

Letters to the Editor

Eve Phillips Blocks Progress on Orinda's Downtown and Roads

As I've observed our city council votes over the past four years, it's clear that first-term council member Eve Phillips has consistently voted against progress on improving our downtown and roads. As examples, Eve was the only council member of five to vote against these critical items:

1) Sole vote against simply initiating a council discussion on ways to improve our downtown (July 21, 2015)

2) Sole vote against approving a small contract with experts on downtown improvement, which ultimately resulted in a useful report with action items that city staff has since pursued (November 15, 2016)

3) Sole vote against commissioning a plan to improve our public spaces downtown, including downtown creek restoration (June 19, 2018)

4) Sole vote against placing a bond on the 2016 ballot to improve our roads, going against the will of almost 70% of Orinda's voters who ultimately approved it. The revenue has since helped repave pot-holed roads throughout Orinda (Feb 16, 2016).

On Election Day on November 6th, all Orindans who care about progress on downtown and our roads should be aware of Ms. Phillips' voting record and vote accordingly.

Anthony Malutta
Orinda

Nick Kosla for Orinda City Council

One of the best decisions our family has ever made was to make Orinda our home. Growing up, Nick was blessed with life-long friends, warm community, magnificent natural surroundings and a security that only a town like Orinda can provide through dedicated leadership. Nick, with his beautiful home-town wife and daughters will work hard to ensure Orinda continues down a path of responsible decisions ensuring all residents the confidence that the best is yet to come. Grand/Mom Kosla will Pick Nick Francine Kosla

Looking for leaders we can trust in State Assembly

I want to commend the East Bay Times for its endorsement of Catharine Baker in the 16th Assembly District race. I appreciate that it called out Bauer-Kahan for making several misleading statements about Baker. Dishonesty in politics is running too rampant and we need leaders we can trust. Moreover, when Bauer-Kahan was called out on her false statements, her reply was an uninspiring, "That's what I was told." We teach our children to do their own research and it is certainly reasonable to expect the same out of someone who wants to represent us in the Assembly. I simply won't vote for someone who will distort the truth to win an election just because that's what they were told to say. The Times nailed it: "voters deserve better" than Bauer-Kahan. Please vote for Catharine Baker.

William Weber
Moraga

Rebecca Bauer-Kahan for Assembly

As a Lamorinda resident for over 30 years and an environmental scientist for almost 40, I used to take BART into the city for my commute. However, I have seen BART get more and more crowded, dirtier, and less safe, as BART's infrastructure has just not kept up with the exponential housing growth in the East Bay, particularly the areas north and east of Lamorinda. As our housing crisis increases and affordable housing gets pushed further

and further from the job hub in San Francisco, our transportation problems have gotten exponentially worse. Our local roads in Lafayette and Orinda are getting choked and polluted, as well, due to increased traffic in the area. I have seen cars exit Highway 24 and head parallel to the highway on surface streets, driving through Lafayette and Orinda merely to avoid highway traffic. We need to prioritize improving our public transportation options, not just for commuting, but to get people out of their cars and improve air quality. Rebecca Bauer-Kahan has pledged to accomplish these issues in the Assembly. She gets my vote.

Dr. Booker Holton, Ph.D. Ecology
Orinda

A vote for Bauer-Kahan

Governor Brown has not endorsed the Republican Assembly representative Catharine Baker, although her mailer purposely misleads voters by making it appear that he did.

Catharine Baker's assertion in her mailer that Rebecca Bauer-Kahan somehow made "secret promises" about future votes is patently absurd and not based on any facts. Rebecca has not signed any secret pledges or contracts about future votes – to the contrary, she is committed to her core values. To state otherwise is dishonest and underhanded, plain and simple.

During these turbulent political times, Lamorinda deserves to have a candidate that actually represents the values of our district. Rebecca Bauer-Kahan is much more representative of our district's progressive values, and deserves the support of our residents.

