



Candidate Questionnaire

General Information

Candidate Name: Lauren Meister

Office Sought: West Hollywood City Council

Proposed Ballot Designation: Councilmember
(Or Occupation Listing)

Campaign Mailing [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Campaign Team*

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

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[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?

Councilmember, City of West Hollywood

Personal and Political Background

Current Occupation: Market research professional

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.).

After nearly two decades as a neighborhood advocate, I was elected to the West Hollywood City Council in 2015 and re-elected in 2019.

I became involved with the City of West Hollywood as a neighborhood watch captain, took the LASD Community Emergency Response Team “CERT” training, and attended the West Hollywood Sheriff’s Community Academy. I went on to lead the largest neighborhood association in the city (West Hollywood West Residents Association), representing residents on issues such as public safety, traffic circulation, parking, and development.

Prior to my election, I served on numerous commissions and committees for the City of West Hollywood, including the Planning Commission and Public Safety Commission. I worked to mitigate traffic and parking impacts of new and proposed projects in the City, supported creative parking solutions to help neighborhood businesses, initiated the City’s “Live, Work, Play, Be Safe” educational campaign, and supported new ideas to increase pedestrian and bicycle safety. I also worked on campaign finance reform and have been a strong advocate for a stricter code of ethics.

Professionally, I am the sole proprietor of my own marketing research firm based in West Hollywood. I have a BA with a major in Sociology and an MPA with a concentration in Emergency Services Management.

A resident of West Hollywood for more than 30 years, I have been both a renter and a homeowner in the city. My parents, sister, and rescue dogs, Suki and Sammy, also call West Hollywood home.

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

California State Senator Henry Stern
LA County Assessor Jeffrey Prang
West Hollywood City Councilmember John D'Amico
Director Scott Houston, MWD West Basin District 4
Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs (ALADS)
Southwest Carpenters Local 721
WeHOME Local 3339 and AFSCME District Council 6
West Hollywood/Beverly Hills Democratic Club
WEHO PAC (Sponsored by the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce)

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, since I've been on Council (and before I was on Council!), the City of West Hollywood has supported Israel and formally opposed the BDS movement. I initiated an item to co-sponsor the ICAN/Kol Ami Antisemitism Summit. The City has also worked with Israel on issues related to HIV research and a zero transmissions strategic plan (before I was on Council).

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 have been to Israel twice, but not for professional reasons. The first time, my grandmother took our family (children/grandchildren) for her 90th birthday. It was an incredible trip with the Margaret Morse Tours. The women in the family (including me) were bat mitzvah'd on top of Mount Scopus. I returned the next year to visit friends I had met during the tour.

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 have found Dillon Hosier of ICAN (Israeli-American Coalition for Action Network) to be very knowledgeable on such issues and I respect his point of view. I also follow Haaretz and The Times of Israel on Twitter to keep up with current events.

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

I have worked with Dillon Hosier from ICAN over the years and, most recently, initiated an item for West Hollywood to co-sponsor the Antisemitism Summit event, produced by ICAN and Kol Ami. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and Jewish Federation of LA also participated and we have are excited to work on more programs in the future.

I have worked with Maimonides Academy on public safety measures (after the Sushi Fumi incident) – bringing our West Hollywood Sheriffs community policing team with me to speak to the school administration and parents about how the City and Sheriff's dept. can help. In fact, the Sheriff's team provided a security check while we were there – to inform the school as to where they could improve campus security.

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?

While I tend to focus on local matters, as we are a small city (only 1.89 sq. miles and a population of around 37,000), I hope to be working with ICAN, ADL, and the Jewish Federation on education, programs, and events, particularly regarding antisemitism.

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?

In 2016, we voted to Support AB 2844 (Bloom), which was the California combating the boycott, divestment, and sanctions of Israel Act of 2016. In January 1994, the City of West Hollywood adopted an ordinance that the City shall not enter into a contract for any purpose that complies with the boycott of Israel. I am happy to continue the discussion with DFI.

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?

I will be meeting with the Anti-defamation League to see what we can work on together to fight antisemitism in my jurisdiction. I will also reach out to my council counterparts in the City of Beverly Hills and the City of LA to see how our cities can work together on initiatives to prevent activity in our region in addition to just locally.

Several years ago, ICAN included me as a speaker at a press conference about antisemitism in the City of Beverly Hills. As Mayor, I have joined with the US Conference of Mayors to support ADL-US Conference of Mayors Compact Against Hate. I supported the adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism in the City of West Hollywood. The City of Beverly Hills found that having the IHRA definition helps law enforcement to understand when words or actions are antisemitic. Most recently, I initiated an item for the City to cosponsor the Combating Antisemitism Summit.

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

We need to support policymakers, both at the state and federal levels, who are willing to work with us on this issue by requiring education in schools, education in the military, education in the workplace. Education is an important tool to help fight antisemitism on both the left and the right, and we need to make sure our state and federal leaders are on the same page.

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?

Making sure that our schools teach about the holocaust is very important. Again, education is one of the most important tools in pre-teaching history, teaching about the holocaust, raising awareness, promoting openness to all cultures.