

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

Candidates Name: Mary Koberstein

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?

My career in the private sector, four years of Council service and service as a Planning Commissioner give me the requisite skills and knowledge to serve effectively as Mayor of St. Helena. Throughout my career, I've worked as part of a team. I have held management positions in the public and private sectors. As a city planner and attorney, I developed extensive knowledge of land use, zoning and real estate development. As an attorney, I gained experience in negotiations and documentation of agreements; skills that readily apply to matters the Council faces. I've been working as one of two assigned Council Members on the important issues we face.

I've earned your endorsement through Council accomplishments that demonstrate my commitment to social and economic equity (e.g. revised water rates), development of substantive legislation to protect access to housing opportunity (e.g. rent stabilization and new workforce housing model for hotels) and initiation of public participation processes (e.g. SHAPE Committee, Ad Hoc Water Rate Committee) that improve citizen participation in our governmental processes.

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?

In St. Helena, I consider my leadership on affordable housing and access to government to advance Latinx issues. As an elected official, I would mentor and work with interested members of the Latinx community to facilitate representation on Council and our committees. We must ensure that all city communications are provided in Spanish and English. We can sponsor listening sessions – with translators - to give all residents

the opportunity to learn about and understand issues and concerns of our Latinx community and POC.

3. What are your top three priorities, and how will you ensure that you accomplish those? Major campaign issues are (i) the long term financial viability of the city which is important to safeguard our ability to provide required public services and those our residents enjoy; (ii) lack of affordable housing opportunities; and (iii) the need to address long-neglected city infrastructure and civic buildings . Unlike other candidates, I've developed a detailed action plan to move forward on these issues and published it on my website mayormary.com. I'm different from other candidates in that I've worked extensively over the past four years as part of two-Council member ad hoc committees, to develop facts and options related to all our major issues. I am an acknowledged leader on the Council.

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?

We need to constantly promote and enforce public health standards regarding business operations and visitors. We need to support local businesses to enable them to continue to support workers, an effort I helped spearhead with our direct loan program in St. Helena.

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?

We need to be prepared for the next disaster, constantly updating our emergency operations manuals and ensuring that we have competent staff and resources to engage and educate the community. If and when this pandemic is over, we need to look back and learn what we could have done better. To that end, we should invite all members of the community to participate in this review and offer their input and suggestions for what we can do better the next time. There is no excuse for lack of language access. It's unacceptable for our current mayor and administration to publish press releases that state that the Spanish translation is "to come." Reliable translation services are readily available and must be part of our protocols. We can also go beyond our usual channels and reach out to media sources that serve the Latinx community.

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

The Black Lives Matter movement is long overdue. Sadly, it took continued tragedy to grow into a national movement. But it is never too late to demand that our legislators and community leaders address the impacts of systemic racism, police brutality and racial equity on Black,

indigenous, and other people of color. The needs of the Latinx community are no less important, particularly in Napa Valley.

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?

We can and should refocus our police efforts toward public safety and community service. We should consider appointment of a community relations coordinator and or advisory committee and conduct surveys to understand community concerns. We can partner with other local municipalities to expand services, including mental health. We should conduct more frequent implicit bias training and supplement it with training in cultural awareness. Our communications must be bi-lingual.

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....)

I have been a leader on housing issues in St. Helena. I helped develop the 2018 Housing White Paper in St. Helena that outlined legislative and financial options we can take to maintain and improve access to housing. Over the course of negotiating a Development Agreement for a new hotel, I took the lead to establish a policy that requires a meaningful contribution from new development to increase housing opportunities. We need to update our housing impact fees and financial condition generally. A strengthened general fund and Housing Trust Fund could enable us to provide downpayment assistance to new buyers, or to purchase and deed restrict reasonably priced housing when it goes on the market.

9. Do you believe it is the role of elected officials to take policy steps to assure adequate affordable housing? Yes X 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?

Yes I support percentage participation in housing, for residential and commercial development. As a lawyer and planner I recognized that St. Helena was failing to enforce the provisions of our existing inclusionary housing ordinance. I brought it to the attention of Council and our city attorney and expect that we'll enforce it moving forward. I'm happy to expand on this answer with more information regarding the Development Agreement I negotiated that is referenced in the response to question #8.

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?

We can partner with and provide financial assistance to social service and other organizations that work to address homelessness.

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?

We can work with local businesses to facilitate van and ride sharing programs that they're interested in providing for their employees, or that provide better access to community facilities, such as the hospital, for example. We should work with other governmental units whose mission relates directly to transportation.

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?

We should adhere to equal access to employment policies. We have limited legislative ability to place hiring restrictions on private employers but we can assist their ability to reach and employ and diverse workforce by increasing housing opportunity in our community. We can also support efforts to increase the minimum wage and a path to citizenship for undocumented workers.

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

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

This is an area where I can be most productive by working with and providing financial support to agencies whose mission is focused on women's reproductive rights and healthcare.

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

St. Helena's vision is to be a diverse and safe community. We can fulfill that vision by being welcoming and inclusive and doing what we can to reach and serve the LGBTQ community. For example, the city can work with other partners to create opportunities to increase awareness and understanding of LGBTQ identity and issues. The city can provide direct funding to

organizations that provide services to LGBTQ citizens. We can encourage their participation in government and community service.

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

Our 11+ million undocumented immigrants live in the shadows. They are hard working; many have families and they contribute to and are a part of their communities. Many undocumented immigrants have children born in the United States. They deserve the right to become American citizens. A pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants will help keep families together, contribute to our economy and allow them to enjoy the full rights and privileges of being an American. As a City Council we can advocate for and support efforts to create a pathway to citizenship.

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

I have already begun to lay the groundwork to establish a recycled water system in St. Helena through negotiation of a development agreement for a new hotel project. I would advocate for ordinances that require water-wise construction, sustainable land planning and renewable energy solutions and apply them to new development and retrofits. We need to work through the Upper Valley Waste Management Agency, Upper Valley Disposal and Recycling and our local businesses to achieve the mandates of SB 1383 to reduce climate pollutant emissions and organic waste from landfills.