

# **Santa Monica Democratic Club**

## **2022 Rent Control Board Candidate Questionnaire**

Thank you for your interest in the Santa Monica Democratic Club endorsement. Candidates seeking the endorsement of our Club must complete and return the following questionnaire. Note that only registered Democrats are eligible for our consideration.

Please send the completed questionnaire to [smdemocrats@gmail.com](mailto:smdemocrats@gmail.com) by 11:59pm on August 26, 2022. Interview appointment times with our Executive Committee will be scheduled on a first come first served basis as the questionnaires are returned.

Submitting this questionnaire constitutes acknowledgment that its contents are now part of the public record and may be reproduced and distributed by the Santa Monica Democratic Club.

### **General Information**

Candidate Name: **Daniel Ivanov**

Email Address: **divanov@law.gwu.edu**

Phone Number: **(847) 271-2264**

Candidate's Current Occupation: **Attorney**

Candidate's Employer: **Liebert Cassidy Whitmore (LCW)**

Campaign Contact Person (if other than candidate): **N/A**

#### **What qualifications do you bring to this office?**

**As an attorney with experience in litigation, negotiations, and advice & counsel matters, I believe that I have a unique skillset well-suited to take on any complex issues that may come before the Rent Control Board. My diverse legal background will allow me to examine disputes between tenants and landlords in a thorough and impartial manner while making sure that the law is applied fairly.**

**As a renter that lives in a rent-controlled apartment in Santa Monica, I live and experience the same issues many of my constituents face which will empower me to serve as their advocate.**

**In addition, with my extensive record of campaign experience ranging from local to statewide, I have the communication, political, and social media skills necessary to inform the public of the work the RCB is doing in the community including key resources available to them such as rental assistance.**

#### **Why are you running?**

**I am running because the only reason that I am able to live and thrive in Santa Monica is because I am a beneficiary of Santa Monica's 1979 rent control charter. As I am sure many Santa Monicans can relate, my rent control unit is the only thing preventing me from getting priced out of the City and forcing me to move elsewhere. I was appalled by recent efforts by the City Council to essentially gut rent control in Santa Monica by implementing a "means-tested" model. I am running to serve as a bulwark against any effort to gut rent control in our community.**

#### **What are the top issues of your campaign? How do you plan to address those issues once**

elected?

My top issue in this campaign is to ensure that we stop the 6 percent rent increase and cap the increase at 3 percent as several other jurisdictions across the state have already done. If elected I will work to ensure that the Rent Control Board is also prepared to address the same issue when it inevitably happens next year as the general adjustment calculated in 2023 will include inflationary months from 2022. By being prepared early on, we can develop a plan to make sure that renters are not faced with sticker shock and look at legislative tools in the RCB's disposal to minimize the burden on renters.

Please list all of your individual and/or organizational endorsements.

**Rick Chavez Zbur, AD51 Candidate**

**Caroline Torosis, City Council Candidate/RCB member**

**Anastasia Foster, RCB Vice-Chair**

**Sion Roy, SMC Trustee**

**Dan Hall, Santa Monica Pier Corporation Board Member**

**Janine Bush, SMDC Board Member**

**Melissa Goodman, Legal Director ACLU SoCal/SMDC Board Member**

How long have you lived in Santa Monica? Where else have you lived, and why did you live there?

I have lived in Santa Monica since March 2021. I was raised in Buffalo Grove, IL where I lived through high school. From 2014-2017, I lived in Coral Gables, FL to attend the University of Miami which I chose because of its strong academics and warm weather. From 2017-2020, I lived in Arlington, VA and Washington, DC to attend The George Washington University Law School which I chose to further foster my passion for public policy. Despite living in other regions across the country, I have always had my sights set on living in California where I hope to live for the long term.

Will you pledge to serve on City Council for your entire four year term?

YES

## **Party / Activism**

How long have you been a registered Democrat? Have you ever been registered as a member of another political party, or as Decline To State? If so, which party and why?

I have been registered as a Democrat since 2014 when I turned 18. I have been registered as a Dem wherever I have lived throughout my academic and professional journey (IL, FL, VA, CA) because I will never miss an election in my lifetime.

I have never been registered with another party or declined to state because I am a proud Democrat.

What is your experience with political activism? Have you ever volunteered or worked for a political campaign other than your own, and if so, in what capacity were you involved? Which political candidates have you endorsed or supported publicly in the past? Please list as many as possible.

I have been involved with political campaigns since my college days to the present. During my freshman year at the University of Miami in 2014, I was a field organizer for gubernatorial candidate Charlie Christ in my role as a member of the UM Campus Democrats. In the summer of 2016, I was a field organizer for Democratic state senator Tom Cullerton back in IL. In the summer of 2017, I interned with the Tenth Congressional District Democrats in Highland Park, IL in support of IL-10 Congressman Brad Schneider. During my first year of law school, I worked at the DNC to GOTV for Democratic candidates nationwide in preparation for the 2018 midterm elections.

