

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

Candidates Name: Leslie Stanton **Area/District:** Saint 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?**

I am not a politician with years of practice or rehearsed answers to these types of questions. What I have is a passion for the town and all it's citizens that call Saint Helena home. I can't claim that I am well versed in Latinx issues but I am open to learning and supporting the community.

I have grown-up, lived and worked in Saint Helena for most of my life. I just retired from the Saint Helena Public Library after 34 years as Youth Services Librarian. My working life was spent serving everyone and making everyone's library experience the best it could be. I engaged with local schools to get all kids to the library and have library cards. I also made regular visits to Stonebridge, Hunt's Grove, La Pradara, and the 3 Upvalley Boy's & Girls's Clubs to read aloud and distribute books with the Federated Women of Upper Napa Valley. While at the library I introduced and supported Spanish Storytimes, helped organize and participated in Latino cultural events and special craft activities.

I believe my direct involvement in the community, serving, working and talking with our community members, qualifies me. Being on City Council would give me the opportunity to continue advocating for children and their families, and the rest of Saint Helena's residents.

- 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?**

Children and their families are the heart of a community. I have always listened and helped wherever I could. Through my tenure at the library we have built community spirit with the Latinx community, featuring dancing, displays and cultural events including, Ballet Folklorico, Dia de Muertos, Las Posadas, El Día del Niño, and many craft times and celebrations to engage Latinos.

I will continue to promote events relevant to our Latinx community as well as encourage and support involvement in civic leadership.

There's a new platform trending #shesepuede to empower young Latina women. I would certainly encourage everyone to become active in their community. Words in the press release are inspiring. "the project aims to inspire, affirm, and inform Latinas so they can leverage their power to transform their lives, their families, their communities and their nation." To paraphrase America Ferrera - believe in your own potential and realize your own power as a political and cultural force.

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

1. I'm running to help Saint Helena remain a residential community, looking to support projects that include affordable and workforce housing and keeping hospitality projects in proportion to our small town character while respecting climate drawdown goals and water neutrality.

2. Planning for long term availability of potable water as well as evaluating water rates, supply and distribution for residential, commercial and agricultural users is also crucial.

3. Saint Helena staff and the City Council need to continue to improve and upgrade our infrastructure, while keeping in balance the City's revenue sources with spending.

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?

Continue to educate, inform and encourage safe living and working practices during COVID. Making sure that avenues to services are available and known, and our news platforms publish bilingual pandemic information and resources.

My family has a small vineyard operation with 5 or 6 core crew members. We provide our valuable year round crew with good wages and medical insurance as well as information on COVID.

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?

All information released to the public needs to be in Spanish as well as English and disseminated through all avenues of communication; television, radio, social media, mail, flyers as well as making sure community leaders, managers and worksites all have the information and it is released in a timely manner. Police (Public Safety) officers should receive training to distribute and impart needed information. Building communication and trust is key

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

To turn a popular phrase ; all lives will matter when black, brown, LGBTQ, everyone no matter their race, their religion, no matter their age and ethnicity, regardless of employment status, housing or lack of, income level, health condition, marital status, or immigration status **matter**.

BLM has led us to look not just at policing but to privilege as well. I am a part of the BLM Weekly Vigil in Saint Helena and a member of a group, Racial Equity in Saint Helena, that has presented to the City Council, and is working toward new policies written into City Code.

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 definitely think incorporating new policies and training for the SHPD is in order as well as considering structural changes to the department to incorporate updated considerations brought forward by BLM. Continuing education should also be mandatory for first responders.

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 out 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....)

An avenue for youth, families, working people needs to be enlarged to encourage them to live, work, and stay in Saint Helena. There are identified sites in Saint Helena, some that are public property, that could support affordable and workforce housing, modular and mobile included, of varying size. Non profit groups, such as Our Town Saint Helena, are ready to propose projects and seasoned builders of such projects are available. The City is poised to proceed with affordable and workforce projects and I would certainly support them.

I have seen many opportunities for outdoor activities evolve over my lifetime in Saint Helena. We now have a walking and biking trail to the Napa River behind the library, and it could be expanded. Bike lanes leading to the SH Primary School have been added, with more bike lanes being studied by the Active Transportation and Sustainability Committee. Hopefully our town will connect up soon to the Vine Trail that already links cities down-valley.

In non COVID times the town has various sports opportunities for youth like soccer, baseball, swimming, tennis, running, biking, dance, etc. I believe to make these opportunities more equitable a fund should be available so all youths wanting to participate would be able to. Bilingual staffing should be encouraged to make registration and participation easier for non-English speakers.

The City is engaged in downtown improvement, increasing the walkability and enjoyment of Main Street. Bike racks have also appeared downtown over the years. Play structures have been built in our parks, and bocce and tennis courts have been improved. New activity opportunities should be encouraged.

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?

Absolutely, elected officials need to assure affordable housing is included in the plans when any project is proposed. The in-lieu-of fees have been nice but they don't necessarily get houses built. I think the City needs to require an affordable element of any project that is moved through the process so that affordable units get built.

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?

The Housing Element in City Code states : While the number of farmworkers and homeless persons in need of permanent or transitional housing specifically within the City of St. Helena is unknown, these two special needs populations have an unmet need for housing in Napa County as a whole and St. Helena must work with surrounding jurisdictions to meet that need.

Saint Helena does not have a homeless shelter. Services come through the County of Napa, also from individuals, faith organizations, civic clubs and non-profits. All services' information needs to be in both English and Spanish and available to those in need. City policy could be changed as needs arise.

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?

Shuttles and buses run around and through Saint Helena. I think as we progress toward 2030 and our carbon drawdown goals usage should and will increase and be encouraged. Ridesharing needs to be encouraged as well as biking and walking.

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?

I think that our workforce is diverse, that our local Latinx community is welcome and sought after to staff our businesses because of their availability, work ethic and dual language skills. Every opportunity should be encouraged to create a diverse staff in city government. Awareness of civic jobs, hiring and appointments could begin in the schools with information and mirroring. Because councils, boards and commissions take time and commitment, which are in short supply amongst young working people, financial incentives might be considered.

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

Yes, undocumented immigrants are a contributing part of our community. Would they consider serving civically if detention or deportation was possible? A safe system would need to be put in place

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

Absolutely. Language barriers must be eliminated and social services available to all who need it. I am a proponent of universal health care.

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

Confront homophobia and transphobia, educate, listen, learn and support and make sure that these issues are included in City Policy.

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?

We are a nation of immigrants. Immigrants are, and have been, the backbone of our workforce.

Immigrants are essential for the economy of Napa County. Our Nation's immigration system is not working. I would be an advocate for a pathway to citizenship.

Since 2014 the Napa County jail does not hold undocumented immigrants on detainer requests of federal immigration officials without court orders. Expanding that decision to create Sanctuary Jurisdictions is a discussion for communities to have with their local advocates and government members. There is an upcoming Town Hall Meeting, to be scheduled in Saint Helena later in September, and Sanctuary Jurisdiction would be a good topic for discussion.

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

Climate Change is the most important overall issue confronting everyone in the world today. Everything we do as individuals and community should address this issue. All draw down goals need to be addressed and implemented as well as all new ideas and opportunities to draw down. Locally the wine and hospitality industries must continue to change policies and practices to help recover from the damage already done. The Green Economy principals of resource saving and management, environmental protection, water conservation and natural disaster prevention. must be a considered portion of all proposals.