



## Candidate Questionnaire

### General Information

**Candidate Name:** Sam Yebri

**Office Sought:** Los Angeles City Council District 5

**Proposed Ballot Designation:** Non-Profit Director / Businessowner  
(Or Occupation Listing)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

### Campaign Team\*

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

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

### Elected Office

**Do you currently, or have you ever held public office?** I have never before held elected office.

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

**Personal and Political Background**

**Current Occupation:** Attorney

**Are you a registered Democrat?** Yes, I have been a registered Democrat since I was able to vote.

**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.).**

My journey towards public service began when I was one year old, when Los Angeles opened its arms to refugees from Iran, promising families like mine a brighter and safer future. We were blessed to rebuild our lives in Westwood. Three local public schools in the 5th District provided me with a launching pad to Yale University, USC Law School, and a federal clerkship.

Since then, I built a successful law firm in Century City, advocated for the rights of workers, tenants, and refugees, advised startups and small businesses, served on the Los Angeles City Civil Service Commission and on the board of the Friends of Westwood Library, spearheaded the Jewish community’s response to the pandemic by serving as the Jewish Community Foundation’s COVID Relief Grants Committee, helped build affordable housing for special needs adults in the 5th District as a board member of special needs provider ETTA, fought against hate and bigotry of all forms on the board of the Anti-Defamation League, served on the Executive Committees of the Jewish Federation’s Legal Division and Community Engagement Initiative, advocated for low-income Angelenos on the boards of Bet Tzedek Legal Services and Bend the Arc, and engaged thousands of Iranian-American Jews in Jewish and civic affairs by co-founding and leading non-profit civic organization 30 Years After in 2007. I have also always been a proud advocate for the U.S.-Israel relationship.

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

Attached in separate PDF.

**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;**

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- **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?**

Over the last five years, I have supported and been actively involved with Democrats for Israel, the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles, American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, AIPAC, and the American Committee for Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem, among many others. Over the last five years, I have hosted and spoken at educational events for high school and college students about the U.S.-Israel relationships, hosted events with Democratic Members of Congress and candidates for office to discuss the U.S.-Israel relationships, and written many articles about Israel-related issues over the years.

### **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?**

Unfortunately, my family and I had to cancel a June 2021 trip to Israel due to the pandemic. I have previously been to Israel six times, most recently on a mission I helped organize in 2014 in which I led a delegation with former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa to tour and visit Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem and to meet with the Prime Minister of Israel. Before that, my family and I visited our Jewish homeland of Israel in 2013, and I visited Israel on numerous prior trips, including with Birthright and Hillel.

- 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?**

My views on Israel and the Middle East are forged from my deep personal connection to Judaism, my many trips to Israel and years of study, my family's deep-abiding Zionism, and my life-long work and commitment to ensure that the U.S.-Israel relationship remains strong and bipartisan. I read voraciously about these issues from all perspectives, and have worked and will work with leaders and organizations with different approaches and perspectives.

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

Over the last two decades, I have supported and been actively involved with more than three dozen different Jewish organizations spanning the ideological, denominational, ethnic, and social service spectrum. These include service on the boards of directors of: the Jewish Community Foundation, 30 Years After, the Anti-Defamation League, ETTA (which provides services and housing for adults with developmental disabilities), Bet Tzedek Legal Services, both UCLA and USC Hillel, and the Builders of Jewish Education. I have also been supportive of and active in a broad range of organizations, including Democrats for Israel, Bend the Arc/Progressive Jewish Alliance, the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles, AIPAC, American Jewish Committee, the American Committee for Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem, the Israeli-American Council, Tomchei Shabbos, Jewish Family Service/SOVA, Sinai Temple, IKAR, Jewish Democratic Council of America, among many others. I have a deep and abiding love and commitment to serving the Jewish and Israeli-American community in Los Angeles. It is central to who I am as a person.

**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 will continue my current work but also leverage my role and influence as a Council Member to support the U.S.-Israel relationship and advance the pursuit of peace, justice, security, and prosperity between the people of Israel and Palestine.

**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 oppose the BDS movement and view its intentions and actions to delegitimize, demonize, and use double standards against Israel as blatantly anti-Semitic under the “3

D's" test for anti-Semitism advanced by Natan Sharansky ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three\\_Ds\\_of\\_antisemitism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Ds_of_antisemitism)). I will lead efforts to oppose the BDS movement and support enhanced investment and partnership between Los Angeles and 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?**

There is no greater responsibility for City Hall than keeping Angelenos safe, especially from hate-based violence. I will ensure greater investment and coordination between LAPD and our local Jewish institutions, including more visible patrols on holidays and during times of conflict or controversy. I will work closely with leading educational organizations within the Jewish community as well as the broader community to help build closer relationships among communities and root out anti-Semitism through education and cross-cultural and interfaith programming. Finally, we must ensure that our District Attorney brings appropriate hate crime enhancements when hate crimes are committed in Los Angeles. Hate crimes not only victimize the victim, but terrorize a community. Failing to prosecute perpetrators of hate crimes with hate crime enhancements makes a mockery of our state's hate crime laws.

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

First, we must draw a distinction between criticism of the policies of the Israeli government (which is legitimate and not anti-Semitic) and the double standards, demonization, and delegitimization of the Jewish State and its right to exist (which is anti-Semitic). When we do see anti-Semitism from either side of the political spectrum, we must call it out, immediately and unequivocally. Then, we must do the hard work to educate and correct misconceptions about the Jewish community and about the dynamic history of Israel dating back millenia and its special connection to the Jewish people, Israel's unique demographics as a country whose majority of residents are of Middle Eastern, North African or Ethiopian Jewish descent along with its large Muslim, Arab, and Christian communities, Israel's commitment to democracy, rule of law, environmentalism, LGTBQ rights, and pluralism, and its complicated and difficult security risks.

**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?**

The three most important issues facing the residents of the 5th District - homelessness, affordability of housing, and public safety - are the key focuses of our campaign. They are also issues important to the Jewish community. It's time for new leaders from outside of government who will act with urgency, with innovation, and with common sense to tackle these problems, so that we can build a better Los Angeles for everyone.