

2022 General Election Candidate Questionnaire

Senate - District 4

Marie Alvarado-Gil

1. What are your qualifications?

I am a native Californian raised by a loving community of neighbors, teachers and family. My parents immigrated to the US from Mexico and worked in the service industry. I was taught the importance of hard work early by watching my aunts and uncles build several successful family-owned businesses. As such, I am a firm believer in the power of our business community, and the need to allow it to flourish with limited regulation.

I pursued my passion in livestock management by studying Animal Science at UC Davis before pivoting my education to raise my three children Justice, Anissa and Carmen in rural northern CA. As a single parent, I grew my career in management by working with nonprofit organizations and government agencies to design, develop and implement new community health and education programs for youth and families. Much of my success was accomplished through partnerships with local business leaders. I then returned to college mid-career and achieved both a Bachelor and Master degree in Public Administration from the University of San Francisco, to ultimately become a widely recognized and awarded leader in public service.

As Regional Director for a charter school network, I was personally responsible for opening several high-performing schools for underserved children, working with all stakeholders including the city, county, local districts, etc., to plan, fund and open schools from scratch - in a process not much different than opening a business dedicated to serve and improve our communities. Thanks to those efforts, and the efforts of all those who worked with me, we now have the two top rated schools in their respective school districts (among over 60 schools) for math performance serving primarily low-income students.

I am seeking the endorsement of the Modesto Chamber of Commerce because I believe that as business, public and professional leaders, across all industries and areas of society, we must build solidarity to continue to advocate for and create a framework to support our children, workers and families - our entire community.

Current Elected & Appointed Positions

- Commissioner, Advisory Commission on Special Education - appointed by the CA Department of Education
- Vice Chair, ChartHouse Public Schools Board, elected by members of the board

The Voice of Common Sense Leadership for over 15 years.

- Commissioner, Healthcare Integration Advisory Board, 2016
- Board Member, Leadership Institute for for Just and Resilient Communities, 2015
- Board Member, Sonoma County Mental Health Board, 5th District, 2014
- Steering Committee, Healthy Kids Sonoma County Children's Health Initiative, 2010-15
- Executive Board Treasurer, California Human Development Corporation, 2009-14
- Commissioner, County of Sonoma, Maternal Child & Adolescent Health Advisory Board, 2010-12

I have the full support and endorsement of many state organizations and legislators who have been instrumental to our business community.

- California Chamber of Commerce
- Stanislaus County Farm Bureau
- California Association of Winegrape Growers
- California Credit Union League
- California Charter Schools Association Advocates
- California Latino Legislative Caucus
- California Democratic Legislative Women's Caucus
- Susan Rubio, CA State Senator
- Steve Glazer, CA State Senator
- Bill Dodd, CA State Senator
- Susan Eggman, CA State Senator
- Cristina Garcia, CA State Senator
- Assemblymember Bill Berryhill (former)
- Assemblymember Blanca Rubio

- Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry
- Assemblymember Lori Wilson

For an updated list of local endorsements, please visit my website at:
<https://www.votealvaradogil.com/>

2.What would be your top priorities?

Instability in the economy is the most pressing issue facing our communities as inflation begins to soar and savings, pensions, loans and other reserves risk evaporation - directly impacting not only our community as a whole, but the businesses that support everyone.

As the economy begins to recover from the COVID epidemic, government officials cannot just go back to "business as usual," continuing heavy taxation and regulation over business, expecting that the economy will continue to grow indefinitely on its own. There are signs of economic distress all around us, starting with global supply issues, ever-increasing energy costs, employee shortages and growing inflation.

First, we must reduce taxes - in fact, we should consider tax havens for those who produce and grow so as to attract businesses, not repel them. California is losing some of its best businesses and people to other States, because we simply make it too costly for people to live here. Second, we must increase our housing supply. For my District in particular, my priorities are reducing taxes, addressing gas prices, addressing inflation as a whole, securing our water supply, increasing housing stock, bringing better educational opportunities, attracting employers who pay livable wages, and expanding internet connectivity.

