

State Assembly/Senate

Michael Brownrigg

State Senate District 13

Social Impact Investor; City Councilman

Top 3 priorities citywide

1. Affordability -- our communities are eroding out from under us. This is mainly about housing but not only that, it is also affordable and accessible childcare and better and more affordable transit, to name just two key factors. I want to boost housing in partnership with our city leaders aggressively, provide more childcare, and increase rail frequency up/down the Peninsula and around/across the bay.
2. Climate -- we need to pull carbon out of the energy stream much more rapidly; we also need to prepare our very threatened Peninsula for higher sea levels. Waste reduction is also urgent and I have been a regional leader in innovative technology and financing to reduce organic waste in San Mateo County. I want to build on that leadership in Sacramento. I will be announcing more detailed plans on all this by end of August.
3. Education -- we need to bolster resources in our K-12 and significantly increase services in 0-5 age group on a means-tested basis. I also want to bring a 4 year public degree granting institution to San Mateo County as a 2 year add on to our community college program.

1. Who is your Campaign Manager?

Katie Merrill and Duane Baughman

2. What is your Campaign Budget?

\$930k for the Primary, and General will be determined depending on competition. I am prepared to invest in my campaign.

3. Please share your Top Ten Endorsements:

All of my city council colleagues; four out of five Hillsborough council people; Supervisor David Canepa; San Carlos Mayor Mark Olbert; South SF Councilmen Mark Addiego and Rich Garbarino; Belmont councilman Doug Kim; San Bruno Council member Laura Davis; San Mateo Councilman Joe Goethals; 650 ordinary voters who have endorsed me online or in one of our 42 house parties in 20 cities.

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

Support

Our Bay Area deserves much better rapid transit, and that mainly means rail and shuttle services. (Buses play a role but will be more useful for point to point corporate traffic over time.) I am a Peninsula kid born and raised, and for most of my life, we in northern Santa Clara county and San Mateo County have thought of ourselves as bedroom communities. Suburbs are OK with one train an hour, a couple of buses. But as the twin job-creating universes -- SF and Silicon Valley -- grew they essentially merged over the last 20 years, and so we become one single universe, and San Mateo County and N Santa Clara are smack in the middle. That is the transition we are all going through here on the Peninsula. So we are becoming a single city (with 25 jurisdictions). That can work OK for a lot of things -- I have thoughts on that -- but not transit. Our "city" needs the same kind of rapid transit service that other cities have and expect. I have lived around the world and I know lots of folks will take transit as opposed to driving PROVIDED the service comes frequently -- enough so you don't have to wait 45 minutes if you miss a train -- and provided it is not much more expensive than driving. With those thoughts in mind, I am 100% in favor of aggressively investing in our rail infrastructure ASAP, Caltrain and BART. The other benefit will be that the housing units which we all must deliver for the SF/SV/Peninsula job machine can be spread over a wider geographic area if we have rapid, frequent rail transit. We need to both bolster resources and cut red tape on these transit infrastructure projects, in my view. The downside to not doing so is not just a hit to our commercial and innovation sectors, but I believe it threatens the very fabrics of our communities, as I alluded to in the Affordability answer above. As for the ballot measure referenced, I have been a public supporter and champion of each of our recent transit taxes, such as RM3 and Measure W.

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

This is a more nuanced answer, to be honest, not really yes/no. I am a practical person and what I want to achieve is better rail transit for our metro areas (Bay Area and LA) and to build out from there, rather than starting in the Central Valley and building inwards. Candidly, I wonder about the HSR investment: for me, in addition to 30 years of public service experience I also have 20 years in the private sector, the first decade as a pure venture capitalist, the last decade as a social impact investor, so I am very familiar with risk-taking and have some scar tissue from investments that didn't work out. High Speed Rail feels to me like a venture investment that missed, and as Reid Hoffman and so many others teach us, when things miss, fail fast. Looking at the practical travel times from Bakersfield to Mountain View, if one assumes one has to connect in Merced to a regular train, seems appallingly long. My conclusion is that we should stop trying to save Bakersfield-Merced HSR, at least for now. I support a pivot: redirect that massive HSR rail investment and energy into substantial upgrades to the Bay Area and LA metro areas. Then build OUTWARD from the Bay Area into southern and eastern counties. We would not reach Bakersfield for a long time perhaps but we would create a lot more useful bedroom communities and affordable housing options in the near term at less expense and with shorter commutes for workers. HSR/Bakersfield can remain a long term goal. I completely understand the desire not to create a stranded asset -- how embarrassing -- but this is where we in Silicon Valley ought to help the Legislature and Governor get over it and

