

**IRVINE**

# WEEKLY

NOVEMBER 4, 2022 • VOL. 4 • NO. 13



**I VOTED**

## ELECTION 2022

IRVINE WEEKLY VOTER GUIDE BREAKS DOWN  
THE RACES APPEARING ON LOCAL BALLOTS



**NOT LEFT. NOT RIGHT.  
FORWARD.**

**2022 CITY COUNCIL RACE**



**SCOTT HANSEN**

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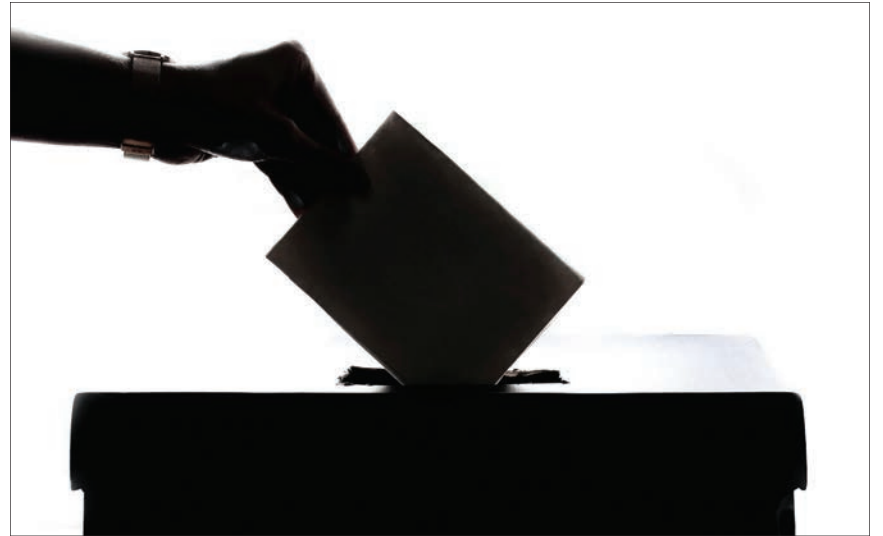
**FOR IRVINE CITY COUNCIL**

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Scott Hansen for Irvine City Council 2022 FPPC# 1443680

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## UNIVERSAL FUN FOR ALL

### IRVINE'S SWEET SHADE PARK RECEIVES \$2.8 MILLION TO COMPLETE THE CITY'S FIRST UNIVERSAL PLAYGROUND THAT WILL BE INCLUSIVE TO ACTIVITIES FOR ALL ABILITIES.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

**O**n Tuesday, Oct. 25, Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris presented the city of Irvine with \$2.8 million in state funding that will be utilized to develop a universal playground at Sweet Shade Neighborhood Park.

The implementation of the universal playground follows the city's recent renovation of the Sweet Shade Ability Center. The center was renovated in 2019 to provide residents with a more accessible hub for Disability Services activities.

The universal playground will be a first for Irvine, and will be designed with multigenerational play components, along with adaptive access activities to support individuals with disabilities. The playground will feature a sensory garden, along with an adaptive swing and will also be wheelchair accessible.

The funds were presented during a ceremony, which was attended by Irvine Mayor Farrah Khan, and Irvine Council member Anthony Kuo. During her com-



ments, Khan thanked Assemblywoman Norris, and said addition of the universal playground speaks to the inclusivity of Irvine, adding that providing residents with the highest degree of services is her main focus.

"Ensuring Irvine is an inclusive City that

offers all residents access to equitable services and opportunities is a top priority for me and the City Council," Khan said. "The universal playground will be the first of its kind in Irvine and will support our existing efforts to provide services for individuals with sensory,

physical, or cognitive disabilities, and their family members. I am grateful for the support from Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris for this partnership in providing this remarkable resource."

Speaking on the earmarked funding, Norris echoed Khan's gratitude.

"I'm so proud to have secured \$2.8 million in the California state budget to renovate Sweet Shade Park in the Westpark neighborhood of Irvine, to be inclusive of all abilities," said Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris (D-Irvine). "The new STEM and outer space theme will provide exciting interactive sensory learning for special needs individuals, and I can't wait to see kids come together to enjoy this phenomenal resource in our community."

Sweet Shade Neighborhood Park sits on nearly eight acres of land, near Westpark in Irvine. Construction on the universal playground is expected to begin in Spring, with an estimated completion date arriving in 2024.

Albeit the city's first universal playground, Irvine is no stranger to accolades regarding its park space. In June, Irvine's park space was ranked eighth nationally in the Trust For Public Land's ParkScore Index, with nearly 20% of city space dedicated to parks.

With a median national ParkScore of 19% for total park space, Irvine's 37% of total park space doubles the median of more than 14,000 cities and towns in the ParkServe database.

Out of a total of 100, Irvine received a score of 83 for access, a score of 77 for acreage, a score of 93 for investment, 68 for amenities and 62 for equity.



## NEWS

## VOTE BRINGS PROTECTION TO IRVINE'S HOSPITALITY WORKERS

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

In a 3-2 vote on Tuesday, October 25, the members of the Irvine City Council became the first city in Orange County to approve an ordinance that aims to improve workplace protection for hospitality workers in Irvine.

During a City Council special meeting, local hospitality workers, many of them speaking through a translator during public comment, shared personal experiences that detailed occurrences of repeated propositions for sex and frequent unwanted physical advances from hotel guests toward hospitality staff.

Many public speakers said they experience this type of inhumane treatment on a regular basis.

Now, the Hotel Worker Protection Ordinance will make it the responsibility of hotel management to equip and maintain wearable security devices for staff to utilize in the event someone is harassed, assaulted or in an emergency.

In addition to the personal safety devices, the ordinance will also ensure hotel workers are given adequate resources to report these instances to the proper authorities – without fear of retribution from their employer.

In an interview with *Irvine Weekly* after the vote, Irvine Council Member Tammy Kim spoke about the different components of the ordinance, adding that the use of “panic button” devices already exists, but this ordinance would require the devices to be maintained by management.

The ordinance spotlights shady workplace practices in the hospitality industry that occur out of public view. Without naming specific hotels, Kim explained that some hotels – not all – may not give employees proper avenues to report workplace harassment.

“It’s loss of business, loss of revenue – I don’t want to speak for all hotels, because I’m sure there are some that are working with the worker’s interest in mind.

But, then there are others who are not,” she said. “This is a practice that needs to be remedied – our police know what’s going on, they see it too. For them, this is not a shock. We’re dealing with transient people, these are not our Irvine residents.”

The ordinance will also force hotels to adopt more on-site security, and implement stricter, more transparent measures for workload compensation for hotel employees.

Advocates for the Hotel Worker Protection Ordinance say it’s a welcome addition to local hospitality industry workers who fear not enough is being done to maintain a safe environment for workers inside hotels.

While the council must conduct a second reading of the ordinance at a council meeting before it goes into effect, The Hotel Worker Protection Ordinance will ultimately impact several aspects of hospitality industry employees’ day-to-day responsibilities, which have been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under current COVID-19 guidelines, hotel rooms are only cleaned and sanitized after a guest checks out of a hotel. Many hospitality workers expressed their frustration during the special meeting, emphasizing that COVID-19 restrictions have created a bottleneck in housekeeping efficiency, due to the amount of work that accumulates in hotel rooms with the absence of daily room cleanings.

During her comments, Irvine Mayor Farrah Khan said she was appalled by the testimony of many of the workers, and emphasized that she supported the safety of all hospitality workers. Khan also said she had been made aware of the low level of cleanliness inside hotel rooms.

“I’ve heard the stories of our workers who work countless hours changing the sheets, moving the beds, moving the chairs, scrubbing the bathrooms,” she said. “I want to make sure we are being fair to them as well.”

However, Khan admitted she was not confident the ordinance would function the way its supporters envisioned.

“I don’t think this ordinance does the things that I hope that it does for our workers, just because of the way it’s written, but I know that’s what you want,” Khan said. “I don’t want to revisit this in six to eight months – have you come back saying, ‘it didn’t work’ – because I have a feeling this ordinance isn’t going to work.”

While the ordinance was heavily supported by hospitality industry employees, several hotel managers spoke against the ordinance.

Donald Driscoll, General Manager of The DoubleTree by Hilton Irvine Spectrum, wrote a letter addressed to Irvine City Clerk, Carl Pertersen. In his letter, Mr. Driscoll asked the council to withdraw from a vote, citing that a vote without any hospitality industry ownership involvement is “inappropriate and undemocratic.”

“Our hotel has gone over three hundred days without a lost-time workplace accident, and we pride ourselves on monitoring and maintaining a safe environment for both team members and our guests,” he wrote. “We also provide weekly and daily safety reminders and share these with all team members to keep safety and safe work practices front of mind for all.”

Lynn S. Mohrfeld, President and CEO of the California Hotel and Lodging Association (CHLA), wrote a letter echoing Mr. Driscoll’s statements. Both letters were submitted into the e-comments prior to the meeting.

Mohrfeld said she was concerned that the new ordinance would impact scheduling, if rooms are made unavailable due to new cleaning mandates.

“CHLA and our Irvine hotel community are extremely concerned that the proposed ordinance you’re considering is not motivated by worker safety concerns.

We are also extremely concerned that this ordinance would harm the hospitality industry and our employees who are still recovering from nearly two years of pandemic-related closures that set us and the city back months,” Mohrfeld stated.

Irvine City Council Member and Vice Mayor Anthony Kuo, who voted against the ordinance, said he was disappointed in support on both sides of the ordinance. Kuo took issue with several aspects of the discussion, including the timeline in which he was made aware of the ordinance – and its proximity to the vote.

Kuo said he was made aware of the ordinance on October 13 and received the language of the ordinance on October 21, only four days before the special meeting.

“I started getting emailed on the 13th, the first time I saw the language for this ordinance was Friday, so something is happening; in that language is being disseminated, some people knew about it on the 13th, and some people don’t. Some people are being asked to consider something urgent – that people knew about well in advance,” Kuo said. “That gives me a little bit of pause.”

Another aspect of Kuo’s concern was if hotels had been made aware of the ordinance – he said he had notified some personally, but had the impression that some hotels were not made aware of it.