Candidates that I have publicly supported/endorsed in the past include but are not limited to:

2014: Charlie Christ, FL-GOV; Pat Quinn IL-GOV

2016: Hillary Clinton, D Primary & General

2017: Ralph Northam VA-Gov; Justin Fairfax VA-LG; Mark Herring VA-AG; Phil Murphy NJ-Gov

2018: JB Pritzker, IL-GOV; Brad Schneider IL-10

2020: Kamala Harris, D Primary; Joe Biden General; Brad Schneider IL-10

2022: Gavin Newsom, CA-Gov; JB Pritzker, IL-Gov; Ted Lieu CA-33; Rick Chavez Zbur AD 51; Henry Stern LA County BOS; Malia Cohen Controller; Ben Allen SD-26; Shirley Webber SOS; Caroline Torosis City Council; Jesse Zwick City Council

Have you ever signed for or publicly supported efforts to recall a public official from office? If so, please list the name(s) of the officials and why you felt they should be recalled.

I have never signed a petition to recall a public official but I did publicly support the recall attempt of Republican Governor Scott Walker in Wisconsin back in 2012 because I felt his union busting efforts to gut collective bargaining in the state were that egregious.

Please list any organizations with which you are a member, including any leadership position you have held in each organization.

Santa Monica Democratic Club, VP Political Action  
SMRR, Member

Please confirm that you have read the latest version of the California Democratic Party Platform, as found here:

YES

List any items in the CDP Platform with which you disagree. (This is in no way a litmus test for our endorsement; however, because the party delegates have worked so hard on every word of this platform document, we believe it will be a helpful guide to comprehend the policy differences between each candidate.)

**I do not have any substantive disagreements with the platform of the California Democratic Party.**

## **Campaign Finance**

Please indicate Yes or No to the following statements:

1. I pledge not to take contributions from oil, gas, and coal industry executives, lobbyists, and PACs. **YES**
2. I pledge not to take contributions from police or law enforcement unions, lobbyists, and PACs. **YES**
3. I pledge not to take contributions from development firms, lobbyists, and PACs.

If you answered No to any of the above contribution questions, please explain here:

**YES**

## **Social Justice**

In what ways can the City of Santa Monica ensure that, in a real, practical sense, Black Lives Matter in our community?

**African Americans are oftentimes disproportionately affected by rising rents and steep increases in the cost of living forcing many African Americans to move away from our community. If we really care about black lives in our City, we will fight to make Santa Monica a more affordable place to live to ensure that we have a vibrant, thriving black community in our City that is not priced out of our rental market. That is what I will fight for as a Rent Control Board member. Citywide, we must continue to work to implement the Black Agenda the city council advanced in 2020.**

In what ways can the Rent Control Board best protect the undocumented residents of Santa Monica?

**Because undocumented residents are disproportionately low-income, they are most likely to qualify for rental assistance offered by the City. The Rent Control Board must use all tools in our disposal including outreach in Spanish, social media, etc. to ensure that undocumented residents have the help they need to be protected and avoid eviction. The Board should also conduct outreach in Spanish to make undocumented residents aware of their rights as tenants in the case of any disputes with landlords.**

How would you use your position on the Rent Control Board to assist BIPOC and other disadvantaged residents of Santa Monica?

**First, I will reiterate my answer from above in the sense that BIPOC are often the most vulnerable members of our community and the best thing that I can do in my position and jurisdiction as a RCB member is to make Santa Monica a more affordable place to live to ensure that this community has access to affordable housing options and is not priced out of our City. Second, as a Bi, Jewish, First Generation American, I know what it is like to feel overlooked and as such will vow to use my platform to elevate issues on the RCB that impact vulnerable communities such as BIPOC.**

**How do you plan to (in the moment) counteract any and all observed possible acts of micro-aggressions towards Women, African Americans, Hispanics, LGBTQ and others of marginalized communities from your fellow Boardmembers or members of the public? What is your experience in dealing with these situations?**

**In my experience the best way to deal with this is to forcefully confront and call it out when it happens. Ignoring the issue will cause it to fester. If something like this happens on the dais, I will not hesitate to speak out.**

## **Housing / Development**

**What steps would you propose to address the homelessness crisis in the City of Santa Monica?**

**The City must use every tool in its disposal to increase new construction of affordable housing in our community to meet its RHNA targets. The City must employ a collaborative strategy to work with the state where it can to secure funding for new construction such as the Governor's Project Homekey effort. Tackling the homelessness crisis must involve an all-of-the-above approach which includes increased investment in outreach services, transitional housing, and mental health services.**

**What is your philosophy on the appropriate scope of development that should be approved in Santa Monica?**

**The City must prioritize new construction of affordable housing units as the City has not been on track to meet its RHNA targets with respect to affordable housing but has been on track to meet its target with respect to new development of mixed-use/market rate housing.**

**In what specific ways has Santa Monica failed to address the housing affordability crisis? What concrete steps would you take on the Rent Control Board to better address the crisis?**

**Santa Monica has failed to meet its RHNA targets with respect to new construction of affordable housing units. In order to address this, the City needs to use City land to devote to affordable housing as is currently being done with Parking Structure 3 Downtown. I think that this project can be used as a model. The City also needs to fight to ensure that with new construction of mixed-use development projects, a greater percentage of units within those projects will be set aside for affordable housing units.**

**How can the City of Santa Monica meet its next RHNA cycle goal of 6,153 new deed restricted**

affordable housing units for low and moderate income households and 2,721 new market rate housing units?

- 1) Use more City-owned land to devote to new construction of affordable housing as has been done with the Parking Structure 3 project
- 2) Ensure that with new construction of mixed-use development projects, a greater percentage of units within those projects will be set aside for affordable housing units.

I am not as concerned about the City meeting its market-rate RHNA targets because the City has done so in the past. Not meeting our affordable housing targets is the primary issue the City should be prioritizing/devoting its resources to fix.

What is your assessment of the 2022 Housing Element proposed by City Council?

I support the Housing element proposed by the Council but have reservations at the lack of specificity over how the City will concretely meet its affordable housing RHNA targets.

## Rent Control

What do you see as the mission or purpose of the Rent Control Charter, both at its founding and in its present form?

The purpose of the rent control charter is to provide renters with stability so that tenants and their families can call Santa Monica home for the long term and put down roots here. This stability provides renters the opportunity to save money and work their way towards home ownership in Santa Monica if that is a path that they so choose. Rent Control makes Santa Monica a city that is accessible and livable for people from all walks of life, not just an elite wealthy few that could otherwise afford it.

The Rent Board and its staff have committed to hosting a discussion about the city's rent control law with the community at large. The Charter has undergone periodic changes over its 43 year history. What areas of the Charter, if any, do you feel need enhancement or review at this time?

I do not see any current provisions of the charter that need to be changed. If anything, the RCB needs to explore ways to strengthen the existing charter so as to prevent any attempts at gutting or diluting rent control in Santa Monica as was proposed earlier this year by the Council with its mean testing proposal.

Historically, how do you think landlords have fared regarding the return on their buildings, both before Costa-Hawkins and since?

Landlords have likely enjoyed significantly higher returns on their buildings following the passage of Costa Hawkins given that landlords are allowed to charge market rate rent when a tenant leaves a rent control unit either voluntarily or through eviction due to the statute's "vacancy decontrol" provisions.

Are there any current trends in real estate speculation patterns that you see as an issue for the spirit of the Charter?

Yes, even though the Ellis Act was originally intended to apply to landlords who want to go out of the rental business it is being abused by speculators who quickly vacate properties and resell them for a profit, displacing tenants in the process. These efforts

by speculators undermine the spirit of the charter.

What are the biggest challenges to keeping tenants in their homes in Santa Monica? Do you feel that Costa-Hawkins and/or the Ellis Act need reforms, and if so, what are some examples of those reforms?

The Ellis Act is one of the biggest challenges in keeping tenants in their homes in Santa Monica. The Ellis Act needs to be reformed to close this loophole that allows speculators to quickly vacate properties. Perhaps a proposed reform would be to mandate landlords own the property for a certain amount of time (3 years, 5 years, etc.) before attempting mass evictions. With Costa Hawkins, we need to reform if not outright repeal the vacancy decontrol provisions.

## Ballot Measures

Do you support California Proposition 1?

YES I am proudly pro-choice. We must enshrine reproductive freedom into the state's constitution.

Do you support the citizens initiative ballot measure which would tax real estate transactions over \$8M and provide revenue for affordable housing, rent subsidy, and SMMUSD? Why/why not?

YES because the proposal actually commits to using the revenue generated to fund SMMUSD, affordable housing, and homelessness prevention.

Do you support the competing council-approved ballot measure which would tax real estate transactions over \$8M and provide revenue into the general fund? Why/why not?

NO because it doesn't actually commit to funding anything. All revenue generated by the measure would go into the City's general fund to be used at the Council's discretion. This was an attempt by developers to gut the citizens ballot measure.

Do you support the rent control ballot measure which would permanently lower the rent control General Adjustment cap from 6% down to 3%?

YES

Do you support the SMC bond measure?

YES

Do you support the 1% transient occupancy tax ballot measure?

YES

Do you support the cannabis business tax ballot measure?

YES

## Additional Questions

What role do you believe the Santa Monica Democratic Club should have in our City? If elected, how would you attempt to interact with the Santa Monica Democratic Club and other political organizations to ensure community buy-in on new proposals?

**I believe SMDC needs to work to elect Democrats up and down the ballot city-wide, county-wide, and statewide. SMDC must also continue to serve as a key information source for the public on key issues facing the City just like the club did with the Save Rent Control Rally. Activism like that is where the Club is at its best and the Club in all likelihood saved Rent Control in our City. If elected, I hope to join SMDC meetings as needed to inform the general membership on key issues so they can support my priorities/initiatives and spread the word to their networks to rally support.**