make the next \$20 billion count much more in terms of our transit infrastructure and ROI. So, yes, we should bring better rail service to our far flung counties and create more housing options in that fashion (like Shinkansen did for Tokyo) but let's do it the practical and common sense way, by building outward.

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

1000%. See my answers above. We have to do this. The only question is how best to pay for it. I support the measure described above, I would support any number of other fiscal measures too. The vision of "a world class, seamless integrated transit system to better serve Bay Area residents" is a MUST HAVE for our communities, for lots of reasons. I am a champion from City Council and would be an even bigger one in the State Senate.

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?*

Oppose

This is another nuanced answer, not really yes/no. I agree wholeheartedly with the premise: we have a housing crisis that is eroding our communities. This is my top priority in the campaign and it resonates everywhere I speak. There is almost no style of housing we don't need. This is the central issue for my Senate Campaign and I am fully committed to get housing built and de facto affordable housing preserved. Unlike other candidates, I have a track record to prove it. I am proud that in Burlingame, we are going to break ground this fall on a 5 story building in the heart of our downtown for affordable units, 54 for low income seniors and 78 for workforce families. If you had asked anyone in my city 5 years ago whether that would be possible, you would have been laughed out of the room. But not just one project: we have adopted a new General Plan that envisions growing our total housing units by 20% in 10 years -- for a city that has grown at 1/4 of 1% a year for the last 40 years! And I led the way 10 years ago to raise the heights in our downtown to 55' for mixed use developments. I pushed hard for these outcomes and worked to bring our community along on a vision that not everyone shared at first. And I know our General Plan will be transformative because before the ink was dry we already had a developer at our door with a project for 260 units, 38 of which will be affordable. And a lot other land has changed hands into those willing to take risk and do the development -- so we are going to see real production. I am proud of these accomplishments. So why do I answer "no" above, which is basically a reference to SB50? Because I believe many cities on the Peninsula are creating density, but in ways that comport with their city's layouts. In our case, we rezoned a light industrial area (that happens to be very near BART and Caltrain) for 6 story housing; SB50 would not have made that happen, it only requires cities to remove height limits where housing is already permitted. Instead of SB50's top down, one-size-fits-all mandates, I propose insisting that every city produce a plan that a 3rd party auditor and real estate expert certifies is likely to yield real production increases of 20-25% in a reasonable period of time, to be monitored every

24 months for progress. If we did that in San Mateo County, we would generate 60,000 more housing units, a huge number that would put a real dent in demand. Finally, it is really important to remember that most of the land in our cities is privately held. It is not enough to change height limits in single family home neighborhoods and expect redevelopment given the price of land. I truly fear that we could adopt SB50 and not a single project would get built, because the land price, aggregation, construction costs and risks would make deter or slow actual redevelopment. I like TOD development, but mostly, in the face of this crisis, I like development, near transit or not. City leadership knows best where development can occur in ways that work for them and work for the developers and GETS STUFF BUILT. As for streamlining, I have long favored streamlining by government for everything, provided that there is a true planning process that occurs. I support any effort to make sure that "housing delayed" does not become "housing denied," but on the other hand developers need to be responsive to reasonable city input and requests.

8. Do you support reform of CEQA?

Support

This is very delicate, but after 8 years on Planning Commission and 10 years on City Council, I believe I have seen the CEQA process abused in some cases not for valid environmental purposes but to try and slow or deter the completion of a reasonable project because someone did not like it. I think there must be ways to ensure a project's valid CEQA environmental concerns are addressed and mitigated (if any) without becoming a substantial tax and sometimes veto to a good project overall. I don't know what those changes look like exactly but I would support common sense CEQA reform, provided environmental vigilance is thoroughly retained.