“I’ve talked to some hoteliers – not all hoteliers – they don’t feel like they’ve been reached out to. We have some hoteliers that have come tonight and said they haven’t had discussions with anyone, and that’s not true, I’ve had discussions with them,” he said.

Kuo said he discovered that communication between the supporters of the ordinance and the hotels had not been occurring in the capacity he imagined. He said he was under the impression that conversations were happening inside a joint committee between the City of Irvine and the Irvine Chamber of Commerce, only to find out the city hadn’t been invited to those meetings for two years.

“I think there’s some mischaracterization on both sides. I think there is a lot of rhetoric tonight,” Kuo said, “I would say to both sides, you have both misrepresented things.”





PHOTO BY AZUSA TARN

## IRVINE BALLOT GUIDE 2022

VOTERS WILL CHOOSE WHO REPRESENTS THEM IN THE CITY OF IRVINE, ORANGE COUNTY, STATE OF CALIFORNIA AND U.S. CONGRESS AND SENATE.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER AND ISAI ROCHA

**O**n Tuesday, Nov. 8, voters in Irvine will be heading to polling places to fill out a ballot for the first time since 2020.

With Irvine Mayor Farrah Khan along with Irvine Council members Anthony Kuo and Larry Agran seeking reelection, voters will have some familiarity along with new candidates vying to represent Irvine for the next few years.

With City Council terms set at four-

years and the Mayor serving a two-year term, Khan, Agran and Kuo will need to convince voters that back-to-back terms are warranted.

There are two open seats on the city council and Agran and Kuo will face off against four other candidates. Khan will take on four candidates for mayor.

In 2020, Khan, a nonpartisan, defeated former Irvine Mayor Christina Shea with a total of 56,304 votes and is campaign-

ing for a second term this year.

With a total of 11 candidates on the 2022 ballot, voters are seeking actionable answers to topics ranging from the inner workings of the Orange County Power Authority and the potential switch from at-large to district elections in Irvine.

Candidates are also highly focused on the impact on the quality of life All American Asphalt is having on residents in Orchard Hills.

### IRVINE MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Out of the candidates for Irvine mayor, Katherine Daigle, an author and journalist, is the only candidate on the 2022 ballot with prior campaign experience. An eight-year resident of Woodbridge, Daigle ran for mayor in 2020. She received 8.2% of the vote.

This year, Daigle's top priorities are to cease operations of the All American Asphalt facility and create more transparency within the Orange County Power Authority, according to her candidate statement.

Also running for mayor of Irvine is Tom Chomyn, a 25-year resident of Irvine. Chomyn moved here after graduating from Indiana University. As a technology account executive, Chomyn is highly involved in the community, with positions in the Greentree Homeowners Association, AYSO and Irvine High School Boosters.

Chomyn supports building a Veterans

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PHOTO BY ELEMENT5 DIGITAL ON UNSPLASH

Memorial Park and Cemetery at the Great Park and expanding the council in a switch to district elections.

In his candidate statement, Chomyn expressed the need for more accountability and transparency inside the Orange County Power Authority, as well as the relocation of the All American Asphalt facility.

Simon Moon is an active chaplain in the United States Army Reserve and is also running for Irvine mayor. As a 10-year resident of Irvine, Moon serves as a pastor locally at the Onnuri Church. In his statement for candidacy, Moon vowed to never defund the police and wants to advocate for the homeless.

Lifelong Irvine resident Branda Lin has experience as a Community Services Commissioner for the city of Irvine. Lin also co-founded Irvine Watchdog, "a non-

profit organization dedicated to spotlighting city issues and holding elected officials accountable," according to her candidate statement.

"I'm well-versed in the challenges we face, from inadequate shade structures in our parks to asphalt plant pollution; haphazard planning and insufficient retail in the Great Park; and high electricity rates without adequate notification," said Lin.

Current Irvine Mayor Farrah Khan will seek reelection for mayor. In 2020, Khan garnered 47.6% of the vote. Since her election, Khan has had some notable accomplishments, working closely to bring innovation and climate action into Irvine.

Khan has faced criticism, however, for several issues over the last two years – failing to bring a veterans memorial park and cemetery into Irvine, and issues relating to the potentially toxic emissions

stemming from the All American Asphalt facility.

## IRVINE CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

Irvine City Council incumbent and long-time Irvine politician Larry Agran has been the county's most outspoken proponent for a veterans memorial park and cemetery in Irvine. Agran has also served as Irvine mayor.

Agran, who filled Khan's City Council seat in 2020 will be running for a four-year term.

In his statement, Agran proposed a Climate Action Plan that will offer residents an alternative to the Orange County Power Authority. If elected, Agran supports district elections with the aspect of expanding the council from five to seven seats.

John Park currently serves as the chairman of the Irvine Finance Commission and ran for City Council on the 2020 ballot. Park fell short despite receiving more than 32,000 votes.

Park, a 22-year resident of Irvine, hopes to change things in 2022 and says that public safety, excellent education and open spaces are all great aspects of Irvine. However, Park is concerned with the rapid state of growth in Irvine, which he says is "unprecedented." In order to mitigate that growth, in his candidate statement, Park said the city will need a candidate with "fiscal fortitude" that understands multimillion-dollar budgets.

