

# Imperial Beach Democratic Club - City Council 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 Imperial Beach. Please be sure to respond to each question below and **submit your completed form by 12 NOON**

**on WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 4, 2024.** By submitting this form you acknowledge that the answers you provided are accurate and true. **The endorsement meeting will be held at Millport, starting at 6:00 PM on September 5, 2024.**

If you have any questions or encounter any problems completing the form, please contact imperialbeachdemclub@gmail.com

Email address \*

ben4ibcouncil@gmail.com

Name, address and telephone number \*

Ben Swearingen, [REDACTED] St, Imperial Beach, CA 91932; 619-[REDACTED]

Social media (website, Facebook, X, Instagram, etc.) \*

I have no campaign social media sites, yet

Office sought (City Council District) \*

Imperial Beach City Council, District 2

Have you ever been registered as other than a Democrat? \*

Yes, I was No Party Preference when I first moved to California 25 years ago

How long have you been registered as a Democrat? \*

At least 16 years

How long have you resided in your council district and in IB? \*\*

19 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? \*

No.

Are you involved with any community service or civic organizations? If so, which ones and what is your role in each? \*

I am on the Executive Board of the Imperial Beach Democratic Club, serving as Director of Membership

What factors motivated you to run for this office? \*

Wanting to further serve the community and help solve the sewage crisis, address the lack of affordable housing, increase access to mental & physical health facilities, and improve transportation/traffic and public safety.

Why are you seeking the endorsement of the Imperial Beach Democratic Club? \* \*

I align with the mission and values of the IBDC and would like to reflect that with the club's endorsement..

What other endorsements have you received for this race and what others are you seeking? \* \*

I've received endorsements from the San Diego County Democratic Party and Democrats for Equality. I am also seeking endorsement from the Labor Council.

What are your experiences and qualifications that will make you an effective Councilmember? \*

As a longtime teacher in the community, I have come to understand up-close-and-personnel the needs of our Imperial Beach residents. I served for several years on the Local Control & Accountability Board for SBUSD, as well as their Budget and Leadership Committees. I also served as a leader on the executive board of our local teachers union, the Southwest Teachers Association, as a District-wide Representative and as PAC Chair. In that capacity, I helped to elect three new, pro-public education, pro-labor school board members that changed the make-up of the board. Finally, I have served one the IBDC Executive Board twice, first in its early days and the last year and a half as Director of Membership. In both instances, I represented the club at county-wide organizations, like the Council of Clubs, South Area Caucus, and Central Committee. This has kept me aware and involved in public issues affecting our community.

What measures and ideas for dealing with sea level rise, storm surge, erosion and other impacts of climate change, would you support if elected? \*

I would support a comprehensive and collaborative approach involving ongoing input from IB residents and coordination with other local organizations, the state of California and Mexico. In the short-term, I support beach replenishment, additional groynes (jetties), and elevating Sea Coast and other road at-risk of flooding from sea rise. We also need policies that inform the public of potential flooding hazards and how to mitigate them. For long-term mitigation measures, further study is needed. However, I would support climate-adaptive building codes, like requiring moveable foundations or elevated structures to avoid costly loss of property for our residents along the waterfront and the loss of a significant portion our town's tax base.

What measures and actions for dealing with the sewage crisis would you pursue if elected? \*

Lobby Congress, the EPA, and the IBWC to fully fund repairs and upgrades to the US Sewage Treatment Plant. I would press Mexico to continue to repair and upgrade their sewage infrastructure to make it future proof. I would also advocate for cleaning up the TJ River Valley to decrease trash and improve flow.

If elected, what would you do to keep our neighborhoods safe? \*

I would support adequately funding our Sheriff's to have at least 3 officers on patrol at a time. I would also focus on increasing mental health services for both youth and families, including having a mental health crisis personnel on call to work alongside our peace officers.

What actions for attracting and retaining business in IB would you support if elected? \*

I would support incentivizing businesses to locate in IB by offering limited tax break during the establishment phase.

What will you do as a member of City Council do to maintain fiscal solvency? \*

I would make sure that any vote I take to approve an action requiring public funding would stay within our annual budget, as required by law.

What will you do as a Council member to provide affordable housing? \*

I will support public housing projects for low-income, seniors, and our unhoused residents. I would also take measures to encourage additional housing by lowering the barriers to build ADUs.

Thinking about your Council District, what do you think are its biggest priorities and what will you do as a Council member to address them? \*

The biggest priority is the sewage crisis, as both the lack of access to the beach and the associated health risks, including the frequent foul-smelling air, are critical. Another very important issue is housing affordability, which includes addressing the challenges of our unhoused population. Increased traffic and transportation issues are also key to our city's liveability, and I will work to bolster public transit and other alternatives to decrease single vehicle pass-through traffic that has exploded in the past few years.

How can the Imperial Beach Democratic Club be of assistance during your campaign and support you if elected? \*

Helping to raise money, knocking on doors and talking to folks about my campaign, putting up yard signs, and making GOTV phone calls near election day.

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms