



## Policy and Education Committee Homelessness and Housing Policy Candidate Report Card

The homelessness crisis and its solutions are directly tied to the decisions that are made by Los Angeles Local governing bodies. On March 3rd, Los Angeles will be holding elections that will determine the future of City Council, the County Board of Supervisors, the District Attorney, and more. The City of Los Angeles is home to over 4 million of the County's residents, yet there are only 15 City Councilors and one Mayor deciding City policy. With a budget of \$10.71 billion, City Councilors have the power to: implement bridge housing, designate safe parking locations, prevent evictions, build affordable housing, tell the LAPD how to spend their money, and decide whether it should be illegal to sleep in your car, on the street, or in a park. Los Angeles County is home to over 10 million people, with 60,000 that are unhoused and hundreds of thousands of others that are on the brink of losing their housing - yet there are only five elected officials (County Supervisors) who decide County policy. With a budget of \$36.1 billion, the County Supervisors have the power to: decide how the \$355 million Measure H dollars are spent, what the systems look like including justice and child welfare, and more. The LA County District Attorney supervises nearly 1,000 Deputy District Attorneys. They make decisions about who to prosecute and what charges to bring.

### **METHODS**

Ktown For All's Policy and Education Committee (KFAPEC) held a special meeting to review and rate local candidates included on the March 3, 2020, primary ballot that would potentially have jurisdiction over the community of Ktown: City Council District 4, City Council District 10, LA County Supervisor District 2, and LA County District Attorney. Committee members gathered research from candidate websites, public coverage, candidate press or public statements, voting records (when applicable), and candidate public forums.

The committee reviewed each candidate on five categories related to homelessness and housing in Los Angeles. Candidate platforms on other issues were not taken into account. The five categories identified were: *Housing Policy*, which specifically reflected overall housing policies (not related to homelessness services), such as affordable housing development and zoning policies; *Homelessness Services*, related to candidates proposed or historical policies related to services for persons experiencing homelessness including things such as supportive housing, shelter, and street-level services; *Renter Protections*, which reflects policies or approaches to supporting tenants; *Criminalization*, which reflects candidates' attitudes and history towards punitive policies that target and/or criminalize persons experiencing homelessness; and *Depth of Knowledge*, which reflected the candidates' overall understanding of the issue of homelessness in Los Angeles as well as the context of the system it exists within. District Attorney grades reflected slightly different categories, including: *Overall Criminal Justice Policy*; *Criminalization of Homelessness*; and *Focus on Homelessness*.

The research was presented to the group and each candidate was discussed individually. Each KFAPEC member present assigned a unique grade (range A - F) for each category. If a member works or worked for a specific candidate, they were excluded from grading candidates in that race. Then an average grade was calculated for each category. Finally, an average grade was calculated based on the average across all five categories, resulting in a final overall grade. Candidate's overall grades and specific issue grades are presented in this report, along with a brief summary of how we arrived at each grade.



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**RESULTS**

Overall Grades on Candidates Homelessness and Housing Policies		
<b>City Council District 10</b>		
<b>Channing Martinez</b>	<b>N/A</b>	Martinez is a strong advocate on important issues, but not on the issues addressed here.
<b>Mark Ridley-Thomas</b>	<b>C+</b>	Ridley-Thomas knows the issues but has not always demonstrated urgency. While his policies on housing and services are positives, the gap between his rhetoric and his record on criminalization is a problem.
<b>Aura Vasquez</b>	<b>B-</b>	Vasquez endorses policies we like and would be a strong advocate against criminalization on the City Council, but there are questions about how deeply she understands the city's housing and homelessness governance.
<b>Grace Yoo</b>	<b>D+</b>	Yoo's stances on tenant protections and housing policy lean in the correct direction, but her opposition to a local shelter and her lack of deep knowledge on housing and homelessness issues raises concern.
<b>City Council District 4</b>		
<b>Sarah Kate Levy</b>	<b>D+</b>	Levy's suggestions on how to build more are often positive but have a concerning pattern of tying homeless services to the need to enforce criminalizing ordinances.
<b>Nithya Raman</b>	<b>A</b>	Raman's platform is detailed and specific and prioritizes issues of housing and homelessness. She would be a strong advocate against criminalization.
<b>David Ryu</b>	<b>C-</b>	Ryu has some experience and his recent statements against criminalization are a positive development, but his platform and his record on housing in his district don't reflect the urgency of the moment.
<b>County Board of Supervisors District 2</b>		
<b>Jake Jeong</b>	<b>D-</b>	Jeong's lack of depth on issues combined with his outspoken opposition to a homeless shelter raise questions about how he would govern on housing and homelessness issues.
<b>Holly J. Mitchell</b>	<b>B+</b>	Mitchell has a solid grasp of the issues and would be an advocate for reducing criminalization. Overall we hold her policies on housing, services, and tenants' rights in high regard.