Kathleen Treseder is a climate scientist and a professor at UC Irvine. With a passion for environmental issues, Treseder helped spearhead the creation of OC Clean Power, which according to their



mission statement, "is an alliance of community members and businesses in Orange County who support energy choice, clean energy and local control."

Locally, Treseder has also been vocal about air quality issues in relation to the All American Asphalt Facility, and helped introduce an air toxic reporting system for Irvine residents.

Navid Sadigh, currently a student at Irvine Valley College, is studying computer science.

As a lifelong resident of Irvine, Sadigh said he has noticed a lack of internet service providers within the city, and he hopes to change that.

Appointed by Khan to the Irvine Transportation Commission, Irvine resident Scott Hansen has served on a number of community-based boards and associations, including the Irvine Unified School District Finance Committee and Legacy Partner in the Irvine Public Schools Foundation.

Lifelong Irvine resident and incumbent Anthony Kuo is opting for a second four-year term as a City Council member. This year, Kuo, who is a resident of Woodbridge, said he knows what it takes to "run Irvine city government with business-like efficiency."

Aside from a mayoral race, and a pair of seats on Irvine's City Council, voters in Irvine and throughout Orange County still have many choices to make as Election Day approaches. Specifically, Irvine residents will have the opportunity to select a pair of U.S. Representatives, along with California Governor and Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, and Controller.

With a total of six different congressional and nine State Assembly races happening in Orange County, Irvine voters will have a say in the 47th Congressional District election, along with the State Assembly District 73.

## U.S. HOUSE 47TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: KATIE PORTER (D) VS. SCOTT BAUGH (R)

Opponents from Huntington Beach and Irvine will face off in the race for the U.S. House 47th Congressional District. In this race, Scott Baugh, a Huntington Beach-based lawyer, and

former state assembly member, will be challenging 45th Congressional District democratic incumbent and Irvine-native Katie Porter.

The 47th District, which topographically spans between Seal Beach and Laguna Beach from north to south, widens at its center to include Irvine.

For the last two years, Porter has served as the 45th Congressional District representative, after defeating republican Greg Raths in the 2020 election. As a member of the House Financial Services Committee and the House Financial Services Committee, Porter built a well-known reputation for her frequent use of a whiteboard during congressional hearings.

On her campaign website, Porter has been vocal about reducing inflation, combating the rising cost of healthcare and maintaining the reproductive rights of women.

During her most recent campaign, the former UC Irvine professor has raised more than \$22 million from donations, spending a total of \$24 million in the process, according to the campaign finance website OpenSecrets.org.

Baugh, Porter's 47th District opponent, has raised substantially less funding during his campaign according to the same website. As of October 19, Baugh has reported a total of \$2.6 million in contributions, spending \$2.5 million.

In terms of experience, Baugh served in the California State Assembly between 1995 and 2000.

However, Baugh was indicted on multiple felony charges in 1996, after an investigation found that he, along with several members of the GOP, engaged in election fraud to help secure a victory for Baugh in the 1995 election. Eventually, Baugh admitted to violating state campaign finance laws. He paid a civil fine totaling \$47,900.

Baugh's conservative views on abortion are the opposite of Porter's. In a recent O.C. Register interview, Baugh was attributed to saying "life begins at conception." Baugh also supports the charter school system and plans to create avenues for the state's per-pupil funding.

In terms of endorsements, Baugh's website has listed endorsement support from Irvine City Council member Anthony

Kuo, O.C. Sheriff Don Barnes, U.S. Senator Ted Cruz and The Orange County Register.

## ORANGE COUNTY SUPERVISOR 5TH DISTRICT: KATRINA FOLEY VS. PATRICIA BATES

Laguna Niguel resident and State Senate Republican Patricia "Pat" Bates, and current Orange County District 2 Supervisor Katrina Foley, will be facing off for control of Orange County's 5th Supervisor District.

The district which covers Aliso Viejo, Costa Mesa, Dana Point, a large portion of Irvine, Laguna Beach, Laguna Niguel, Laguna Woods, Newport Beach, San Clemente, San Juan Capistrano, along with unincorporated areas of Coto de Caza, is currently held by O.C. Supervisor Lisa Bartlett.

In terms of experience, Bates has served Senate District 36 since 2014, most recently defeating Democratic candidate Marggie Castellano in 2018. Prior to the Senate, Bates was Laguna Niguel's first mayor, serving four terms between 1989 and 1998.

If elected, Bates lists coastal and environmental protection, the protection and support of senior citizens in Orange County as top priorities. In terms of endorsements, Bates has secured support from the Orange County Register along with many members of Congress and State Senators.

Foley was elected to the Orange County Board of Supervisors in 2020 by defeating long-time Orange County Republican John Moorlach. If elected to represent the 5th District, Foley's campaign website indicates she will continue to push for economic recovery, stronger public safety measures and reduce homelessness.

## STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 73: COTTIE PETRIE-NORRIS (D) VS. STEVEN S. CHOI (R)

The race for State Assembly District 73 will be fought between two Irvine-based opponents looking to represent Irvine residents at the state level.