3.How do you evaluate the impact to business when making voting decisions?

I believe our state over-regulates so much, we are running out of things to regulate so we make new ones up. Rather than try to address everything through regulation the state needs to set priorities. For example, one priority should be to protect our industry, including our businesses and farmers. Another one should be to increase our investment in education. A third should be to address the housing shortage. Once priorities are set, the legislature can review existing regulations (not just pass new laws),

so as to create an overall plan to address each issue. Where appropriate, areas that are so over regulated that they lead a whole sector to stagnate should be deregulated.

I propose to prioritize protecting the economy in all future legislation, with legislation reducing or eliminating taxation and excessive regulation a priority. By viewing all potential legislation with an economic lens, that is with an eye towards increasing economic growth and protecting the industry we have, we can ensure that the troubling trends we are seeing do not descend into economic chaos through hyperinflation or a recession.

4. What are your plans to make government more transparent, responsive, and effective?

I believe government should be transparent. Transparency promotes accountability and provides information for citizens about what their Government is doing. Government should also be participatory. And above all, government should be collaborative.

With a choice between a liberal union boss and a moderate, common sense, charter school innovator who was raised with a high work ethic and practical business values, I think my candidacy better reflects our district, especially for the business community. I will vote my district and fight for its needs, not vote with Bay Area/LA liberals who too often look down on rural and central valley residents and their values, and wish to resolve everything through restrictive and paternalistic regulation. I will also be a Senator who listens first - then leads with humility to represent every rural and valley resident with honor. I am uniquely qualified to work across party lines and represent the District needs above all.

Our district needs courageous, principled leadership that represents our values in the State Capitol, forces Sacramento politicians to see, hear, and understand what we care about, and stop them from imposing one-size-fits-all policies that hurt our way of life. We also need leaders who have the experience and know-how to actually get things done. As a moderate, rural Democrat I will not only be an advocate for our business community, I will lobby my Democratic colleagues to join in the fight to protect its interests. When it comes to the reality of securing budget money in Sacramento, and just getting things done, being a member of the majority party matters far more than almost any other consideration. THAT, and for many other reasons, is exactly why the business community should support my candidacy.

5. Is the organization for which you seek office operating with a balanced budget? If not, what are your plans to make the organization more sustainable?

I firmly believe governments like the rest of us should live within their means. That means we must be pragmatic in how we spend our resources. We must also be strategic. I advocate the lowering of taxes, and the reduction of overall government spending whilst ensuring balanced budgets.

Tim Robertson

1. What are your qualifications?

My name is Tim Robertson and I am a well-known community leader in Stanislaus County. As director of the North Valley Labor Federation, I have worked for policies that help businesses create better jobs and communities for working people and have engaged in multiple countywide and regional economic and workforce development committees.

I have collaborated with local legislators and community leaders to enact legislation at all levels of government to build infrastructure, expand health care and create jobs. I serve on the Stanislaus County Workforce Development Board to prepare people for jobs, help people advance in their careers and build a skilled workforce.

As an executive committee member of Stanislaus 2030, I'm working with some of the county's most prominent business, community, education, and government leaders to produce a county-wide strategic economic growth plan. Through this committee, we are using new research and organization to improve the effectiveness of economic development programs. I also work with local school boards to connect students to career technical education opportunities and serve on the board of the United Way of Stanislaus County.

I am also the elected President of the Keyes Community Services District, where I oversee the area water system and have learned first-hand about some of the challenges to meeting the water needs of the Valley.

My years of dedication to improving the local economy of Stanislaus County and vast experience developing and passing policies through community collaborations make me an ideally qualified candidate to represent Modesto and Stanislaus County in Sacramento.

2.What would be your top priorities?

Economic and Workforce Development. There are many reasons for the current labor shortage as the labor market has shifted dramatically in the last few years, but the solutions are clear. We need to revamp our education and workforce development system to ensure that current and future workers have the skills to do productive work that meets the needs of the business community.

