

Imperial Beach Democratic Club AD 80 Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for seeking the endorsement of the Imperial Beach Democratic Club.

We would like to know a little more about you and your positions on some of the important issues facing our District and Imperial Beach. Please respond and submit your completed by 12 NOON on WEDNESDAY AUGUST 3, 2022. You will receive a confirmation that your email has been submitted. If you do not receive it, please make sure that you have answered every question and hit the submit button.

Email *

David@DavidAlvarez.com

Name and address *

First and last name

David Alvarez

Social media - Facebook, Twitter, Website, etc. *

@AlvarezSD

Have you ever been registered other than a Democrat? *

No

How long have you been registered as a Democrat? *

Since I could vote, 1999

How long have you resided in this area? *

I have lived in Barrio Logan all of my life, 42 years

Have you ever run for or been elected to public office before? If yes, when, and what office(s) *
did you run for or previously hold ?

Offices held: San Diego City Council, District 8 - 2010-2018; California State Assembly District 80 2022

Offices pursued: San Diego Mayor - 2013/2014 Special, San Diego Community College District Trustee 2020

Why are you running for this office? *

I'm running for State Assembly because I'm worried about what kind of California we are leaving for our kids. Every year it seems like our problems are getting worse, and the solutions provided by our leaders are more ineffective.

I have deep roots in Assembly District 80, and I do not have to move into the district to be eligible. I grew up poor in Barrio Logan, my parents were immigrants from Mexico. My father was a farmworker and a janitor, and my mother worked in fast food restaurants. They worked hard and pursued their dream of giving their six children a better life than they had. And they succeeded. They raised us with love, faith and discipline. They were never interested in politics, but I became involved through my Church, Christ the King Catholic Church. I was taught about servant leadership, that true leaders set aside their own pride to serve the community and help the needy. My parents never owned a home, but I proudly own a home in Logan Heights with my wife Xochitl, our daughter Izel, our son Javier, and our dog Glaze. Up until last year, prior to his passing, my father also lived with us and he was a loving and inspirational figure for all of us.

I ran for San Diego City Council in 2010 because our neighborhoods were sick and tired of the City ignoring their problems. I ran a grassroots campaign, outspent by the insiders, but I won. From successfully pushing the City to build the first new park in the South Bay in decades (Cesar Solis Community Park) to repairing hundreds of miles of roads throughout my district, I worked hard in office to make real positive change in the community during my two terms in office and I will replicate that at the State.

The South Bay communities that comprise AD80 are not always understood in downtown San Diego, let alone in Sacramento. I think the people of AD80 want an Assemblymember that is one of them and will look out for our community's interest. Nobody recruited me to run, and I didn't ask any person other than my wife for permission before I decided to run.

Why are you seeking the endorsement of the Imperial Beach Democratic Club? What other endorsements have you received and are you seeking? *

I am seeking the endorsement and support of the Imperial Beach Democratic Club because I want to work with the club to passionately advocate for Imperial Beach. Here is a list of my current endorsements:

Senate Pro Tempore Toni Atkins
State Senator Ben Hueso
Assemblymember Chris Ward
Assemblymember Akilah Weber M.D.
Assemblymember Tasha Boerner Horvath
Assemblymember Brian Maienschein
Chula Vista Mayor Mary Salas
Imperial Beach Mayor Serge Dedina
National City Mayor Alejandra Sotelo-Solis
Ret. State Senator Denise Ducheny
Ret. County Supervisor Greg Cox
City of San Diego Councilmember Vivian Moreno
National City Councilmember Mona Rios
National City City Clerk Luz Molina
La Mesa Councilmember Colin Parent
San Ysidro School Board President Rudy Lopez
Sweetwater Union High School District President Arturo Solis
Ret. South Bay Union School District Member Barbara Elliot-Sanders
California Latino Legislative Caucus
National Union of Healthcare Workers
Southwest Carpenters Local 619
San Diego Union Tribune

What qualities, skills and experience do you have that will make you an effective State Legislator? *

Following graduation from San Diego State University, I was accepted into the California State University's 2003-2004 Capitol Fellows program in Sacramento.

This was succeeded by five years as a staffer for State Senator Denise Moreno Ducheny. In 2010, I was elected as Councilmember for District 8, and re-elected with 74% of the vote in 2014, so I have extensive experience in state and local government.

In 2018, after 15 years of government service, I started Causa Consulting- a Public Affairs firm focused on economically disadvantaged communities and binational projects.

All of this experience allowed me to hit the ground running when I was elected in June. Having experience in both State and Local government has given me the ability to know how best I can help my district in the legislature.

What will you do and what have you already done to prepare our area from the threats we face from Climate change, such as sea level rise, high-tide flooding, coastal erosion, and higher storm surge? *

I was the strongest San Diego City Councilmember on environmental issues since Donna Frye. I chaired the environment committee for all 8 years of my time in office, and I always worked closely with environmental groups including the Sierra Club. I pushed forward Pure Water, which will recycle our sewage into potable water to avoid discharging more wastewater into the Pacific Ocean. I also protected MSCP lands such as Rose Canyon which was under threat of an unnecessary massive bridge expansion. I led the effort to establish Community Choice Aggregation in San Diego, now known as San Diego Community Power. I brought climate change scientists from UCSD and Scripps Institute of Oceanography to talk to the City Council about the threat climate change and sea level rise poses to public infrastructure.

During my current tenure as Assemblymember, I voted in favor of AB54 that will require all packaging sold and distributed in California to be recyclable or compostable by 2032. I am also working with lawmakers to increase greenspace access to help reduce the "urban heat island" effect.

What do you believe should be the State's role in relation to other governmental agencies in addressing cross border pollution? *

When I served on the City Council for District 8, addressing the Tijuana River Valley environmental disaster was one of my top priorities. Many residents in South Bay use Imperial Beach as their main location for beach access and water recreation. I fought hard to keep the City's State of Emergency in place to allow additional resources to be diverted to this issue, and I laid the groundwork for the City's lawsuit against the federal government, which was passed only a week after I termed out.

Following the passage of the USMCA in 2020, the federal government has issued a \$600M+ bundle of new cross-border infrastructure projects that will reduce transboundary pollution and help keep Imperial Beach open. I believe the State should work with the federal government to support these projects, in addition to working with lawmakers in Mexico to combat the pollution problem at its source.

I am also co-authoring AB2248 along with Asm Ward and Asm Garcia to bring more State resources (\$50M) to address Tijuana River Valley pollution.

What will you do and what have you done to address homelessness? *

The State is spending billions on homelessness, and it simply is not working. Homeless encampments line our freeways and people are dying on the street from drug addiction and untreated mental illness. We must offer shelter to those who need it. But shelters alone are not enough, they don't provide the help that many people really need. California must create more inpatient treatment options throughout the State to address addiction and mental health, and change laws to require people to accept the help that they need. I am supportive of several reform proposals by Sen. Susan Eggman.

What will you do and what have you done to provide affordable housing? *

Housing costs are out of control in Chula Vista, National City, Imperial Beach and San Diego. Almost everyone is either worried about how they will be able to afford to continue to live here, or how their kids or grandkids will be able to afford to stay when they grow up. We must reduce the cost of housing by building more homes that families can afford.

My definition of affordable housing is getting to the point when a family that earns a median income can afford to rent or purchase a median priced home, and where subsidized housing is available for those earning up to 80% of the median income. The only way to create more affordable housing stock is to start building housing again in California.

In San Diego, I supported the Affordable Housing Density Bonus program, which has been hugely successful and became the model for AB 2345 authored by Lorena Gonzalez, which is the statewide version of this law. This reform has caused many market rate developers to enthusiastically embrace affordable housing, and the San Diego development community were huge supporters of it. I also supported revolutionary accessory dwelling unit reforms that preceded the reforms at the state level.

According to the 2022 Statewide Housing Plan, California needs to plan for 2.5 million homes over the next eight years to address decades of undersupply. As Assemblymember, I am looking to bring back redevelopment which was the most effective tool to fund affordable housing, and the new version of redevelopment should include protections against displacement and a higher number of affordable housing units.

One piece of legislation I am very excited to be working on is AB2011 (Wicks) that will streamline affordable housing projects within commercial and retail spaces. The bill also provides additional benefits for the construction workers who build these projects and includes new homeownership opportunities for middle-income Californians.

What will you do and what have you done to reduce crime? *

We have seen troubling increases in violent crime throughout our region. Denying or ignoring this increase in crime won't make it go away. Violent Crime is up in Chula Vista by 16% over last year, 20% in San Diego, and 12% in National City. We have to give the police the resources they need to keep our neighborhoods safe.

When I served on the City Council, I advocated for the reform of our Police Department to improve the relationship between police officers and the community they serve. This included reforming use of force guidelines, improving training, and increasing funding to allow more police officers to patrol our neighborhoods and engage in real community policing.

I will push the State to help local departments reform and give them the staffing to engage in community policing.

What will you do and what have you done to provide economic relief from inflation and high gasoline prices? *

I voted in favor of Governor Newsom's budget that includes nearly \$10B for direct economic relief to families hurting from inflation, and like President Biden, I am also supportive of an immediate suspension of the State's gas tax.