Irvine resident, and Republican Assemblyman Steven S. Choi, Ph.D., who currently represents Assembly District 68, will look to keep the State Assembly

District 73's right-leaning trajectory intact, by defeating 74th District incumbent Democratic Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris.

Choi, a former Irvine Mayor from 2012 and 2016, and a City Council member between 2004 and 2012, has held his State Assembly District 68 seat since 2016. In 2020, Choi successfully defended his seat against former Irvine City Council member Melissa Fox (D-Irvine).

Per Choi's campaign website, he plans to continue to fight for COVID-19 protections for both residents and those experiencing homelessness in Orange County. As one of his main points of emphasis, Choi co-authored Assembly Bill 251, which provides an income tax credit for family caregivers, giving families the ability to purchase medical equipment, transportation and/or make needed modifications to their homes.

In terms of additional priorities, Choi wants to improve healthcare by combating rising costs, oppose racism and discrimination in Orange County, and continue residents overcome financial challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. In terms of financial help, Choi said he has advocated for the Governor to allow counties to delay property taxes without penalty.

Choi has received endorsement support from Orange County District 3 Supervisor Don Wagner, Lucy Dunn of the Orange County Business Council (retired), and John Coupal, president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association.

As of October 22, Choi listed just over \$339,000 in campaign contributions and a total of \$429,828 in campaign expenditures.

Petrie-Norris (D-Irvine) will be challenging Choi, having generated more than \$1.5 million in campaign contributions since January 2021. In 2020, Petrie-Norris narrowly defeated Republican Diane Dixon for the AD-74 seat, in a race that was decided by less than 3,000 votes.

In terms of priorities for AD-73, which spans between Santa Ana and Lake Forest, and including Costa Mesa in the south and Limestone Canyon in the north, Petrie-Norris's campaign website lists maintaining women's reproductive rights, aiding the county in wildfire prevention funding, and combating homelessness in

Orange County, as core campaign issues. Endorsing Petrie-Norris are U.S. Senator Alex Padilla, California Governor Gavin Newsom and California U.S. 45th District Representative Katie Porter.

## SECRETARY OF STATE: SHIRLEY N. WEBER (D) VS ROBERT BERNOSKY (R)

California's race for Secretary of State is between Republican candidate Robert Bernosky who will be challenging Democratic incumbent Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D., a position Weber has served since being appointed by Gov. Gavin Newsom in January 2021.

Bernosky describes himself as "a career Chief Financial Officer," and prior to running for Secretary of State, ran for State Assembly District 30 in 2012. He went on to lose to then-incumbent Luis Alejo in a lopsided defeat by more than 35,000 votes.

In terms of candidate campaign financing in the race for the California Secretary of State, Weber is the clear front runner having generated \$1.6 million in campaign contributions. Weber has also secured endorsements from Gov. Gavin Newsom and Attorney General Rob Bonta.

In his quest for Secretary of State, Bernosky's campaign has reported \$0 in campaign contributions. His campaign website also does not list any specific endorsements.

## CONTROLLER: LEEHAN CHEN (R) VS. MALIA M. COHEN (D)

As incumbent Betty Yee ends her term as Controller of California due to term limits, there are two of California's political minds vying for one of the top spots in state government.

A Democrat and Republican will face off in this highly contested statewide race. In terms of responsibilities, the State Controller's office in California issues paychecks for approximately 50 million individuals each year. Those checks include payments to state employees, personal income tax refund checks, and payments to Medi-Cal recipients.

Leehan Chen (R-San Francisco), took leave from his position as Director of

Domestic Policy Studies at Stanford University in order to focus on his campaign. In addition to his background in education, Chen has also worked as a political advisor for both George W. Bush and Mitt Romney.

In his quest for Controller, Chen's campaign website indicates that his top priorities include auditing state programs for fraud, while utilizing technology to create transparency in taxpayer expenditures.

Cal Matters reports that Mr. Chen's campaign contributions have exceeded \$5 million since January 2021.

Malia M. Cohen is also applying for the job of Controller. Cohen has represented the 10th District on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors since 2014 and currently serves on the State Board of Equalization.

Sporting the endorsement from the California Democratic Party, Cohen's website indicates that she will work to address equity issues among women and single families, and will take action on climate. As Controller, Cohen said she will use the position to build a climate action agenda for California.

## ATTORNEY GENERAL: ROB BONTA (D) VS. NATHAN HOCHMAN (R)

Bonta was never elected to the Attorney General position, instead being appointed by Gov. Gavin Newsom in 2021 after then-Attorney General Xavier Becerra was appointed U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services. With that said, this would be his first shot at winning the election for his current position. During the primary election, Bonta received more than 3.7 million votes, good for 54.3% of the vote, while his opponent Hochman received 1.2 million votes, good for 18.2%.

In his short stint as Attorney General, Bonta has focused on ensuring sentences for gun traffickers and sex traffickers, as well as multiple high-profile settlements with pharmaceutical companies for wrongful conduct. Bonta has also expressed prioritizing the opioid crisis, already creating a task force and securing billions of dollars in settlements against manufacturers and distributors.

"As your Attorney General, I and my team are confronting our fentanyl crisis head on to protect California families," Bonta said.