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<b>Jan Perry</b>	<b>D</b>	Perry is experienced, but her statements and platforms are often out of step with current best practices. We have a particular concern with her policies on criminalization and tenant protections.
<b>Herb Wesson Jr.</b>	<b>C+</b>	Wesson understands government and the issues, but his quiet, incremental approach raises questions.
<b>District Attorney</b>		
<b>George Gascón</b>	<b>A</b>	Gascón's platforms show he's serious about reform, and he provides the most detailed and specific plans of any DA candidate.
<b>Jackie Lacey</b>	<b>F</b>	Lacey's history on homelessness and criminal justice broadly suggest that she does not prioritize the needs of unhoused Angelenos.
<b>Rachel Rossi</b>	<b>A</b>	Rossi's platform aligns closely with our values, and her background as a public defender is a positive.

Detailed Individual candidate grades for:

- [Los Angeles City Council District 10, page 4](#)
- [Los Angeles City Council District 4, page 8](#)
- [Los Angeles County Supervisor District 2, page 12](#)
- [Los Angeles County District Attorney, page 16](#)



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**Los Angeles City Council District 10**

<b>Channing Martinez, City Council District 10 Candidate</b>		
<b>Overall Grade</b>	<b>N/A</b>	
<b>Housing Policy</b>	<b>N/A</b>	Martinez’s policy platform is very narrowly focused on a few key issues, grounded in his activism. Unfortunately, this means he has made few statements on housing and homelessness policies. As such, we have declined to give him a grade on these topics or an overall grade.
<b>Homelessness Services</b>		
<b>Renter Protections</b>		
<b>Criminalization</b>	<b>B+</b>	Martinez’s strong stance on LAPD accountability suggests he’d be a good advocate for anti-criminalization efforts, though there are few specifics.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	<b>F</b>	Martinez does not seem particularly focused on these issues. He has acknowledged he’s running to promote a specific platform, and it does not speak deeply to housing and homelessness issues broadly.
<b>Additional Notes</b>	While we have trouble grading him alongside the other candidates, we appreciate that Martinez is using his candidacy to promote an important platform.	



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**Los Angeles City Council District 10**

<b>Mark Ridley-Thomas, City Council District 10 Candidate</b>		
<b>Overall Grade</b>	<b>C+</b>	
<b>Housing Policy</b>	<b>C</b>	While Ridley-Thomas makes reference to the need for affordable housing, overall plans on housing policy are vague. His rhetoric is philosophically aligned with our values, but the lack of specifics leaves open questions about his governing style on these issues.
<b>Homelessness Services</b>	<b>B</b>	Ridley-Thomas is a strong advocate for services - he was an important voice in pushing for Permanent Supportive Housing and more community mental health services.
<b>Renter Protections</b>	<b>C+</b>	Ridley-Thomas has advocated for just cause eviction protections and against Section 8 discrimination, but his plans are vaguer than other candidates.
<b>Criminalization</b>	<b>F</b>	Ridley-Thomas's record and rhetoric do not match on criminalization. He voted in 2019 to support overturning Martin v. Boise, which protects unhoused people from charges for sleeping on the street when there is not enough shelter. His advocacy for expanding forced treatment also raises serious concerns.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	<b>B+</b>	Homelessness is a top priority for Ridley-Thomas, and he has extensive experience on policy at the state and local level. While he has occasionally made misleading public statements on homelessness, he has fluency on these issues and is an important voice on the nexus between homelessness and racial inequality.
<b>Additional Notes</b>	Ridley-Thomas's time as an LA politician is long and marked by occasional scandals that raise questions about his overall integrity as a public servant.	



