

State Assembly/Senate

Shelly Masur

State Senate District 13

Redwood City Councilwoman; former CEO Californians Dedicated to Education Foundation

Top 3 priorities citywide

1. Public Education
2. Housing & Transportation
3. Access to high quality healthcare for all

1. Who is your Campaign Manager?

Barry Barnes

2. What is your Campaign Budget?

\$1,000,000+ for the primary and general

3. Please share your Top Ten Endorsements:

State Treasurer Fiona Ma; State Senator Connie Leyva; State Senator Scott Weiner; Assemblymember Marc Berman; Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry; Supervisor Susan Ellenberg; Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson (former); California Democratic Legislative Women's Caucus; Fund Her; Northern California Carpenters

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

Support

As a member of the Local Policymakers Group on Caltrain and High Speed Rail, I am very interested in increasing Caltrain Service, full implementation of electrification and have been advocating for that the board include language in its Business Plan that demonstrates a commitment to working toward the highest level of service. This also would require significant attention to the 42 at-grade crossings on the Caltrain corridor, all of which require funding. This question, however is highly reliant on Question 6. The viability of two transportation measures on the same ballot after recent increases in bridge tolls, passage of SB 2 and other regional measures, including local and countywide sales tax measures is connected to this potential measure as well and will require careful thought as we move into the 2020 election season.

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

Support

Given the urgency of the climate crisis and the need to decrease traffic. I believe we need to be studying all additional rail options. The State can and should be contributing and supporting, as they have done with the Stockton to Dublin rail line advocated for by Assemblymember Susan Eggman.

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

The 2019 Urban Mobility Report ranked Bay Area traffic as the second worst in the nation, second only to Southern California. The average number of hours per commuter lost to traffic has nearly doubled from 55 to 103 at a cost of \$2.4 billion. Coupled with and connected to our housing crisis, this is simply not acceptable. As such, I applaud these three groups for working toward a regional solution to traffic woes. We've seen at the local level that local measures can only go so far especially when there's a lack of coordination between transit agencies. The result of all of this is more time wasted in traffic for our residents and less productive work and family lives. This said I have questions regarding what I have read so far and my questions would need to be answered before supporting. 1) given that a sales tax is regressive, how can we ensure that disadvantaged communities don't pay more than their fair share for the transit improvements? 2) how can we know that the improvements will benefit regional transportation across the Bay Area? 3) how do we ensure that local governments (who rely on sales tax for many vital needs) aren't negatively impacted by a large regional tax like this? I look forward to engaging with your groups and others to address these questions and create a win-win for our region and residents.

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

As a Redwood City Councilwoman I have been a champion of building more housing near transit. In Redwood City we have build over 4,000 units of housing in the last 8 years and are continuing to approve new housing with over 500 units approved or under construction, the majority of those affordable and the majority near transit. I strongly support transit-oriented development and am on record as supporting modifications to recently proposed state legislation, which would give cities a window to create their own TOD plans and if they don't, they would need to follow state law. In addition, I would want to see no exemptions for counties with smaller populations. With this, I do understand that in order to advance a local plan we would need to have streamlining of CEQA specifically for TOD plans to meet state guidelines. I have discussed this modification with State Senator Scott Weiner, who proposed SB 50, and received his endorsement in my race.

8. *Do you support reform of CEQA?*

Support

The original intent of CEQA, to understand the environmental impacts of a project and to mitigate them so we are protecting our environment, is important, especially as we face a global climate crisis. However, In Redwood City, our Downtown Precise Plan, which allowed for the transformation of our downtown, went through years of litigation due to a citizen using CEQA to try to stop it. Recently a Habitat for Humanity project, which will provide 20 affordable for-purchase homes, took an extra year due to a CEQA lawsuit. A few areas that could address challenges with its current implementation have been identified that I would support. 1. Disallow duplicative, serial lawsuits as long as the project has already completed the CEQA process, been litigated and the mitigation measures have been addressed. 2. Outlaw delay tactics that drag litigation beyond the goal of completion in nine months. 3. Ensure discretion for judges to require fixes to the EIR rather than a full decertification for deficiencies in certain cases. This last one has been litigated and found to be allowable in some instances and care would need to be taken to understand interrelated sections of the EIR.

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

Oppose

As a public health professional, access to high quality affordable health care is a key priority for me and something I would be very pleased to work on with SVLG. This ballot measure, however, does not advance that mission in a comprehensive way. I fully agree that we need to address high health care costs so that people don't have to choose between eating and going to the doctor, or paying rent and receiving medical care. Dialysis patients are particularly vulnerable due to the critical nature of this treatment. However, ballot measures that seek to cap profits over the cost of patient care are both challenging to enforce and difficult to measure. For example, what counts as the "cost of patient care". Patients certainly need doctors and nurses, but they also need clean beds and rooms. How is the cost of electricity to run a dialysis machine counted since clinics also need electricity to run an office? We may want to look at better regulations that address the issues related to high costs, but a ballot measure is too blunt of an instrument to address such a complex problem. We need real health care changes so everyone is able to afford healthcare, but this ballot measure offers a limited approach that doesn't address the real problem.