Josh Norek
Lafayette

Vote for Baker and for education

Education is not a partisan issue. Assemblywoman Catharine Baker has been a champion for education issues and an ardent supporter of our schools and students. School funding remains insufficient and unstable, and our students need her continued vigilant advocacy on their behalf in Sacramento. Assemblywoman Baker does more than just advocate for better education funding; she is a visible, active, and engaged public servant who holds education workshops and town halls, promotes STEM learning and college preparation, leads child abuse prevention efforts, recognizes outstanding students and teachers, and is still an involved parent. She listens closely, asks critical questions, and makes thoughtful decisions on behalf of her constituents, even those who are not yet old enough to vote. Her actions have proven to us she is best suited to serve our students and the future of our children.

Join us to re-elect Catharine Baker for Assembly.

Suzu Pak, Clerk, Lafayette School District Governing Board
Mark Gundacker, President, Child Abuse Prevention Council of Contra Costa County

Vote for a healthy future with Bauer-Kahan

This is a frightening time when the Trump Administration is putting big business interests over the protection of wildlife and a clean environment, in spite of the warnings of reliable climate science. It is vital that we have someone representing our Assembly District who will fight 100% of the time for critical issues like (1) healthy classrooms free of chemical-based cleaners and (2) protecting people, our parks and wildlife. Catherine Baker may espouse her willingness to cross the aisle for our environment, but

when I checked her record myself, it is far, far less than 100%. Baker voted against support for local agencies to use water more efficiently (AB1668), against setting new pollution limits for big polluters exploiting 'cap and trade' (AB378), against providing state funds to the low-income communities most harmed by pollution (AB523), and against mandating that all new developments undergo environmental review (AB890). I cannot support a record like that, so I will be voting for Rebecca Bauer-Kahan for a healthy future for all of our children and grandchildren.

Susan Forman
Orinda

MOFD

Concern over conflict of interest

As an MOFD Division 1 property owner and taxpayer, I am deeply concerned with the obvious conflict of interest that Greg Baitx will have if elected to the MOFD Board. He is an active member of Local 1230 - the very same union that negotiates with our MOFD Board for its firefighters' compensation including retirement. Clearly Baitx will have an interest in supporting his union versus the taxpayers of Moraga and Orinda. It baffles me how his candidacy is even legal, if in fact it is? Will Baitx have to recuse himself from all matters impacting the union? Why in the world would we elect someone with conflicts that would either preclude representing his constituents, requiring routine recusal, or voting notwithstanding such obvious conflicts.

I'm also greatly troubled reading that Baitx, one of three allied firefighter union candidates, in a union-paid advertisement in this publication's September 19th edition, falsely claimed that the Moraga Town Council endorsed him for MOFD Board.

As an attorney, I know it's illegal for government entities to endorse candidates for office. Yet, there it was, in black and white. We now learn by retraction that Moraga Council members have denied Baitx's false endorsement claim.

Worse yet, uniformed MOFD employees cited Lucy Talbot, the competing non-union Division 4 candidate, issuing a retaliatory abatement notice demanding thousands of dollars of tree removal. Incredibly, they issued the same punitive notices to Talbot's neighbors that dared host a "Talbot for MOFD" sign. We now learn that these harassing notices were not authorized by the Fire Chief or Marshall, yet exclusively targeted the non-union candidate and her supportive neighbors. Unsurprisingly, no similar violations were issued anywhere else in the Division. We cannot tolerate this kind of thuggery and intimidation by our fire union or its rank and file.

I ask a simple question to all MOFD residents: Do the citizens own the MOFD or does the MOFD own us? With the above antics and strong-arm tactics, it appears, sadly the latter appears to be the case.

I encourage a vote for the non-union candidates of Bell, Smith and Talbot for MOFD Board.

Larry Pines
Moraga

Support for Baitx, Donner and Danziger

My name is Janet. I am a Firefighter that works for the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and a member of Local 1230 and a resident of Moraga.

In last editions Letters to the Editor, Carol Penskar claims the Moraga-Orinda Fire District is "technically insolvent ... will eventually go bankrupt ... (and) the union ran the show."

