



Candidate Questionnaire

General Information

Candidate Name: Sydney Kamlager

Office Sought: Congress, CA-37

Proposed Ballot Designation: State Senator
(Or Occupation Listing)

[Redacted]

Campaign Team*

Provide the names and cell phone numbers for the following campaign team members:

[Redacted]

Elected Office

Do you currently, or have you ever held public office? Yes.

If yes, which public office(s) have you held and when did you do so?

State Senator, District 30, 2021-present

State Assemblywoman, District 54, 2018-21

Los Angeles Community College District Board of Trustees, Seat 3, 2015-18

Personal and Political Background

Current Occupation: State Senator

Are you a registered Democrat? Yes.

Have you ever been registered with another political party or selected “Decline to State” or “No Party Preference” for your voter registration party affiliation, and if so, for what period? No.

In less than 250 words, briefly summarize your personal background (work experience, education, community involvement, etc.).

Born to biracial parents in Chicago, my first exposure to politics was working with my grandmother in 1983 to help elect Harold Washington, the city’s first Black mayor.

I came to Los Angeles to attend the University of Southern California as a political science major. While I was at USC, the 1992 Rodney King riots erupted. That catalytic event motivated me to work with Rebuild LA and the Los Angeles Festival, two nonprofit organizations that helped restore the communities most affected by the riots.

Early in my career, I worked at the Social and Public Arts Resource Center (SPARC) in Venice and then as an advocate for quality childcare and early education at the nonprofit Crystal Stairs in Los Angeles. I then worked as District Director for Holly Mitchell in the Assembly and State Senate. After being appointed to and serving on the Los Angeles County Commission on Children and Families, I was elected in 2015 to the Los Angeles Community College Board, where I fought to make higher education and career training affordable and accessible to everyone. In 2018, I was elected Assemblywoman to Assembly District 54. And last year, I began serving as State Senator to District 30, a district that encompasses 93% of CD 37, the congressional district I am now running to represent.

What endorsements have you received from organizations and prominent individuals? (You may either use the space below or attach a separate list.)

Senator Alex Padilla, Congresswoman Karen Bass, Congressman Adam Schiff, Senator Maria Elena Durazo, Senator Monique Limon, Senator Henry Stern, Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, Assemblymember Isaac Bryan, Assemblymember Miguel Santiago, Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Emily’s List, Equality California, Elect Democratic Women, The Collective PAC, Moms in Office, The Muslim Dem Club of Southern California, IASTE 33, International Association of Fire Fighters, IUPAT District Council 36, National Union of Healthcare Workers, SEIU California, UNAC/UHCP

In the past five years, have you:

- **belonged to an organization that has taken action or formally expressed a viewpoint on Israel or related issues;**
- **participated in an organized activity, including a forum, on Israel or related issues; or**
- **while holding office, introduced or co-sponsored legislation (other than purely ceremonial, supportive measures) on Israel or related issues?**

No.

Policy Questions

Please describe your positions on the following issues. Please limit your responses to 250 words for each response. If you wish, one response may include up to 500 words.

- 1. Please describe your last trip to Israel and the Middle East, including the year of the trip and any group that arranged or sponsored the trip. If you have not yet been to Israel, when and to where do you plan on going in Israel, and the region generally, for your trip?**

I went to Israel as part of the Jewish Federation delegation in 2014. It was a memorable trip that left a profound impact on me and compelled me to want to get involved in issues of foreign policy.

- 2. Who do you speak with to develop your positions and views on Israel and the Middle East, including people overseas and local leaders in Southern California?**

I consult with a wide range of community leaders, from Rabbis (Frimmer, Brous, Wolpe), to members of the California Jewish Caucus, to leaders in the community, such as Andrew Lachman, Dr. Liebovitz, David Bocarsly, Iran Handleman, Howard Welinsky, Michael Tuchin, Sandy Weiner, and Jonathan Jacoby. I have also begun to talk with New Ground to gain a better understanding of the perspectives of Palestinians seeking peace.

- 3. Please describe your relationship, if any, with the Israeli-American and Jewish community in Los Angeles.**

I hope I have an open relationship with the Jewish and Israeli-American community. I lean in with my heart and ears, I work not to pass judgment, I listen earnestly and ask questions. I consider myself an honest broker and an ally.