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**Los Angeles City Council District 10**

<b>Aura Vasquez, City Council District 10 Candidate</b>		
<b>Overall Grade</b>	<b>B-</b>	
<b>Housing Policy</b>	<b>B</b>	Vasquez’s housing platform focuses on affordable housing, and she has endorsed the Homes Guarantee. Her policies are good, but compared to other candidates they provide fewer specifics on addressing affordability issues.
<b>Homelessness Services</b>	<b>C+</b>	Vasquez’s ideas on homeless services are good - she is supportive of housing, shelter, and other necessary services. However, there appeared to be some confusion in her platform and statements about which services the city vs. the county are responsible for.
<b>Renter Protections</b>	<b>B</b>	Vasquez’s platform focuses on rent control and protecting tenants from displacement. We like that she is clearly on the side of tenants, but as with housing policy, the grade reflects a lack of detail in some of her proposals.
<b>Criminalization</b>	<b>A-</b>	Vasquez has endorsed the Services not Sweeps pledge and vowed to be an advocate against laws that criminalize homelessness. She would be a strong voice opposing criminalization ordinances.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	<b>C-</b>	Some of Vasquez’s platform lacks detail, and statements at forums and on social suggest a lack of deep fluency on current housing and homelessness policy. A lack of familiarity with the systems that she would be tasked with as City Councilor is concerning.
<b>Additional Notes</b>	Vasquez is refusing campaign donations from developers, and she comes from an organizing background.	



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**Los Angeles City Council District 10**

**Grace Yoo, City Council District 10 Candidate**

<b>Overall Grade</b>	<b>D+</b>	
<b>Housing Policy</b>	<b>C</b>	Grace Yoo’s housing policies correctly identify the need for affordable housing at all levels but lacks the detail we see from other candidates.
<b>Homelessness Services</b>	<b>D-</b>	Yoo suggests some good ideas (like safe parking, more mental health and shelter services), but her history of opposition to a shelter in her own neighborhood raises questions about how she would fight to get these projects sited near the people they serve.
<b>Renter Protections</b>	<b>C</b>	Yoo expresses proper concern about evictions and tenancy issues, but again lacks specificity.
<b>Criminalization</b>	<b>D+</b>	We like that Yoo has expressed opposition to bans on car dwelling, but her mailers identifying encampments as “the problem” raise questions. She has not made statements we could find on laws that currently criminalize homelessness in Los Angeles.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	<b>D</b>	The vagueness of several of Yoo’s proposals along with a tendency to oversimplify housing and homelessness issues suggest that Yoo still has a fair amount to learn on these issues.
<b>Additional Notes</b>	Yoo, along with Supervisor District 2 candidate Jake Jeong, led protests against a proposed homeless shelter in Koreatown which platformed vitriolic anti-homeless rhetoric and spread misleading information about the project.	



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**Los Angeles City Council District 4**

Sarah Kate Levy, City Council District 4 Candidate		
<b>Overall Grade</b>	<b>D+</b>	
<b>Housing Policy</b>	<b>C+</b>	Levy correctly identifies affordability and the loss of SRO and other bottom-of-the-market housing as a problem. Her policies focus on useful zoning reforms, which are positive, but other candidates offered more robust affordable housing plans.
<b>Homelessness Services</b>	<b>C-</b>	Levy's homelessness plans focus on safe campsites and safe parking, along with importing the Trieste model for mental health services. The problem is that these suggestions are often justified as a means to more strictly enforce criminalization ordinances. More positively, she has spoken supportively of expanding bathrooms and other street-level services.
<b>Renter Protections</b>	<b>C-</b>	Her public statements suggest she is supportive of tenants - she calls out spurious Ellis Act evictions and bad landlords as problems. But her plans on this subject are lacking in detail.
<b>Criminalization</b>	<b>F</b>	Levy's platform calls for the strict enforcement of homelessness criminalization ordinances. She has also tied her support for services to a desire to legally justify these ordinances, which would result in more police violence against unhoused people.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	<b>D</b>	Some platform planks mention big ideas but don't offer specifics, and her overall housing and homelessness platform lacks depth. Her participation in the Homeless Count notwithstanding, she does not profess to have much personal experience with this issue.
<b>Additional Notes</b>	She does not accept money from developers and opposes the behested payment system.	



