax increase – and rest assured, we will all pay the price. We should focus on raising revenues by growing our economy and creating middle-class jobs. And we should also focus on continued improvements in government efficiency – so we can deliver more services for each dollar. Now is not the time to be raising taxes.

13. *Will you support legislation that reduces the volatility of the California tax system?*

Support

Our tax system is the result of decades of political and policy battles and it has become both too narrow, unwieldy and too often it favors the politically powerful instead of focusing on growing our economy fairly.

My highest priorities in terms of increasing our tax revenues are growing our economy collecting unpaid taxes. But this will also be a very high priority. Senator Bob Hertzberg is already doing good work on this issue – and while I don't necessarily agree with every one of his conclusions – I will work with him and others on fundamental tax reform.

14. *Do you support the creation of a statewide student longitudinal data system?*

Support

Not enough of our kids are graduating, especially among students of color.

Addressing disparities in our education system is one of the most important things we can do to fight inequality throughout our society. I believe it is critical we invest in our children at an early age so that every child has an opportunity to succeed. There is no excuse for California to lag behind other states when it comes to doing everything we can for our students. As the home of Silicon Valley, our state should be the leader in using data and technology to create the best environment for our students to succeed.

15. *Will you address the higher education opportunity gap for underrepresented students and increase the number of graduates prepared for innovation economy careers?*

Support

California faces a gap in skilled workers. Estimates indicate that by 2030, if current trends continue, California will be 2.5 million short of workers with some postsecondary education. This is a huge hole in our workforce and in our ability to grow our economy. We need to do better in supporting career and technical education programs, as well as providing students and workers with the information needed to evaluate their educational choices, especially in an era when many will be challenged by the threat of job and career displacement due to the growth of Artificial Intelligence and other forms of technology.

But the path to higher education starts much earlier. So much of a child's future is determined by where they live, including what schools they attend. Therefore, we need to tackle California's housing crisis, and address persistent racial disparities in housing. Giving more kids a better head start in life - and breaking the school-to-prison pipeline - will help put more underrepresented students in a position to achieve.

16. *Tell us about a time when you were opposed to a position of one of your major supporters. What was the issue? How did you handle this situation?*

This year, the California Association of Realtors sponsored SB 50 (Wiener) and I was opposed to the legislation. I am proud to be a realtor, have worked with CAR for many years and have served in leadership roles in the organization. I am very supportive of creating higher density housing along transit corridors in principle and I think each city should have control over the details of the projects, so the development fits the community. I was direct with CAR and described my opposition and the amendments needed for me to support the bill. In the State Senate I would look for ways the state can partner with cities and incentivize them to build more housing, and hold them accountable.

Additional Question asked on 10/15

17. *Are you in favor or in opposition of a ballot measure that will prohibit campaign contributions from advocates for development and tie the San Jose Mayoral term to the Presidential Election Cycle?*

Support

I support any efforts to increase voter turnout but this measure doesn't address the underlying causes for why turnout is often low. Moving the election date doesn't address voter apathy or make it easier for voters to cast a ballot in off-year elections, and it's unfair to allow campaign contributions from some organizations with political interests, but not others. We need to be honest with voters when we are promising reform— and this measure isn't completely forthright.

Though turnout has increased in recent years—70% in November 2018 in Santa Clara County— there is more we can do to make sure more of our friends and neighbors are engaged in the issues that affect their everyday lives. Like San Mateo County, I'm so pleased to see Santa Clara County will make it easier for voters to have their voices heard with automatic vote by mail this year. We have seen positive outcomes in San Mateo, particularly for people of color and young people— a 79% increase among voters ages 18 to 24 in San Mateo in November 2015, for example. I hope we see the same outcomes across Santa Clara County in 2020.

Finally, we need to do more to earn the trust and respect of our voters. That starts with electing leaders that are representative of our communities, who will speak up on behalf of everyone, regardless of politics or campaign contributions. We need to restore voters' faith in politics by sending leaders to Sacramento who are interested in solving problems and getting things done. That will be my mission.