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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SACRAMENTO COUNTY CANDIDATES FOR DISTRICT ATTORNEY — APRIL 2010

BUDGET CRISIS

1. The state is facing the worst budget crisis in nearly a century and spending on corrections is an enormous drain on the General Fund. Would your charging and plea bargaining policies consider the impact of your decisions on the state budget? On the county budget?
2. Do you support reducing spending on corrections and if so how? If not, how do you propose to fund the current corrections system?

DEATH PENALTY

1. Death penalty trials require many more resources from the prosecution, defense, and court system than other homicide trials and cost the taxpayers millions each year. Are you concerned about the amount of money and resources used in death penalty cases?
2. What would your policies be as District Attorney regarding when to seek the death penalty?
3. Would you provide full disclosure of the process used by your office in each death penalty charging decision to the citizens of Sacramento County?
4. What would you do as District Attorney to minimize the risk of sentencing an innocent person to death?
5. Would you support changing the law to replace the death penalty with permanent imprisonment? If yes, why? If no, why not?

DRUG LAWS

1. Do you support sending non-violent drug offenders to state prison, why or why not?

2. What would your office policies be regarding plea bargaining in drug offense cases? Would you encourage plea bargains that include drug treatment and rehabilitation in place of incarceration and state prison?
3. Studies show racial disparities in drug law enforcement, despite the fact that whites and people of color use and sell drugs at the same rate. Are you concerned about racial disparities in drug law enforcement and if so, what would you do to minimize these disparities?

JUVENILE JUSTICE

1. What would you do to reduce the numbers of juveniles—particularly Latino and African American youth—who are brought into the criminal justice system? What policies would you put in place to ensure fair and unbiased use of prosecutorial discretion in juvenile court? Would you support audits of your charging practices and disclosure to the public of the findings regarding race?
2. Do you support sending young offenders to restorative justice programs and other avenues that divert young people out of the juvenile justice system and toward new opportunities? If so, what would you do as District Attorney to promote such programs?
3. What would you do to reduce the number of juveniles—particularly Latino and African American youth—who are brought into the criminal justice system? What policies would you put in place to ensure fair and unbiased use of prosecutorial discretion in juvenile court?

REHABILITATION AND PREVENTION

1. What programs and policies would you implement as District Attorney to reduce crime and increase public safety in the county? What funding sources would you use to fund these programs?
2. Do you support rehabilitation programs in prison and in the local community? If so, would you advocate continuing and expanding funding for such programs? Would you cut other budget items to fund these rehabilitation programs? If so, what? What other revenue sources would you look to for funding rehabilitation programs?
3. Do you support diversion and mentor programs for first time offenders ages 18-25? If not, why not? If so, what would you do as District Attorney to promote such programs?

THREE STRIKES

1. What is or would be your office policy regarding the application of the Three Strikes Law? What criteria would you use to determine when to charge someone with a second or third strike under the Three Strikes Law?
2. Would [or have] you ever prosecute(d) non-violent felonies such as petty theft as a third strike under the law?
3. Would you support reforming the Three Strikes Law to require that the third strike be a violent felony? If not, why not?