Do you believe that there is discrimination in policing and the justice system and if so, what will you do to ensure equal protection under the law ? *

Yes. I was the strongest supporter of police reform on the San Diego City Council, even back when most of the Democratic Party was not, and I have a record of standing up for criminal justice reform even when it has caused me the support of law enforcement unions or the enmity of police leadership. During my first term on the San Diego City Council, there many horrifying revelations of severe misconduct by police officers: including Anthony Arevalos (convicted of sexually assaulting women he arrested) and Christopher Hays (convicted of assault, battery, and illegal detention of several women).

The misconduct itself was horrible, but the lack of accountability in the Department was even more disturbing. There was evidence that people within the Department, including supervisors, were aware of this misconduct, and either did nothing, or actively covered up misconduct. Most of the enablers were never held accountable, and in many cases still work at SDPD and in many cases were promoted. This happened because most of these cases ended with settlements, in which the victims or their families were required to keep silent as a condition of receiving a settlement from the City.

As a result, I decided to vote no on all police misconduct settlements, and I said openly in the media that I would continue to vote no until the SDPD and the San Diego City Attorney's Office stopped sweeping misconduct under the rug through settlements. As retaliation, the Chief of Police at the time falsely accused me of supporting terrorism against police officers.

I support the newly enacted SB2 which changed the rules regarding a victim or their family being able to sue for actions by police officers under California Law.

What will you do and what have you done to help residents with mental illness? *

Our mental health system in California is totally broken. As a result, ten thousand of our friends and neighbors have been left to fend for themselves. The State Auditor issued a report in 2020 that found that even though the state spends billions on mental health care there is poor oversight and accountability on how this money is spent. This lack of transparency stems directly from the lack of a single agency being in charge of mental health funding. Expecting all 58 counties in the state to handle mental health is unrealistic, and the State needs to step in and fix this system.

I am currently working with Sen. Susan Eggman on a slough of reforms that will help modernize the State's mental health care system in a more comprehensive way. This includes an expanded number of assisted outpatient and in-patient treatment options, improved wraparound programs and legislative improvements to the Lanterman Petris Short Act of 1967 which is the basis of California's behavioral health care system.

What are your priorities for the regional transportation network; i.e, roads and highways, public transit, airport, bicycling and pedestrian accommodations? *

A decade ago, the State took key steps towards investing in infrastructure to facilitate cross-border commerce, with the construction of the 905 freeway and the investment in State Route 11. There are massive projections of growth in the Cali-Baja region over the next 50 years, and the State needs to make investments alongside the Federal Government and the Mexican Government to facilitate this trade. Our bi-national economy is poised to take advantage of the near-shoring phenomenon of manufacturing relocating back to North America from China in response to rising labor and transportation costs, and our State's lawmakers need to support this transition.

One of my priorities is reconnecting communities that have been divided by freeways. My own neighborhood of Barrio Logan experienced this when the I-5 was built. I am currently exploring the possibility of constructing a greenspace freeway lid over the I-5.

If elected, how will you interact with the residents and elected officials in Imperial Beach to ensure that our needs are being addressed? *

Our elected officials often forget where they come from. As Councilmember for District 8 in the City of San Diego, I spent a large amount of time in the community connecting with residents to ensure they knew who their elected official was and what type of services my office can provide.

Two weeks ago, my staff and I hosted our first town hall event at the Chula Vista Library, and I will continue hosting these, as well as participate in other community events to ensure I stay in tune with the issues affecting Imperial Beach and AD80.

My family and I love spending time in Imperial Beach. We often come to enjoy the beach and visit the Suncoast Market. As your elected official, I commit to hosting town halls throughout AD80, including in Imperial Beach.

If elected, what will you do to maintain fiscal solvency? *

As a successful Small Businessowner, being able to meet your financial obligations is critical. In the businessworld, a rule of thumb is to have a financial buffer of 3-6 months' worth of operating expenses. In the 22-23 State Budget passed last month, approx 12% (\$38B) of the total budget was allocated to the States Reserves. I will continue supporting additional transfers to the State reserves to ensure we meet our financial obligations, especially with a potential economic recession looming.

What do you believe should be done with the State's budget surplus? *

I am supportive of the 22-23 State Budget that has allocated the State's budget surplus in several critical areas, including a historic investment in education to allow our kids to catch up from the "pandemic learning loss", economic relief to help families with rising costs of living, increased support services to address homelessness and behavioral health challenges, and protection from the impacts of wildfire and drought.

How can the Imperial Beach Democratic Club be of assistance during your campaign and after you are elected? *

I would seek any assistance that you could provide, as quickly as you could provide it, including a contribution and assistance attracting volunteers to help walk door-to-door in AD80.

Google Forms