

**Napa County Latinx Democratic Club
Candidate Questionnaire
DEADLINE FOR RETURN: September 4, 2020**

Candidate's Name: Eric Hall **Area/District:** City of St. Helena

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Candidate Specific Questions

1. What qualifications do you have for the office you're running for and why do you deserve the Napa County Latinx Democratic Club's endorsement?

A 6th-generation Californio, my family history and heritage is the story of immigrant family and the connection we have to the land. I am running for City Council in St. Helena because I've demonstrated a track record of hard work, and practice careful and inclusive listening, and I advance well-reasoned, practical solutions to difficult problems. We need all of these skills and more in St. Helena, and in Napa Valley – for all of our constituent voices to succeed.

More on my background can be found here: www.erichallforcouncil.com

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With such a high percentage of our local population made up of Latinos, and such a low percentage actually involved in civic representation, we need to boost representation from this influential and yet "missing" group.

2. Please include an example of your leadership on Latinx issues? Also, what will you do as an elected official to ensure that POC and our Latinx communities are represented?

There are many ways to ensure POC and Latino communities find more places to share their voice in civic affairs. Our boards and civic committees, along with much of our public-facing city communications (such as our websites, notices, newsletters, events,

celebrations, etc.) must include bilingual access and organizational involvement from our Latino residents. This is not an easy task. We must actively find venues in these communities, encourage more involvement, invite members of the community to larger community forums, give them courage to speak up and support their view points.

In addition, I would like to engage many of the major organizations —the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the League of United Latin American Citizens, the National Council of La Raza, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO), the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (TRPI), the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, as examples – to better understand how best to involve Latinos in community representation.

3. What are your top three priorities, and how will you ensure that you accomplish those?

1. Community Restoration – Together we can restore our town with its incredible wealth of history, dynamic residents, and downtown architectural diversity. By working together to promote the beauty of St. Helena, we can transform our city into a community with a more vibrant future ahead.

2. Preserving our History & Heritage – By prioritizing clean water delivery, adequate storm drainage, resurfaced streets and safe sidewalks, our St. Helena community can flourish. We need proper decision-making and management to ensure our city continues to be a place where families establish their roots.

3. Accountability – In order to strengthen our city for generations to come, we need to improve transparency and accountability at City Hall. I believe we can create opportunities for all St. Helena residents by having a more transparent budget process, creating a sustainable rate of economic growth, and living within our means.

4. Smart Growth – Through smart growth policies, we can foster the health of St. Helena and preserve our local environment and economy. Whether it is restoring our natural resources or navigating the current economic upheaval, smart growth policies will empower our schools, local shops, transportation options, housing and create more local jobs.

Issues

4. Latinx community members are often deemed essential workers, what will you do to mitigate the effects essential workers suffer during this pandemic, including your employees?

Our state and our community's well-being is completely dependent upon essential workers of which the Latinx community is a central component. I would use city resources, services, along with my industry relationships to ensure that our community

members, that are essential workers, have sufficient PPE and protection for themselves and families.

5. How will you tackle the next upcoming natural and public health disaster and how will this plan actively engage the Latinx Community? What is your plan to ensure that disaster planning is culturally competent and provides language access?

I would tackle a future natural or public health disaster through preparation, planning, and precise implementation. As a community that is dealing with historic wildfires and a pandemic, we know what it takes to survive. What we need is a plan for all of us to emerge stronger.

I would organize community events to ensure that all households have the necessary personal protective equipment, water, and canned food. I would advocate for restoration initiatives which prioritize vegetation management, high quality storm drains, easier access for first responders and residents to get in and out of town. I pledge to make sure that all city communications and my communications, when in office, are bilingual and frequent.

6. What is your stance on Black Lives Matter? How do you link this movement to the needs of the Latinx community?

I support Black Lives Matter. It is well past time that we correct and change the systemic racism in our society. I believe Black Lives Matter places a spotlight on the societal barriers that also impact the Latinx community and hope it pushes all of us to create a more just society.

7. What is your stance on re-appropriating police funding? What does this mean to you in your role and what policies will you pursue to address this call to action?