- 4. If elected, what committees and organizations would you try to be active in, and what policy areas would you try to affect that are relevant to Israel and the Middle East?**

I would like to be on Foreign Affairs, as well as on Energy and Commerce. I do not know if I would have time to be active in any organizations, but given the makeup of

my District, I would lean on those with whom I seek counsel to identify organizations it would make sense for me to belong to and participate in.

- 5. Over the past decade, there has been a small but growing movement around the country to divest from Israel. These groups often use anti-Semitic language in their efforts, some target Jewish students on campuses and instead of discussing how to engage the democratic process to challenge Israeli policies that may be objectionable, they try to delegitimize Israel or question its right to exist. In short, these are frequently attempts to influence state and local governments and their universities and pension boards not to invest in Israeli companies or companies that do business anywhere in Israel.**

What is your view on the Israel boycott and divestment movement and what will you do about it?

I do not support the Israel boycott and divestment movement because the movement threatens Israel's security, demonizes the Israeli people, and, at its heart, is intent on the destruction of the only Jewish nation state in the world.

As someone who has represented Jewish communities in my districts, I am acutely aware of the discourse on this issue. My job as a representative is to listen to and serve the whole of the Jewish community to the best of my ability. I commit to being a continual learner and to reaching out to seek guidance and counsel from those fighting for peace and a safe and secure Israel.

- 6. The FBI's Uniform Crime Report for 2014 showed that there were more than 609 anti-Jewish hate crimes in the United States that year and even today, Jews were the most persecuted and targeted religious group in the country.**

What steps would you take (for example, in the education and law enforcement arenas) to help prevent current and future anti-Jewish hatred and anti-Semitic activity in your jurisdiction?

As a member of Congress, I will remain vocal against growing anti-Semitism and the rise in hate crimes against the Jewish community in California and across the country. As a former member of the State Assembly Select Committee on the State of Hate, I have attended hearings and received briefings on the disturbing rise in hate crimes against the Jewish community. As Senator for the 30th District, I helped secure funding for the Museum of Tolerance's anti-Semitism exhibition. After the shooting of the Poway synagogue, I supported funding for security grants for places of worship. I believe in the power of allyship, and I recognize that the treatment of Jews in the United States can impact the sentiment towards Israel's security. It is important to stand up for and speak to both.

- 7. As a Democrat, what steps can we take to help fight anti-Semitism on both the left and the right?**

I believe we've moved into a truly dangerous period in history, due to political polarization and economic stresses, that can be defined by a revival of fear and hatred of Jews. It's not a hushed, fringe sentiment, but a perfect storm from both the

Democrats for Israel Los Angeles
Candidate Questionnaire

political right and left – a vast system of thought that people use to explain away the challenges they face and changes beyond their control (the jobs crisis, globalization).

Anti-Semitism is everybody's problem – Democrat, Republican, no political affiliation. It appears before us in black and white and all shades of gray in between. Glaring examples on the right include neo-Nazis in Charlottesville brandishing torches and swastikas and chanting "Jews will not replace us" and a U.S. president denouncing the "Jewish people that run the New York Times" as the "enemy of the American people." On the left, we have more covert anti-Semitism that has formed around some – though not all – critiques of Israel.

I'm a public figure with a platform and an audience and, most of all, a voice. And I consider it my duty to speak out. Because anti-Semitism, in all its manifestations, is unacceptable, I will use what I have at my disposal to root it out. I believe blatant examples of anti-Semitism should be attacked with isolation strategy – by which I mean publicly denouncing and shaming the haters – whereas for progressives who are Israel detractors, it's an engagement and education strategy – or language of reasoning around a more nuanced perspective of the conflict and an understanding of how important it is to use words appropriately and accurately – that can be successful.

8. What other issues do you think are unique or important to the Jewish and pro-Israel community, and how do you propose to make a difference with these issues and keep in touch with the community?

Jewish Americans have widely varying opinions on Israel and its leadership, and it can be hard to find common ground even within the same family. I see this as a complex and significant issue facing Jewish families. I also consider healthcare for all, mental health care, and climate action as cornerstone issues for the Jewish community, and I propose to meet with Democrats for Israel-LA and take your guidance on assistance I can provide locally and in Washington.