

Name
Ms. Zima Creason
Campaign Committee Name:
Zima Creason for SJUSD Board Member 2018
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Employer:
Mental Health America of California
Occupation:
President & CEO
Office You Are Seeking:
San Juan School Board
Specify District/Seat/Ward Number or Indicate At Large:
At Large
Estimated Campaign Budget:
70,000
As of this Questionnaire, Amount Raised:
13,000
1. How have you and/or will you support the mission and purposes of the RainbowPAC as outlined above? Please be specific.
As a San Juan Unified School District (SJUSD) Board Member I am committed to pro-equality education, environment, policies, and practices. Teaching young people what equality is, what it looks like, and how to put it in practice will not only strengthen business, but will also strengthen the community as whole. As the youth mature and enter the workforce, they can carry with them education to truly change our culture so that true equality can be achieved. Also, I am committed to workplace equality for district employees.

Further, I am committed to creating career pathways for youth starting at a very young age so that students are aware of their options, demand, salary, etc. This will allow for a more focused educational experience that better prepares youth for the workforce and can address shortages in a variety of professions.

2. Are you a current member of the Sacramento Rainbow Chamber of Commerce? If yes, since when? And, are you or any of your staff or key volunteers openly LGBT?

No, I am not a member; however, I have supported the organization by attending the recent crab feed fundraiser and by donating. I look forward to further engagement with your organization.

No, I am not LGBT. I have one staff person and yes, he is openly gay.

3. Describe how you would support/oppose the use of programs to ensure equal opportunities, policies, laws, and/or ordinances that protect LGBT individuals in the workplace.

I will support the use of programs to ensure equal opportunity, policies and practices that protect LGBT individuals by first ensuring that there is an equitable level of LGBT representation in all areas of the district, especially in leadership. I'll ensure that there is a system for ensuring that anti discrimination laws and fair employment practices are being adhered to. I would also learn more about the process for reporting issues in the field and strengthen it so that there is meaningful follow through to address any issues. I would also create a modality that allows for suggestions to improve workplace equity before there is incident.

4. What are the most pressing issues facing our region, and how do you propose we resolve them?

Mental health: One in four people will have a mental health challenge in their lifetime. 50% of us will care for someone living with a mental health challenge. Yet, we are not doing enough to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness nor are we providing community defined mental health services and supports on a large scale. Stigma continues to impede help seeking, and continually using a cookie cutter approach without meaningful input from community stakeholders will continue to fall short. To address this I am committed to ensuring that there is onsite mental health support for youth in schools, workplace mental health support and training for staff, and a robust ongoing student education program that provides more awareness about mental health topics and a road map outlining what to do if you need help or someone you know needs help. I believe strongly in prevention and early intervention to prevent crisis such as homelessness, incarceration, involuntary treatment, and suicide.

Workforce: There are a variety of workforce shortages that must be addressed including, but not limited to, shortages in labor and the mental health workforce. An answer is to engage young people in the conversation to provide awareness, education, and career pathways to fill shortages and support youth into future employment. Further, we are living in a culture that does not foster work-life balance. As a result, we have a workforce that is experiencing more mental distress and burnout. Working with youth to build a new work ethic and culture that allows for more balance is also a priority for me. This will benefit both employees and employers by decreasing absenteeism, presenteeism, and will increase overall employee satisfaction. This will keep people on the job and reduce turnover, which will in turn increase the ROI on employee recruitment and development.

Lack of meaningful stakeholder involvement: I firmly believe that government must be informed by community stakeholders in a meaningful way. Sadly, I'm not seeing this in practice at the state and local levels in many cases. Too often I am seeing decisions behind closed doors without stakeholder involvement. I am committed to supporting and enhancing the community stakeholder voice. There are models and recommendations from the stakeholder community that can be implemented to ensure this.

5. What is your vision to attract major business/Fortune 500 companies into our region?

I envision a district where youth are empowered to be the visionaries in this area by providing them with training and education related to the work and functions of major business/fortune 500 companies, through internships and out of the box partnerships.

6. Share your vision to make our region a better place for small businesses.

First, by providing practical, real world education to youth about the importance of small business in local communities and coaching on how to support small business in a meaningful way.

Second, youth should be introduced to the idea of opening their own small businesses early, and provided with resources to move forward with their small business goals if they choose to move in that direction. This will equip young people with personal experience of small business ownership and that experience will foster a culture of support for small business.

Lastly, small business can be connected with students for internships to fill gaps and provide capacity that they may not have in house. For example, youth could potentially secure an internship to build websites, develop social media, conduct research, provide clerical support, and much more. This initiative will support small business and will provide needed skills training and work experience for students.

7. Describe your position on Community Benefit Resolutions, Living Wage Ordinances, and Project Labor Agreements.

Living Wage Ordinances: I believe in a living wage, not a minimum wage. People working full time should not live at or near the poverty level and they should also have access to appropriate healthcare.

Project Labor Agreements: I support PLAs. I believe they serve an important role in protecting the interest of employees.

Community Benefit Resolutions: I admit I still have a lot to learn in this area and I look forward to working with with the Chamber and leaders in the labor movement to develop a deeper understanding. Based on what I know so far, I believe these resolutions can be great as long as they are developed in partnership with unions or employees so that the terms are mutually agreeable.

8. What is your position on requiring employers to provide health care insurance to workers and families?

I lived without health insurance for many years of my life, even though I was working. I used Planned Parenthood and the emergency room as my primary health providers for due to lack of coverage. Until there is a system in place that provides coverage and access to all Americans, I believe strongly that employers should provide health care access to their employees.

9. Describe your vision for improving economic conditions and job security of people within the office you are seeking.

It is my understanding that overall job security is at a high level in the district. It is also my understanding that the unions and the board have had a good track record of negotiating appropriate compensation levels. As a board member I will support the work that is happening now and will always work to provide appropriate wages and benefits to all staff.

As a member of a union family, I understand the importance of working in partnership with unions to achieve fair compensations levels for staff. As a board member I will continue to foster those relationships to achieve meaningful dialogue to compensate the 5,000+ district staff fairly. Further, I will continue to benchmark district compensation with other like districts throughout the State.

10. Identify three (3) key endorsements that you have received for your candidacy.

Angelique Ashby, Sacramento City Council
Jay Hansen, Sacramento County Unified School District Board of Education
Darrel Woo, Sacramento County Unified School District Board of Education

Virtual Signature

Zima Creason

Date

03/02/2018