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**Los Angeles City Council District 4**

Nithya Raman, City Council District 4 Candidate		
<b>Overall Grade</b>	<b>A</b>	
<b>Housing Policy</b>	<b>A</b>	Raman’s platform includes support for social housing, as well as incentivizing development of affordable housing through funding and zoning. She has endorsed the Homes Guarantee.
<b>Homelessness Services</b>	<b>A-</b>	Raman provides a number of good ideas in her platform, focused on combining more housing with services that are people-first. There were slight hesitations about the scalability of certain proposals, but she demonstrates a strong understanding of how the current bureaucracy works (or doesn’t work).
<b>Renter Protections</b>	<b>A</b>	Raman’s platform includes support for tenant’s right to counsel, temporary rental assistance, and enhanced rent control.
<b>Criminalization</b>	<b>A</b>	Raman’s platform calls for more services and less policing of the unhoused community. She has endorsed the Services not Sweeps platform and would be a strong advocate against the criminalization of homelessness.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	<b>A</b>	Raman’s experience with SELAH and the details in her platform suggest a strong knowledge of homelessness and housing issues on both a personal and policy level.
<b>Additional Notes</b>	Raman’s campaign has used its public events to educate voters on homelessness and housing, suggesting these issues would be a major focus for her. She does not accept money from developers.	



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**Los Angeles City Council District 4**

David Ryu, City Council District 4 Candidate		
<b>Overall Grade</b>	<b>C-</b>	
<b>Housing Policy</b>	<b>D+</b>	Ryu’s rhetoric focuses on moderate-income housing but lacks specificity. According to the State Treasurer’s office, 93% of housing built in CD4 from 2015-18 was luxury or market rate, suggesting affordability is not a priority.
<b>Homelessness Services</b>	<b>C-</b>	Ryu has pointed to his past accomplishments but hasn’t offered a clear path forward. CD4 ranks 11/15 in production of permanent supportive housing. His district has also failed to develop any safe parking. His support for abdicating the siting of affordable housing and shelters to the Mayor’s office puts his leadership in question.
<b>Renter Protections</b>	<b>C</b>	Ryu has joined other councilmembers in supporting recent tenant protection legislation, and he supports Ellis Act reform, though his motion on this appears to have stalled in council.
<b>Criminalization</b>	<b>C-</b>	Ryu’s voting record is largely pro-criminalization, though recent statements suggest a shift. His platform’s focus on conservatorship raises concern.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	<b>C</b>	Ryu has experience as an incumbent, but his lack of detailed plans or platforms suggest he’s unlikely to lead on housing and homelessness issues.
<b>Additional Notes</b>	Ryu has often spoken of a “FEMA” style response to homelessness, but his housing and homelessness policies as a councilmember have not demonstrated that urgency.	



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**Los Angeles County Supervisor District 2**

Jake Jeong, Supervisor District 2 Candidate		
<b>Overall Grade</b>	<b>D-</b>	
<b>Housing Policy</b>	<b>D-</b>	Jeong’s primary housing policy focuses on modular construction of homeless housing. His platform does not address housing policy more broadly.
<b>Homelessness Services</b>	<b>F</b>	Jeong’s platform fails to engage with homeless service issues, and, in a recent forum, Jeong demonstrated a lack of knowledge about county services. Combined with his outspoken opposition to a shelter in his own neighborhood, Jeong is not a strong candidate for homeless services.
<b>Renter Protections</b>	<b>D</b>	While Jeong has been critical of landlords and supportive of tenants, he has not provided details on his policies in this area beyond supporting rent control reforms.
<b>Criminalization</b>	<b>D-</b>	While Jeong opposes the County’s decision to file a brief against Martin v. Boise, his past public statements and actions suggest that he views unhoused people as a threat to neighborhoods.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	<b>F</b>	Jeong’s platforms and public forum answers demonstrate he hasn’t done the homework necessary to catch up with his more experienced opponents.
<b>Additional Notes</b>	Jeong, along with CD10 candidate Grace Yoo, led protests against a proposed homeless shelter in Koreatown which platformed vitriolic anti-homeless rhetoric and spread misleading information about the project.	



