



Candidate Questionnaire

General Information

Candidate Name: John Heilman

Office Sought: West Hollywood City Council

Proposed Ballot Designation: Law School Professor
(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? Yes

If yes, which public office(s) have you held and when did you do so?
I served on the West Hollywood City Council from 1984 until 2020.

Personal and Political Background

Current Occupation: Law School Professor

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? I have been a registered Democrat all my life.

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

I have been a resident of West Hollywood for more than 40 years. I helped incorporate the city in 1984 and served on the City Council from 1984 until 2020. In addition to my service to West Hollywood, I’m a law school professor at Southwestern Law School and an adjunct professor at USC. In addition to my law degree, I have a master’s degree in public administration and a master’s degree in real estate development.

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

AFSCME (City Hall employee union)
Firefighters Union
West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce PAC
Assemblymember Richard Bloom
Assemblymember Laura Friedman
Beverly Hills/West Hollywood Democratic Club
Former West Hollywood Mayor Abbe Land
Santa Monica Community College Board Member Nancy Greenstein

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?

Yes. The West Hollywood City Council has taken action on various issues.

Policy Questions

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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 planned to go to Israel in 2020 but was not able to because of the pandemic. I am planning a trip in May 2023. My plan is to visit Tel Aviv and then head to Malawi. I serve on the board of a school that serves children orphaned by AIDS in Malawi.

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?

Ira Handelman
Rabbi Denise Eger
Toby Finkelstein
Dillon Hosier

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

During my time on the City Council, I developed a strong good relationship with the Israeli-American and Jewish community. Organizations such as Jewish Family Service and Jewish Vocational Service have been important partners with the City in providing services to West Hollywood residents. I have also developed a strong relationship with the Russian-speaking immigrant community in West Hollywood. Many of these residents are Jewish, and some lost family members in the Holocaust.

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?

The West Hollywood City Council doesn't have any specific committees which address policy relevant to Israel and the Middle East. If elected, I propose we create a task force to make recommendations on anti-Semitism. I would also propose we look at opportunities for collaboration between the LGBTQI community in West Hollywood and the LGBTQI community in Israel.

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

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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 am opposed to the boycott and divestment movement. When I served on the City Council, we inserted language into our standard contracts which requires those who contract with the City to declare that they do not adhere to the Arab boycott of Israel. We have also passed resolutions opposing the boycott and divestment movement.

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 City, we need to make sure we have adequate law enforcement to document and investigate hate incidents and hate crimes. The City Council's recent decision to cut law enforcement did not take into account the general increase in crime and the increase in hate crimes in particular. We need to fully fund the Sheriff's department and restore the deputies which were cut by the current council. We need to develop a mechanism to communicate in real time to all private security guards working in West Hollywood. We need to require security systems in all new businesses, including street facing Ring-style security cameras. We need to require members of the Public Safety Commission to either live in West Hollywood or operate a business in the City.

We also need to organize and host forums on anti-Semitism and its link to other hate incidents and hate crimes. Because West Hollywood is the heart of the LGBTQI community, we need to provide more education on the linkages between those who perpetrate anti-Semitism and those who perpetrate hate crimes against the LGBTQI community.

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

Unfortunately, in some Democratic circles it has become trendy to criticize Israel, but without similar criticism of any other country in the Middle East. Positive initiatives by Israel are immediately denounced as "pink washing" or "green washing." There needs to be an orchestrated effort to push back against this way of thinking. Of course, everyone should be free to criticize policies of any nation, including our own, when those policies are contrary to the advancement of human rights. But we need to hold people accountable, whether they are on the left or the right, when they attack Israel for policies but don't criticize other governments for more serious human rights violations. We also need to hold

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people accountable when they offer nothing but criticism of Israel, but are unwilling to acknowledge the country's positive developments in human rights, in education and in environmental policies.

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?

With the increase in criminal activity and the increase in hate crimes in particular, public safety is of paramount concern for many of our residents. As noted earlier, we need to prioritize public safety and restore funding for the Sheriff's department. On a different note, a significant number of West Hollywood's seniors are Jewish. As our senior population ages, we need to increase our attention to the social service needs of our residents. As someone who helped establish West Hollywood's social services funding mechanism, we need to prioritize services for seniors in the upcoming budget cycle.