I share the grief and frustration of our community members calling out for change and I am driven to ensure that justice is done. I support the urgent need for reform: including funding for public schools, summer programs, mental health and substance abuse treatment programs separate from funding for policing, in order for officers to focus on the job of policing. I support community policing programs that improve relationships between officers and resident and provides the training needed to avert tragic, unjustifiable deaths. Community policing programs should also resemble the communities in which they serve and I would support funding for body-worn cameras.

8. Families of all ranges continue leaving our community because it is too expensive for them to live here. Many families are doing long commutes in order to work here, therefore increasing their carbon footprint, missing on important family time, and much more. What is your commitment and plan to increase workforce housing so families that work here are able to live

here? And what will you do to help keep families that are living here to remain here (e.g. increase the quality of life, health and wellness, youth and children activities, etc....)

9. Do you believe it is the role of elected officials to take policy steps to assure adequate affordable housing? Yes No

9a. Specifically, what suggestions do you have to make housing more affordable? And would you support requiring new developments to set aside a certain percentage of affordable housing?

Affordable housing in Napa Valley is an acute problem in crisis. I've been working personally for three years to find new housing options for families who work here and cannot afford to live here. The hospitality industry is well-equipped, perhaps better than any other industry, to house its own workers. The industry should be required to build housing for its workers along with its new developments, and it should also be provided tax incentives, business licensing waivers and other community offsets for doing so.

At the same time, it is not economical or practical to require non-hospitality industries to build their own worker housing. If elected, I would like to lead discussions, with All other industries in the county, to contribute into Affordable Housing Trust Fund, just as everyone was required to support a Flood Protection Fund for 20 years – until enough progress had been made to alleviate a common threat to all. I would be in favor of exploring this further.

10. According to a report from July 28th, 2020, homelessness has continued to increase for the last several years in Napa County. In 2016, 317 people were reported to be homeless. In 2020, it reported 464 people. What can you do in the role you're running for to address this important and growing issue?

As a member of the city council, I will work with the county and the state of California to draw more funds to build or acquire transitional or permanent housing. Further, we need more social services, especially for mental health issues, to ensure we can help homeless individuals and families start new lives. I am presently actively exploring this issue with National Alliance of Mental Illness in our neighboring Sonoma County. Lastly, a well-planned, well-executed economic recovery project must be initiated throughout the county to ensure jobs of all kinds become available as quickly as possible, post-COVID.

11. In the role you're running for, what can you do to help ensure that transportation meets the needs of youth, working people, families, and seniors?

I will advocate for more funding to provide more routes, buses, and shuttles to ensure everyone in our community can travel anywhere they need to be. This will include a focus on pedestrian-life in downtown St. Helena, improved access to our bike trails

across town, and an exploration of using the Wine Train as a commuter rail to-and-from Napa and American Canyon.

12. What action steps will you take to diversify the local workforce in your city or town? Additionally, what hiring processes will you pursue to increase the diversity of your City/Town's staff, and boards and commissions?

12a. Do you support a policy where aspiring citizens can serve on boards and commissions? Yes No

I absolutely support and would enhance policies that encourage aspiring citizens to serve on local boards and commissions. I have served for years on various civic and association committees. This is an excellent way to participate in local government and to make a personal contribution to the improvement of the community.

Making local government effective and responsive is everybody's responsibility. Serving on a board or commission can be a rewarding experience for involved residents. The considered recommendations of boards and commissions are often catalysts for innovative programs and improved services.

More can be done, however, to ensure there is a deeper outreach to POC and more sensitivity to including all constituents in our community. Life is a win-win when everyone is included and has a place for their voice to be heard. Anything short of that means someone is getting trampled on, which inevitably leads to friction and harm. I want healthy communities and healthy relationships. By definition, this means everyone must be involved and all voices balanced. My entire career is characterized as the person who can bring disparate groups together, add his own creative "grease" to solution-finding, and move the community forward.