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

There is no question that we must do all we can to tackle GHG emissions. The State has taken steps through policy and funding to address this issue, and requiring zero-emission public transit is a critical piece of the puzzle.

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

At the first meeting of Redwood City's Ad Hoc Committee on Sea Level Rise and Storm Water, of which I am a member, our committee just had a discussion about the importance of regional coordination for this issue for exactly the reasons stated in the question. How each of our cities addresses sea level rise impacts the other. How we address development along the Bay, how we seek funding and how we protect our infrastructure, including our highways must be addressed regionally. San Mateo County has recently formed a JPA, which Redwood City supported and is contributing to, to begin to coordinate in San Mateo County. But with so many jurisdictions touching the Bay, working together, as we do with the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority, is crucial. I sit on the SFBRA Advisory Committee and worked on the RFP for Measure AA funds so have seen individual good projects, but most frequently they are not connected and are solely focused on restoration. A regional vision, approach and coordinated funding will be needed to address another of the Bay Area's significant areas of challenge.

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

Support

I recognize that SVLG has taken an oppose position on the proposed Schools and Communities First Initiative. However, as a former school board member and advocate for public education funding, I have endorsed this measure which qualified for the ballot in 2020. That said, as SVLG members likely know, a new measure has been submitted to the Secretary of State and will be collecting signatures so what will appear on the ballot is in question. I see this as related to California's tax volatility, which is addressed in the subsequent question.

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

Support

California's reliance on personal income tax and capital gains tax means that during a recession, our state's budget suffers significantly. As such, services that rely on this revenue suffer. For example, local school districts had to make cuts of up to 20% during the last recession and have only just begun to recover despite a long period of economic expansion. This boom and bust cycle makes long-term planning difficult as well as creating situations where the most vulnerable populations that rely on state services, are negatively impacted. In addition, it makes it very challenging for the State to invest in infrastructure, housing, and transportation, all components of a thriving region. One committee I am interested in is the Senate Governance & Finance Committee, which has taxation in its jurisdiction. I would very much support legislation that addresses our volatile tax structure and would look forward to working with SVLG to do so.

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

Support

As the former CEO of Californians Dedicated to Education (CDE) Foundation, and a former Redwood City School Board member, I fully support the creation of a statewide student longitudinal data system. Not only would the system allow us to understand how we are serving students across our system, but it would significantly improve our ability to track mobile students across California, as well as better track students across systems, from pre-K to college. At the CDE Foundation we convened a task force, the Alliance for Continuous Improvement, which included education leaders from over 20 organizations. In 2018, the Alliance developed the California Education GPS, which included a recommendation for a statewide student data system that reflects my views and the views of the Alliance members: "Invest in developing a statewide system of data that connects relevant student data from pre-kindergarten through college, while safeguarding individual student privacy. This includes integrating CALPADs with other data systems and taking advantage of technology that enables governments at all levels to better use the data they already collect. Such a system would improve our ability to measure the impact of policies and investments over time, and to help strengthen the alignment of pre-kindergarten and higher education with K-12."

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

Support

Also at CDE Foundation, one area of focus was STEM education and the STEM pipeline. CDE Foundation convenes the California STEM Symposium, a statewide conference of 3,000 educators that includes a focus on diversifying the STEM pipeline. We saw it as critical to the future of our state. To address this workforce issue, we must invest in our public schools, help students see themselves in STEM careers, and work to prepare them for higher education. Governor Newsom's investment in two years of free community college offers an opportunity for students to enter the higher education system at a lower cost, which is a piece of the puzzle. We must also make our CSUs and UCs accessible through affordable tuition, increasing access to student aid, and ensuring students have access to the classes they need to graduate on time. Additionally, California's new computer science standards and the relatively new Next Generation Science Standards are being implemented across the state, but teachers need support and training as well as strong curricula to realize the promise of these new standards.

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?*

As a local elected official over 14 years, there have been many situations where I have had to make a decision that some of my supporters have opposed. Especially during the recession, as we were making budget cuts in the Redwood City School District. Reducing the budget by 20% necessarily pitted different interests against each other and led to very challenging decisions. However, most recently two situations related to housing have come in front of the council where I took a different position than friends and supporters in the audience. The first, and most significant, related to increased housing supply. I was opposing a recommendation from our Planning Commission to reduce the size of our Accessory Dwelling Units over a detached structure from 700 square feet to 280 square feet. Given that our Redwood City Council identified housing as our number one priority, and as a member of the Strategic Plan Committee, recommended a goal to meet our production requirements for all levels of affordability, I simply could not support such a significant reduction in size. I was able to propose a compromise that 5 of my 6 colleagues supported. We went to 576 square feet, the size of a two-car garage. While I would have preferred a larger size, I felt that this was a solution that addressed some of the concerns while still creating housing at a size that was livable. Ultimately I had to do what I believed was right for the whole community and continue to advance policies that increased housing supply.

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

We need to be doing everything we can to increase voter turnout, particularly among young people, women, and people of color who aren't often heard in on our politics. So, I support the San Jose Fair Elections Initiative. Here in Redwood City we moved our local elections to the even year General Election cycle and in 2018 overall turnout in the County increased 26 percent. I also support the Initiative's goal of limiting the influence of money in our elections that can drown out the voices of voters.