

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

**Candidates Name:** Lisa M. Gift      **Area/District:** Calistoga

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**Party Affiliation:** Democrat

**Campaign ID #:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Candidate Specific Questions**

1. What qualifications do you have for the office you are running for and why do you deserve the Napa County Latinx Democratic Club's endorsement?
  - I care deeply about our community, our residents, and our safety. If elected, I will work tirelessly to be a voice for the families, workforce, and business owners of Calistoga, and will add diversity and a new perspective to the City Council. As a councilwoman, I will strive to preserve what we all love about Calistoga in tandem with a strong focus on healthy growth.
  
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?
  - Over the years I have been outspoken on many issues, and I am not afraid to use my voice for change and stand up for what is right. As a hiring manager, and now small business owner, I have a history of hiring and promoting members of the Latinx community into supervisor and managerial positions. I have written numerous letters of reference and recommendation for scholarships, jobs and promotions for members of the Latinx community. I am an advocate for civil rights and support diversity and inclusivity of all groups. If elected, I will listen to all opinions and ideas in the effort to represent my constituents in a thoughtful way.
  
3. What are your top three priorities, and how will you ensure that you accomplish those?
  - Fostering healthy growth with a focus on housing, small business, and full-time residents.
  - Being a voice for the families and work class citizens of our community.
  - Ensuring the growth of, and access to, social programs for all.

## 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?

- As a small business owner, when the pandemic first broke out, I was very concerned for the health and safety of my staff, our families and our community. Before any restrictions were in place, I brought in hand sanitizer and had every workstation cleaned regularly. Once we learned the severity of the pandemic in March, I ensured that all employees had the ability to work from home (if they wanted to). All staff was given a laptop or tablet and there was no pressure to come into the office. Additionally, I cancelled all “in-person” meetings with our clients and moved everything to virtual meetings. If staff members had children and needed to be home to provide support during school hours I offered “flex hours” so that they did not feel pressure to be on their computers working the typical 9-5 hours. Lastly, for staff coming into the office, I requested that we all get tested at least once per month and offered to pay for the testing if my staff could not access the free tests being offered.

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?

- Disasters like these have a profound impact on the long-term public health of a community. Living in a small community that is over 40% Latinx it is critically important to ensure that all communications are bi-lingual and readily available to everyone. If elected to office I would work to ensure that our local agencies, community services and emergency management sectors provide all communications, collateral and open forums that are both accessible and inclusive of both native Spanish and English speakers.

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

- This is a very complicated, sensitive conversation and it is one that crosses into many different communities and cultures. There are various reasons why people choose to support the movement or not. In some communities, such as the Native American Suquamish and S'klallam communities I was raised in, there are discriminations that have been passed down for generations which can come into the picture. People have a plethora of arguments for or against the support of the movement.

At the end of the day my thoughts on BLM are this: People of color have been discriminated and marginalized throughout history in this country, with black people historically receiving some of the worst treatment, and a system built by white people that has discriminated, segregated and criminalized black people since the ratification of

the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment. As one of the most oppressed groups in the United States, if they receive more rights, equality, and protections it will benefit other marginalized groups as well.

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 do not believe that defunding police is the solution to the deep seeded issues of racism in policing, but police culture needs to change. I believe that funding needs to go into more training such as: crisis training, people on the spectrum, mental illness, de-escalation training and non-lethal alternatives. Additionally, there needs to be a push to demilitarize the police, create more restorative justice programs and focus on alternatives to incarceration.

On the smaller scale, if elected to office I would support our local police force and would do what I can to keep them. There have been talks about having the Napa County Sheriff's department take over our local police force. Small town police departments throughout the country are disappearing at a rapid rate due to budget cuts and trouble recruiting officers to rural locations. Eliminating local police is not a good thing, with local police they know the community and the community knows them. They are not treated as the enemy as they truly are part of the local community. Additionally, studies show that contracting out to a county sheriffs department results in slower response times in actual emergencies, more negative interactions with police and can result in a higher crime rate.

Lastly, I would work to integrate the police into the community through interactions such as the Napa Sheriff Departments "Coffee With the Cops" program.

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....)

- If elected I am committed to more housing in our community. For too long Calistoga has neglected housing for the middle incoming working class. I have seen countless friends, colleagues and employees leave the area due to the housing crisis.

There have been low income, farmworker and 55+ housing built which is much needed, utilized and valued in the community. However, for the double income families trying to make it work here we are faced with competition from second homeowners in the current market.

If elected, I am focus on development within the city limits. There are numerous properties within the city that are zoned for apartments, condos townhouses or row homes. Additionally, there is the Yellow Rose Ranch property, which is currently zoned Rural Residential, but I believe needs to be rezoned in the general plan to support housing. There is much controversy in the community about how this property should be used, but it is my opinion that we do not need more multi-million-dollar homes. If the city is going to approve it being built on it needs to solve some of our housing needs.

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

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?

- In Calistoga specifically I think we need more housing to start with, which is why I support the proposal of “middle income” homes on the Yellow Rose Ranch property. I do support enforcing developments having a certain percentage of affordable housing.

10. According to a report from July 28<sup>th</sup>, 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 your running for to address this important and growing issue?

- The causes of homelessness in small towns like Calistoga are the same as anywhere else, mental illness, poverty, unaffordable or inaccessible housing or addiction. Many of the homeless in our community however are mostly just underemployed as the cost of living is so high here. Creating awareness, social programs and access to affordable housing is the key to helping with this growing issue.

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?

- Calistoga luckily has a great in-town shuttle that picks you up when you call or use the app. However, I think that the shuttle should be free for Calistoga residents (it currently costs \$1 each time you step on). A free shuttle service for our residents would be especially beneficial for the elderly who are on a fixed income and need run errands in town, as well as the youth who need to safely get from place to place.

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

- As outlined above I have always been focused on diversity hiring. If elected to city council I will continue these practices with our city government.

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

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

- I will continue to ensure a culture and community of acceptance and inclusivity. For example: When our current city council member Don Williams demanded a vote on flying the pride flag in the city, even though it was on the consent calendar, and then he abstained from voting I used my voice. This action to me showed a lack of inclusion and acceptance of the LGBTQIA+ community. I contacted every local newspaper from Calistoga to San Francisco and I publicly reached out to Williams for comment. Lastly, I am proud to say that Calistoga was the first town in ALL of Napa Valley to fly the pride flag starting in 2014!

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?

- I currently report any ICE sightings to the Rapid Response Network. I have also signed up as a volunteer for the Legal Observation Team so I can be called and respond to be an ally and record the incident if anyone is being detained by ICE in Calistoga. I do support Calistoga becoming a Sanctuary City.

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

- I live and work in Calistoga, so I walk or bike most days. I also recycle, compost and avoid single use plastics. Lastly, in my campaign I have decided not to print fliers, door hangers, pins or other unnecessary collateral that will end up in a landfill.