I have already been doing this work and intend to grow my capacity to do so at the state level. As a member of multiple bipartisan workforce and economic development committees, I've worked to develop consensus (between business/labor/community/education) programs to identify expected and potential jobs of the future and to develop pipelines for those jobs.

The federal and statewide workforce development system needs to do a better job listening to businesses about their needs and connecting them to the services they provide. They also need to do a better job identifying potential workers and connecting them with job training programs that meet the needs of businesses.

Water. We need more water, and we have to examine every aspect of the system for improvement. We need to expand our storage capacity by expanding our reservoir system and fight for our share of water and against transfers to Southern California. We also need to repair our water infrastructure, improve water recycling and stormwater capture. I'm also interested in new developing techniques to decrease evaporation in our reservoirs and canals.

Forest & Fire Management. We need to bring in more resources for fire mitigation, including funding for home hardening, defensible spaces, and fuel breaks to help protect people's homes and limit the spread of wildfires. We also need a more thoughtful approach to forest management including additional thinning and post-fire restoration.

3.How do you evaluate the impact to business when making voting decisions?

When speaking with businesses, particularly in rural communities, a common theme is that regulations that come from the state often seem arbitrary and overly burdensome for the business, with seemingly little impact on the goals of the regulation. Valley and foothill businesses, even very large ones, frequently report that they had little to no communication with the legislature prior to the enactment of a regulation, and for one reason or another, it didn't make sense.

The fact is, advocacy for Central Valley businesses is often drowned out by coastal voices with much more representation in Sacramento but little understanding of rural businesses, from farming to food processing to logging. In California, regulation is inevitable and it's often well-intentioned, but when the regulators don't even talk to those they are regulating, we are not going to get the best solution.

From a policy perspective, I connect with local businesses on matters that affect them long before it is time to vote. We will work together to identify problematic legislation and overregulation and fight to ensure legislative outcomes don't unfairly target local businesses, that they are not overly burdensome, and that they accomplish what they are supposed to. If we are engaged in the process, we can ensure Sacramento doesn't overlook our needs and work together to improve our businesses and economy.

4.What are your plans to make government more transparent, responsive, and effective?

Improving the responsiveness and effectiveness of the state government is an important priority for me. In every corner of this district, I've found people who have a story of how the state government is not working for them. Every day, I hear about ineffective one-size-fits-all Sacramento "solutions" that cost people money and solve nothing. I am building a network of business representatives and owners so we can bring our voices to Sacramento and make the policy improvements we need to lighten the load on our businesses while moving the state forward. I will not only have an open door to local businesses but will always be on the lookout for legislation that affects us and make sure we're at the table.

Further, many of the state resources available to communities around the state don't find their way to Stanislaus County and District 4. For a variety of reasons, coastal and

heavily populated communities receive an outsized proportion of the benefits afforded California communities. California needs to do more to ensure our communities have access to programs and resources to support housing, transportation, homelessness prevention, and much more. We also need to ensure that our businesses have access to the state resources. I will ensure that policies that provide state resources will fund dedicated outreach and technical assistance to ensure that our local agencies and businesses have the knowledge, tools, and resources to participate.

5. Is the organization for which you seek office operating with a balanced budget? If not, what are your plans to make the organization more sustainable?

The budget for the state of California is moderately imbalanced as expenditures exceed revenues by about \$15 billion. That said, this is being spent from surplus delivered by a strongly performing state economy. While projected expenditures exceed projected revenue for the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the budget does project contributing around \$3 billion in surplus to the state's Budget Stabilization Account (or "Rainy Day Fund") and preserves nearly \$8 billion in the fund balance. Between the fund balance, Public School System Stabilization Account, Safety Net Reserve, and the Budget Stabilization Account, the state budget projects that California will end the fiscal year with over \$41 billion in combined reserves.

Operating a deficit for any given fiscal year is not problematic, particularly in response to a build up of surplus, but we must be careful to ensure that the budget is balanced long-term.