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**Los Angeles County Supervisor District 2**

Holly J. Mitchell, Supervisor District 2 Candidate		
<b>Overall</b>	<b>B+</b>	
<b>Housing Policy</b>	<b>B</b>	Mitchell is a strong advocate for affordable housing, and her platform offers detailed plans on reducing speculation and expanding inclusionary zoning. She also wants to expand the use of community land trusts. While her proposals were well regarded, her soft opposition to social housing leaves some concerns.
<b>Homelessness Services</b>	<b>B+</b>	Mitchell understands that homeless services are broad, and her platform offers detailed proposals ranging from expanding ADUs, keeping board and care homes, and Section 8 discrimination. While there is little mention of street-level services, the proposals she offers are important and necessary.
<b>Renter Protections</b>	<b>B-</b>	Her history with Section 8 reform is positive, and she's consistently voted for tenant protections at the state level. Her lack of detailed proposals for tenant protections at the local level makes it unclear whether this is a priority.
<b>Criminalization</b>	<b>A-</b>	Mitchell's platform calls for decriminalizing mental health issues and she's been critical of city and county motions pushing to overturn the Martin v. Boise decision. Combined with her history as a criminal justice reform advocate, Mitchell's record and rhetoric suggest she'd be a useful voice on criminalization issues.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	<b>A</b>	In her campaigning and her platforms, Mitchell shows a deep fluency with state and local policy on homelessness and housing. Her proposals on homelessness are more detailed than other candidates in this race.
<b>Additional Notes</b>	While Mitchell is very much an established politician, her rhetoric makes it clear that she's still engaging with community-level activism.	



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**Los Angeles County Supervisor District 2**

Jan Perry, Supervisor District 2 Candidate		
<b>Overall Grade</b>	<b>D</b>	
<b>Housing Policy</b>	<b>C-</b>	Perry’s publicly available platform doesn’t offer a great deal of information on her housing policies. She has expressed support for inclusionary zoning and incentivizing affordable housing, and her rhetoric often focuses on efficiency and leveraging the private sector.
<b>Homelessness Services</b>	<b>D+</b>	Perry is supportive of permanent supportive housing, but has made troubling statements about the need to build homeless housing and services “in industrial zones.” Her statements on shelter have often tied shelter to policing.
<b>Renter Protections</b>	<b>F</b>	Perry’s platform offers no indication of her stances on tenant protections, and it does not appear to be a priority for her based on her public statements.
<b>Criminalization</b>	<b>F</b>	Perry has a long record of advocating for more policing of unhoused people, and her comments about siting services in industrial zones suggest she views unhoused people as a dangerous class to be displaced to somewhere else.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	<b>C-</b>	Perry’s lack of depth on housing and homelessness issues suggests she is not going to be a leader or an innovator on these issues.
<b>Additional Notes</b>	During her previous time as a City Councilor, Perry supported tax breaks and other incentives for hotel development downtown.	



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**Los Angeles County Supervisor District 2**