Hochman is an attorney, who formerly worked in the Criminal Division as an Assistant U.S. Attorney. He has stated that his primary focuses would also revolve around getting fentanyl off the streets of California, "prioritize compassionate solutions" for homelessness and prosecute human traffickers statewide.

## STATE TREASURER: FIONA MA (D) VS. JACK M. GUERRERO (R)

Ma, a certified public accountant (CPA), has served as State Treasurer since 2018 and received 58% of the vote in the primaries. Like other officials in this year's election, Ma has expressed interest in running for governor in the future. Ma has stated that if re-elected, her focus would revolve around funding for healthcare, housing, jobs and education at all levels.

"California's economic recovery requires a proven problem solver with a track record of getting things done," Ma has said about her run for re-election. "I'm running for re-election as Treasurer to fight for people all across California by investing in the healthcare, housing and schools we need."

Guerrero is also a CPA and former Mayor of the City of Cudahy. He has stated in his campaign that he would advocate for policies that would lower taxes and reduce government power.

"California's financial crisis is the consequence of severe mismanagement and poor leadership by reckless politicians," Guerrero has stated. "They do not care about California's horrible credit rating, unfunded pension liabilities in excess of \$1 trillion, record-high interest payments, and fake budget 'surpluses.'"

## INSURANCE COMMISSIONER: RICARDO LARA (D) VS. ROBERT HOWELL (R)

Lara has served as State Insurance Commissioner since 2019 and became the first openly gay California statewide elected official. He has stated that his priorities include creating a

competitive insurance marketplace, saving insurers on premiums. As Commissioner, Lara tackled the COVID-19 pandemic by directing insurance companies to provide \$1.75 billion in relief for businesses, due to reduced risk of loss. Lara also spearheaded the move for insurance companies to provide more telehealth options.

"As your Insurance Commissioner, I am bringing years of on-the-job experience to solve some of California's most pressing problems, from helping wildfire survivors to holding insurers accountable," Lara said in his California voter guide statement. "And as reproductive rights are under attack nationally and in other states, I am more committed than ever to fighting for equality in health care choices here in California."

Howell is a cybersecurity equipment manufacturer and says he is "not another politician." If elected as insurance commissioner, Howell has stated he intends to create affordable insurance rates for Californians with a focus on affordable housing, wildfires and insurance rights.

## MEMBER, STATE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION: TED GAINES (R) VS. JOSE ALTAMIRANO (D)

Ted Gaines is a Republican from Northern California, who served as a State Senator between 2011 and 2018. Gaines has represented District 1 on the State Board Of Equalization since January 2019. With his four-year term ending in January, he will be seeking re-election against Democratic candidate Jose Altamirano.

In terms of priorities Gaines' campaign website indicates that he will be focused on job creation. Altamirano indicates that he wants all taxpayers, "to know their rights as taxpayers in California, and that's what the BOE does."

Altamirano, of West Sacramento, is seeking to become the first Latino on the State Board Of Equalization, and has previous experience in an appointed position as a commissioner in West Sacramento from 2015 - 2019. He also worked at the California State Compensation Insurance Fund for more than three decades.

In terms of financing, Gaines campaign contributions have slightly surpassed



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\$500,000, spending roughly \$925,000 since January 2021. Altamirano has raised substantially less during the same election cycle, posting less than \$10,000 in campaign contributions.

## U.S. SENATOR FULL TERM: ALEX PADILLA (D) VS. MARK MEUSER (R)

The race for the U.S. Senator places two candidates on the 2022 ballot twice. Democratic incumbent Alex Padilla and republican challenger Mark Meuser are both running for U.S. Senate, and in a special election for the U.S. Senate to represent California.

Meuser, an attorney, has laid out an eight-layer action plan on his campaign website. In short, Meuser's priorities include battling inflation, improving education and infrastructure. In terms of political experience, Meuser unsuccessfully ran for California State Senate District 7 in 2012, but was defeated by Democratic incumbent Mark DeSaulnier.

In January 2020, U.S. Senator Alex Padilla was appointed to the Senate by California Gov. Gavin Newsom, due to former Senator Kamala Harris vacating her Senate seat for the role of Vice President of the United States.

Now, with his term ending in January, Padilla is seeking re-election. If re-elected Padilla vows to continue addressing climate change, medicare and immigration reform.

In terms of financing, Padilla is the clear front runner. Since January 2021, Padilla campaign has received more than \$11.6 million in contributions. His campaign has spent roughly \$4 million, leaving Padilla with more than \$7 million in cash on hand, according to the campaign finance website [opensecrets.org](https://www.opensecrets.org).

Meuser, according to the same website, generated a total of \$948,966 in campaign contributions, spending nearly that total in the process. Currently, Meuser is reported to have approximately \$130,000 cash on hand.

## LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR: ELENI KOUNALAKIS (D) VS. ANGELA JACOBS (R)

Eleni Kounalakis was the first woman elected Lieutenant Governor when she

took office in 2018. She has made it clear that she has aspirations to one day be governor of California and has stated that Lieutenant Governor is one of the more direct paths to do so, as has been the case for two of the past four elected governors. Kounalakis received nearly 3.6 million votes during the primary election, good for a 52.7% share. In her time in office, Kounalakis said her primary focus was on public higher education, environmental protection and international engagement in collaboration with the governor.