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

Oppose

I champion the goals of reducing health care costs and improving health care delivery. The US spends more than almost all OECD nations on health yet get only average or even sub-average health outcomes, so clearly something is broken with our delivery and pricing of health care. In my private life, I have helped back health care investments in Africa, Asia and even in California; here in California we supported a wonderful social entrepreneur whose enterprise provides culturally-sensitive health care advice and services over mobile phones to non-English speaking residents (www.consejosano.com), improving health outcomes in numerous disadvantaged communities, and Consejo has also led an effort to promote the better use of health tech in Medicaid (see HT4M.org), to save money and improve outcomes. That said, I am not persuaded that the ballot box is the best way to strike legislative balances on complex issues like health care service pricing, not to mention that ballot measures require future ballot measures to adjust. This is a general bias of mine, against using ballot measures for complex items that ought to be handled by the Legislature. I certainly agree that if Dialysis centers have 60% NET profit margins ("profit is 115% of cost of service") then that is excessive. Why is competition not driving those margins down? Why are the insurers, who are supposed to police

health costs, not negotiating these costs down? And if we get in the habit of setting prices at the ballot box, where does it stop? Should we ask voters whether to regulate a large tech company's pricing or biotech's pricing? My strong preference is to bring this kind of issue into the legislature and debate the matter transparently and robustly to get better outcomes. Needless to say, for this to work we must elect leaders who are willing to challenge special interests, set reimbursement rates that are rational, and legislate in the best interests of the people of California. I am that person. My whole public career has been working toward what is best for the most number of people: I owe no one anything.

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

1000% support. Burlingame is headquarters to Proterra, so I know this segment especially well. But this is not about one company or our jobs, it is about our future. My campaign will be launching an ambitious vision to get us to Zero Carbon Electricity by 2035, with concrete proposals not just wishful targets, and electrifying the vehicle fleet is a crucial part of the pathway. So YES.

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

YES. I have enthusiastically supported the creation of the new Flood and Sea Level Rise Agency in San Mateo County, an initiative spurred in part by Congresswoman Jackie Speier, in order to harmonize our County's activities and planning and give us more throw weight in Washington DC. Our County and Senate District 13 are flanked by the ocean and the Bay and therefore doubly at risk, making this especially urgent. Moreover, my own city of Burlingame is deeply threatened -- 1/3 of our General Fund revenues come from companies that are within a few feet of the Bay, so sea rise is an existential threat to us, as it is to so many sister communities around the bay. Needless to say, coordinated action makes even more sense at a Bay Area level, and the recent work of the SF Bay Estuary and SPUR ("The Bay Adaptation Atlas") is to my mind an excellent survey and starting point for regional defensive action plans. I would fully support and do all I can in the Senate to support SVLG to develop a Baylands Caucus and any additional efforts at coordination, planning and funding.

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

Support

This is a difficult subject. It is inevitably true that raising tax expenses on commercial property owners will filter through to higher business expenses in our economy, with consequential impacts on profitability and jobs. One cannot deny that. That said, I believe and have stated publicly that Split Roll is an appropriate reform to our tax code in my opinion, principally because we are so far behind on our education spending vs our history and vs our competing states. In a

way, I think of Split Roll as creating a near term hit to California competitiveness to create a long term benefit to competitiveness by having better educated kids and therefore more trained and productive adults and workforce. With 6 millions kids in public k-12 schools and 2 million not a grade level, that is a sign that something is wrong in our school system and being under-resourced is part of that. So the stakes are real. Moreover, while there is never a good time to raise expenses for our great business sector, the recent federal tax code changes which reduced profit taxes will offset to some degree the increased property taxes for California businesses. And of course, for enterprises that have more recently purchased their properties, then the adjustment will be modest. Having said all that, I strongly favor using the discretion in the ballot language to design a smooth and steady transition to market rate valuations, not a sudden one. One other observation: given that my main rationale for supporting Split Roll is to drive more resources into education, and given that the Ballot Language proposes taking 40% for education and the balance for the General Fund (mirroring Prop 98 I guess), I would strongly advocate taking ALL the early money from Split Roll and putting it into education, not starting with a 40/60 split. Indeed, I would even support dedicating 100% of the Prop 13 uplift (estimated at about \$10 billion when fully implemented) to go to Age 0-5 childcare and pre-K and k-12 education. We need to invest in our kids.