Herb Wesson Jr., Supervisor District 2 Candidate		
<b>Overall</b>	<b>C+</b>	
<b>Housing Policy</b>	<b>C</b>	Wesson has advocated for more affordable housing and lately has focused more on gentrification and protecting communities. His historical links to developers complicate this somewhat. His current platform pushes for more inclusionary zoning and focuses on expanding housing for low-income and homeless people.
<b>Homelessness Services</b>	<b>C</b>	Wesson has been a strong advocate for housing and shelters, though projects have seen delays. Wesson helped push other City Council members to do more on this issue. While his advocacy on this issue is admirable, his time representing CD10 has not demonstrated a true sense of urgency on this issue.
<b>Renter Protections</b>	<b>C</b>	Wesson was part of a recent City Council push to protect renters, though City Council has been slow to act under his presidency. His platform as Supervisor calls for a number of new programs and protections to help tenants remain in place, but he's been criticized as unresponsive by tenant advocates.
<b>Criminalization</b>	<b>C</b>	Wesson voted for a number of criminalization measures as a City Councilor, but remained silent during more recent fights over 85.02 and 41.18 (car dwelling and street sleeping bans, respectively.)
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	<b>B+</b>	Wesson has experience on homelessness policy, and his platform includes a number of detailed proposals. His personal experience with homelessness is also an important factor.
<b>Additional Notes</b>	Herb Wesson has shown growth on these issues, which we appreciate, but his preference for behind-the-scenes politics can make his exact positions difficult to nail down at times.	



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**Los Angeles County District Attorney**

**George Gascón, District Attorney Candidate**

<b>Overall Grade</b>	<b>A</b>	
<b>Overall Criminal Justice Policy</b>	<b>A</b>	Gascón aims to be a reformer in LA, and based on his time in San Francisco he means it. Gascón has a record of listening to communities, and offers the most detailed plans for police accountability and a more just criminal justice system.
<b>Criminalization of Homelessness</b>	<b>A</b>	Gascón has been a vocal opponent of policing as a response to homelessness and supported efforts to reduce prosecutions for minor lifestyle infractions. His plans emphasize the need for less jailing and more mental health treatment.
<b>Focus on Homelessness</b>	<b>A</b>	Gascón, in both his public statements and his official campaign materials, demonstrates a detailed understanding of how homelessness and the criminal justice system interact. He has also been vocal on the need for the DA to take on bad landlords.
<b>Additional Notes</b>	Gascón is notable for the depth of his proposals, which demonstrate a commitment to the nuts and bolts of making change within a large and complex criminal justice system.	



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**Los Angeles County District Attorney**

<b>Jakie Lacey, District Attorney Candidate</b>		
<b>Overall Grade</b>	<b>F</b>	
<b>Overall Criminal Justice Policy</b>	<b>F</b>	Jackie Lacey has tried to rebrand as a “progressive prosecutor,” but the LA Times has described her record as “punishment-first.” Her office has filed charges on minor crimes at higher rates than San Francisco under Gascón.
<b>Criminalization of Homelessness</b>	<b>D-</b>	While Lacey’s public statements have suggested she opposes criminalization, her office’s record on programs to clear warrants and avoid prosecuting quality of life crimes has been mixed. According to criminal justice advocates, she has made misleading statements about her office’s role in prosecuting unhoused people for minor lifestyle crimes.
<b>Focus on Homelessness</b>	<b>F</b>	Jackie Lacey’s issue platform does not mention homelessness. She has made some efforts to focus on diversion for those with mental illnesses, but her failure to even mention the most important issue facing our city is troubling.
<b>Additional Notes</b>		Lacey’s office has primarily been criticized for two things: a failure to hold police accountable, and a failure to file charges against powerful people, as with the 2019 case of an Eagle Rock arson against an encampment.



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**Los Angeles County District Attorney**

**Rachel Rossi, District Attorney Candidate**

<b>Overall Grade</b>	<b>A</b>	
<b>Overall Criminal Justice Policy</b>	<b>A</b>	Rossi's perspective as a public defender has driven an interest in reforming the DA's office. She supports progressive changes that emphasize fewer prosecutions and more alternatives to incarceration. She also advocates for more police accountability for use-of-force incidents.
<b>Criminalization of Homelessness</b>	<b>A</b>	Rossi's platform calls for the decriminalization of homelessness, which she links to worse outcomes for homeless people who face a revolving door between jails and the streets.
<b>Focus on Homelessness</b>	<b>A-</b>	Rossi has taken a broad view that includes advocacy for tenants against bad landlords alongside policies aimed to improve conditions for people who are currently unhoused.
<b>Additional Notes</b>	Rossi's platform and language are informed by activism around criminal justice reform, and she shows an impressive fluency in speaking to those issues. However, some parts of her platform are less specific and detailed than we would like.	