Angela Jacobs was second to Kounalakis in the primary election, receiving 1.3 million votes, good for 19.9%. Jacobs is a former Lancaster City Councilmember and became the first Black woman to hold the position. She has received an endorsement from the California Republican Party, but has still agreed with multiple actions made by Governor Newsom, including his decision to leave water and drought measures up to local government and Newsom's CARE Court law, which provided funding for homeless individuals who may be suffering from psychosis or schizophrenia disorders.

## GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA: GAVIN NEWSOM (D) VS. BRIAN DAHLE (R)

To retain his seat as Governor of Cali-

fornia, Democrat Gavin Newsom will face off against Republican State Senator Brian Dahle.

Dahle, a Republican, is a farmer from the rural city of Bieber, north of Sacramento, and has served as a State Senator since 2019, filling the vacant 1st District seat through a special election. Below are multiple points Dahle made during his only debate against Gov. Gavin Newsom.

### Dahle on climate change:

"There's nobody who cares about the climate than myself. I'm a farmer, I'm in tune with the climate every day and it is changing, no doubt about it, but the policies that he (Gov. Gavin Newsom) has put forward aren't doing anything to actually help the climate. He is driving up the cost of gasoline and electricity. Californians are suffering and they're fleeing to other states."

### Dahle on homelessness:

"I commit to declaring homelessness a public health crisis. We have a housing crisis, which hits the poorest Californians hardest. Streamline housing production and we'll ease the pressure. Drug addiction drives many people to the street and keeps them there. We must treat the drug crisis with urgency, hammering suppliers while helping addicts into recovery. We can't just lock people up because they're sick, but California needs better tools to steer

those who need into psychiatric care. There's nothing compassionate about letting people spiral into crisis while living on the street."

### Dahle on crime:

"I commit to keeping our communities safe and holding criminals accountable. I will appoint a Parole Board that will not allow for the early release of violent and repeat offenders. I will fully fund the Armed and Prohibited Persons System to take guns out of the hands of felons."

Governor Gavin Newsom assumed office in 2019 after taking over for Governor Jerry Brown. Before his position as governor, Newsom served as Lt. Governor for eight years and Mayor of San Francisco for seven years before that.

### Newsom on climate change:

"The best science tells us that we need to act now to adapt to California's water future. Climate change means drought won't just stick around for two years at a time like it historically has – extreme weather is the new normal here in the American West and California will adapt to this new reality."

### Newsom on crime after announcing his public safety plan:

"We're not walking back on our commitment in this state to advance comprehensive reforms, but we also have to recognize this moment we're in. We have to recognize people's fears and anxieties." ... "Through robust new investments and ongoing coordination with local agencies, this plan will bolster our prevention, deterrence and enforcement efforts to aggressively curb crime, hold bad actors to account and protect Californians from the devastating gun violence epidemic."

### Newsom on homelessness:

"It's unconscionable what's happening on the streets and sidewalks, that's why we're requiring accountability plans. We're not going to hand out any money any longer if local governments can't produce real results. When I got here there was no homeless strategy. No plan. No resources of any merit. Today there's \$15.3 billion dollars, there's real strategy and there's accountability for the first time."



PHOTO BY ELEMENT5 DIGITAL ON UNSPLASH



## THE DRAC PACK

### REVIEWS OF VAMPIRE ACADEMY, THE NEW INTERVIEW AND LET THE RIGHT ONE IN.

BY ERIN MAXWELL

**T**his is the season to be spooky, and this year, networks and streaming services are doubling down on vampires as the “it” monster of the season. After success with *What We Do In The Shadows*, the vamp tales for *American Horror Story*, *Midnight Mass*, *Legacies*, *The Originals* and *First Kill*, just to name a few, more and more heavy hitters want a bite of the blood-soaked pie. This time around, they are going fangs out with properties that have already seen the light of day as books and movies: *Vampire Academy*,

*Interview with the Vampire* and *Let the Right One In*. Will they rise again on TV? We sink our fangs into each.

#### INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE (AMC)

Meet Louis de Pointe du Lac (Jacob Anderson). Beautiful. Rich. And young. Forever young. And quite dead. Many years ago, a young man had the chance to interview Louis about his unique circumstances, but he screwed it up when his addiction got the upper hand. Now 50 years later, the “boy” (Eric Bogosian) has

a second chance at the interview he was destined to write...

AMC's *Interview with the Vampire* might have die-hard fans on edge with its deviations from the original text, but please, do not fear. The changes might be somewhat drastic, but they are necessary to revamp the problematic vamp tale for the modern age. The adjustments also add a surprising amount of depth to both the story and its players.

While not for everyone, this version of Rice's gothic bible is clever in its modifications, reversing issues that can best

be deemed as thorny when viewed through the lens of modern culture. No longer a plantation owner, Louis is now a pimp whose world is destroyed after his “touched” brother takes his own life. In an effort to escape the pain, Louis falls into the awaiting arms of Lestat, now his lover. Together, the two raise hell, and eventually Claudia (Bailey Bass), their vampiric child, now a teen rather than the precarious child she was in the book.