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

Support

California's boom/bust revenue cycles make it extremely hard to budget and plan, and social service agencies and education inevitably take it on the chin when our State budgets crater, as they did following market meltdowns in 2008/9 and in 2000/1. The reason our budgets are so volatile is exactly as you suggest: we take a large percentage of our income from the very wealthy, most of whose income comes from the stock market, and stock markets are volatile (which a lot of people seem to have forgotten as we head into Year 10 of the longest bull market in 100 years). The State rainy day funds are a good way to create additional stability, but I would certainly support finding ways to reduce volatility for State revenue. You can also see how I answered this question when asked on Pen TV here:

<https://www.pentv.tv/2019/07/the-game-281-michael-brownrigg/> at minute 21.50. I am told the other candidates will also be asked this question by the moderators.

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

Support

You cannot manage what you cannot measure.

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

Support

I am 1000% behind this objective and approach. For over ten years I have served as a Board Member and Advisor to Foundation for College Education, whose mission is to help kids of color in East Palo Alto attend and succeed in college and get their degrees. FCE has been enormously successful, but I have seen up close how a support network -- which wealthy kids

take for granted -- can make a huge difference for first gen students. I also attended the SVLG Education conference at NetApp recently and took away a number of other good ideas to make sure all of our kids, but especially our young women and kids of color, not only have the STEM door opened but are welcomed inside and encouraged throughout. One of my table mates who works with teenage moms to get them to go back to school and improve their skills said, "if your role models are all housekeepers and social workers, then that's all you think you can be." We need to do much better. One of my central education planks in my campaign is to ensure we bring a 4 year public degree granting institution onto the Peninsula (in a 2+2 format with one of our excellent community colleges). Giving our working kids a chance to bolster their AD degree by converting it into a BA, in a local and affordable institution, is just a common sense way for us to improve our local human capital. I will certainly support SVLG and our other employers and educational leaders any way I can to support getting more kids into STEM.

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?

It is happening right now -- there is a 9 acre public lands parcel controlled by State Lands in Burlingame, and there is a heated dispute about its disposition. A group of environmentalists want to turn it into a public park with wetlands by breaking our seawall and flooding a portion of the land to create marshes and wetlands. I am in favor of creating public open space on this parcel and have been for years, but I oppose this particular vision backed by a powerful local land owner and a local environmental NGO because I believe it is a huge mistake to break our sea wall, given the issue of sea rise and future adaptation. I am convinced we will need one day to build a higher sea wall, and breaking the wall today will lead to a much more expensive defense effort in the future. Our bayside lands hold companies that provide 1/3 of our city's revenue -- so losing the land is an existential threat. The details of all this are, needless to say, longer and more complex, but this is the gist of it. My position on the park has been mischaracterized and demagogued by a number of the interest groups involved, most recently at our Sunday Farmers Market, with the proponents telling people I am an obstacle to this great outcome. I have thus received numerous emails from people saying they have supported me in this campaign or in the past and are disillusioned etc. So I write back to these folks -- and whenever I do, they inevitably say that's not the info they got and based on my analysis and project history they are in my camp. But of course, for every one person who writes to me there are probably 10 people who heard this and simply believed it. Easiest thing in terms of my present campaign for Senate would be to go along with this flawed plan -- after all, it is State Lands who makes the final decision so I could wash my hands of responsibility -- but that would not be right. In sum, I have done my best to make my position clear to my friends and supporters -- I have met with the land owner and NGO to explain my concerns -- and I will continue to do my best to protect the near term and long term interests of my city. I am not just a fiduciary just for today, I have to be a fiduciary for the next generation too.

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?

Oppose

I would not favor this initiative as drafted. I am 100% in favor of transparency in election financing, I support the California Clean Money Campaign priorities, and I believe ultimately that the most fair elections will occur when Citizens United is overturned and public financing becomes the norm, removing money from politics altogether. However, in the meantime, in the real world in which we live, it is not fair to limit some groups from making political contributions and not all groups.