13. Racial Gaps In Maternal Mortality Persist. Black mothers die at a rate that's 3.3 times greater than whites, and Native American or Alaskan Native women die at a rate 2.5 times greater than whites, according to a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Would you work to decrease maternal mortality among women of color, protect reproductive rights and a women's right to choose? Yes No

Racial gaps in maternal mortality rates can be reduced over time. Research shows most of this gap is tied to underlying chronic diseases which present themselves differently in each race. Women of color, for instance, tend to suffer from cardiovascular diseases at a much higher rate, and starting much younger, than white women. Often, the pregnant women themselves don't understand this, nor do first responders or hospital delivery units. Every death reflects a web of lost opportunities including lack of access to health care, missed or delayed diagnoses, and failures by doctors or nurses to recognize

warning signs. We can systemically do more to educate women about these risks, plus we can do more in how we deliver health care services to our community by ensuring medical responders are using standardized procedures for emergencies.

As a professor at Pacific Union College, I have a unique opportunity to gain access to and influence policymakers at St. Helena Adventist Hospital in this regard. In addition, Pacific Union College is a nursing training facility where these programs can be embedded into curriculum, if not already there. When elected, I would welcome the opportunity to lead the implementation of such improvements throughout the healthcare delivery web in Napa County.

All women should have the right to access safe, legal abortions, so they themselves can remain healthy. I will remain committed to support these options when elected.

14. What is at least one specific thing you can do as an elected official to address the needs of LGBTQIA+ people?

We can always be more diligent in creating and supporting LGBTQ-inclusive protections, especially at the local level. The LGBTQ community is a much smaller population and is often faced with public ridicule. All of us need to do what we can to support and enhance protections for them. Once elected, I will work to engage this community more directly and try to focus on policies and actions that are:

1. Comprehensive and inclusive in order to ensure that the entire LGBTQ community gains the protections it needs throughout daily life.
2. Maintain—or, preferably, enhance—civil rights laws for other protected classes, including women, religious minorities, and people of color.
3. Ensure parity between all protected communities, as no group of people should be singled out for government-sanctioned discrimination through unique exemptions or exclusions.

15. What specific things will you do to defend immigration and the economy in your jurisdiction? And would you consider making the jurisdiction you're running for a Sanctuary Jurisdiction?

My family was living and working on land in Mexico before the United States took it from us in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 1848. My two sons are 7th-generation Californios. Our family story in California, our heritage, is the story of the land and the immigrant people connected to it. As a child, I routinely traveled with my grandfather to Mexican orphanages to deliver fresh grapefruit and other citrus from our family ranches to the less fortunate.

Today, 12-15 million undocumented immigrants live in the U.S., nearly all of them are working hard to improve their lives and the lives of their children – just as my family did here 180 years ago. Nearly all of them are law-abiding, pay taxes and contribute to their

communities in many ways. We cannot ignore them. Like everyone else, they need a legal pathway to full citizenship. When I am elected, I will continue to support work to find ways to create a legal pathway to full citizenship and I would strongly consider making St. Helena a sanctuary city.

16. What will you do combat climate change in your area and promote the green economy?

We can and must act locally in a more sustainable way that can protect our environment and reduce carbon footprint. While I personally grow and consume much of my own food, and actively support St. Helena's weekly farm-to-table markets, I also believe and practice the principles in the theory of a circular economy. Once in office, I fully intend to do more in St. Helena and Upper Napa Valley to extend activities that allow for circular business model adaptations in private and public sectors. This includes focusing on production and consumption activities that reduce waste through reuse.

In fact, my wife is an industry leader in this space today – her company is the single largest recycling operation in Upper Valley. They take in waste, mix it, cook it, craft a high-quality compost which she sells back to individual and corporate users. Tens of thousands of tons each year. In addition, part of her operation, which produces methane gas as a byproduct, recaptures that gas, scrubs it and generates electricity for 1,000 homes in the town of Calistoga. The more of this sort of circular economy we can build inside Napa Valley, and within the city of St. Helena, the better for everyone.

Through these same principles of a circular economy, we can also find ways to support a living wage in Napa County while reducing our climate impact. With basic needs calculated as food cost + child care cost + (insurance premiums + health care costs) + housing cost + transportation cost + other necessities, it's important everyone is able to cover these expenses. Our living wage in Napa County approximates \$58k per year for a small family. Through the principles of a circular economy, we can find ways and programs to reduce costs in each of these basic need areas. Until that is more developed, local governments, such as the City of St. Helena, can work to ensure all employment contracts provide a living wage minimum. When I am elected, I will work with the other County jurisdictions on broad measures to implement these beneficial programs.