As an interview is only as good as its subject, this *Interview* is only as good as its performers, who are outstanding. In the original novel, Louis was a prototype for the mopey vampire that goth culture would later cling to as an archetype. In this version, Anderson plays Louis as a monster with a story to tell and a determination to be heard. He removes any fallibility that might be in the character's nature and by doing so, makes him all the more interesting.

But the good news here for Rice fans is that this is the best portrayal of Lestat they have ever received as Sam Reid breathes life into the French fop with fangs. Meanwhile, Bogosian holds the pace of the show steady while keeping the events set in reality.

*Interview with the Vampire* might go a little AWOL from Rice's original work, but the changes help the story, and more importantly, they needed to happen. In the end, the narrative is enriched and helps evolve the characters beyond the brooding woe-is-me cliché that time has made of the paperback bloodsuckers. Though the series is not for everyone, Rice fans, vamp connoisseurs, and those looking for a good LGBTQ+ romance will find much to drink in.

#### LET THE RIGHT ONE IN (SHOWTIME)

Eleanor (Madison Taylor Baez) is a 12-year-old girl who needs constant care for the rest of her life because she is destined to stay a 12-year-old girl for the rest of her life. With wants and needs beyond the pale and cravings and yearnings that can lead to precarious situations, she's a problem that any parent would dread. How would you solve it?

In the case of her father Mark (Demian Bichir), the answer is: become a slave to her every need. But for young Isaiah Cole



# ENTERTAINMENT

(Ian Foreman), the girl is a figure of mystery and wonder – a possible friend who seems of similar age. A playmate. And eventually, a hero.

Showtime's *Let the Right One In* is the third adaptation of the critically-acclaimed novel by John Ajvide Lindqvist. The 2008 film was nothing short of a masterpiece, while the Americanized 2010's *Let Me In* was an entertaining but imperfect version of the vampire story.

Unlike previous versions, the series does not solely focus on the friendship between a vampiric "child" and a lonely little boy, but instead shares screen time to focus on the story of her heroic protector, a man who was originally somewhat evil in the novel. Now the duo partake in "wholesome" vampiric father-daughter outings... if one counts hunting drug addicts stricken with vampirism as wholesome activities.

In the series, Eleanor's vampiric nature is now perceived as more of an "affliction" that can be cured, thus giving both Eleanor and Mark a new objective that was absent in both the book and the movies. Though it does give the story a new perspective and longevity enabling a series, it subverts some of the deeper meaning and weight of the original text.

But in the end, the series is a win for Showtime thanks to the powerful performances from Bichir and Baez, as well as Cole and Anika None Rose, who plays Isaiah's mother, a police detective who discovers an uptick in homicides in her fair city. Though the story doesn't reflect the brilliance of the novel or the original film, it has a fresh originality, a dark subtext with a bit of bite, and one hell of a cast.

## VAMPIRE ACADEMY (PEACOCK)

Two years after Bella started mooning over a portentous 200-year-old high school student in *Twilight*, it became clear that moody monsters and temperamental teens made for big business. Thus Richelle Mead offered a whole school filled with fangs with *The Vampire Academy* books.

In 2014, a misguided effort to franchise Mead's teen monster mash for the big screen flopped in a big way, as the film version attempted to compress the densely-packed story of the Dhampirs and the Morois into a popcorn pic.



(PEACOCK)

Now almost a decade later, Peacock has resurrected the *Academy*, giving the story enough episodes to properly spread its wings. But will it help? The answer: only if you're already a fan and/or open to uber-complicated supernatural world-building.

There is no way around it. *Vampire Academy* is a very convoluted story that is difficult to latch onto unless you are already a fan of the book series (or of intricate creature features). It is broken up into the following: Moroi vampires, the ruling class of vamps who hold the power; the Dhampirs, their guardians who are half-Moroi, half-human; and the Strigoi, the Deathaters of this world.

In the series, we follow Vasilisa "Lissa"

Dragomir (Daniela Nieves) and Rosemarie "Rose" Hathaway (Sisi Stringer), two besties who also happen to be a Moroi princess and her Dhampir. The two attend St. Vladimir's Academy, the aforementioned Vampire Academy, where guardians learn to guard while the Moroi drink blood in impressively large dorm rooms while adorned in cocktail attire.

One tragic evening, Lissa's family is killed in a car accident. As Lissa mourns, Rose trains and awaits her friend's return to the Academy to rejoin the fold. Together, the two face new political structures, power struggles, and romantic entanglements as Lissa must hold up her family name as the end of her line.

For the unindoctrinated, the mythos is... a lot. It's a tremendous amount of information to retain for what is essentially a horny version of *Monster High*. For those who make the effort, the lore of *Vampire Academy* does begin to take hold, and like other entangled fantasy shows, it should nab steadfast viewers who pay careful attention to everything and have a deep-seated love for vampiric drama set in Oregon. Nothing about Peacock's *Vampire Academy* is casual viewing. It requires your full commitment. But those who miss vampy, campy romances set on cloudy days with overwrought politics will probably be seduced.