I couldn't disagree more. Although we can't find any official document to support \$62 million in unfunded retirement liabilities Ido agree unfunded liability is a concern. To keep that concern in perspective the latest County Retirement Association Actuarial Valuation and Review shows the funding ratio of market value to actuarial liability is 90.8% funded. The MOFD Long Range Financial Forecast predicts continued revenue exceeding expenditures with the continual growth of reserve accounts. Both the community and your firefighters have a shared interest in being financially sustainable as our careers typically span decades. Therefore we support Greg Baitx, Michael Donner and Steve Danziger for the MOFD Board. Tackling unfunded liability and financial stability are all high priorities for Baitx, Donner and Danziger as well as their opponents. However, only Baitx, Donner and Danziger are able to provide a balance with their experience and expertise in fire service and public administration, which all of their opponents lack. We have been called a special interest group. In reality our firefighters are an actively involved component of this community with a unique perspective. We want the same thing that all of the community members want. That is to have a high level of firefighting, fire prevention and emergency services for a very long time. Therefore please vote for Greg Baitx, Michael Donner and Steve Danziger.

Janet Brandi-Routt
Moraga

Severson for Acalanes Union High School District board

Please join me in voting for Chris Severson for the Acalanes Union High School District board. I've known Chris for many years. He is organized, smart, and collaborative. As an ER physician with teens of his own, he is focused on student health and wellness. I know how important it is for our schools to support our teens in their overall wellness, as well as academics. Chris will certainly help all our students to succeed.

Sincerely,

Katie Solomon

Lafayette

Costa County Board of Education, Area 2

Sarah Butler for Contra Costa County Board of Education, Area 2.

Please join me in voting for Sarah Butler for the Contra Costa County Board of Education, Area 2. I have known Sarah for ten years. She has been a tireless advocate for education in our local schools, both as a parent and as an Orinda School Board Member, 2012-16. Sarah has the experience and qualifications to well serve our communities on the County Board of Education. As a teacher, I understand the role of the County Board of Education which is to serve as a link between their constituents and the County Office of Education and the County Superintendent. In that role we need someone with Sarah's experience and knowledge of education, education policy, budget expertise, and student advocacy. The children of Contra Costa deserve the support of the most qualified representative. Vote for Sarah Butler for the Contra Costa County Board of Education, Area 2.

Colleen Sullivan

Orinda

Hansen for Contra Costa County Superintendent

Thank you for your article on the upcoming election of Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools. It is a little known and often misunderstood role that impacts our local districts, schools and children. I am a graduate of

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Miramonte High School, grew up in Moraga and had a wonderful career in education in Mt. Diablo Unified School District (retired in 2015). I am currently an elected Trustee for Mt. Diablo Unified. I am supporting Cheryl Hansen for this important educational leadership role. I am familiar with the careers of both of these candidates and know that Cheryl Hansen has the breadth and depth of experience and knowledge that is needed. I have seen how easy it is to mislead voters as to one's actual experience, especially those unfamiliar with the positions and organizations. As voters are "hiring" the next County Superintendent, it's important to drill down on the two candidates' resumes and credentials. Cheryl Hansen is the only candidate who earned all her positions through a normal application, interview and selection process. Her resume represents authentic experience and proven leadership.

A key role of this position and the Office of Education is to support the 18 school districts throughout our county. That requires a leader who has walked the walk and talked the talk of school district educators and leaders. We need a change agent who has the ability to make the County Office of Education a 'go to' organization it was meant to be, a true service provider. Cheryl Hansen understands this. She also has the experience and knowledge to ensure fiscal accountability, provide critical services to students with special needs, leverage resources for the betterment of all school districts and students, and build strong partnerships with all stakeholders.

I strongly encourage you to vote for Cheryl Hansen.

Joanne Durkee
Pleasant Hill

Other letters

An Open Letter to the Lamorinda Weekly

As men who have followed the Kavanaugh Hearings either live on TV or through the media we disavow the implication by Senators, The White House and by Judge Kavanaugh himself that excessive drinking by boys and men is part of the male maturation process. We affirm that abusive behavior toward women and girls is never acceptable conduct, whether sober or under the influence of alcohol.

We praise Professor Ford for her courage in articulating the abuse she endured and affirm that we will work to effect change toward a more compassionate and equitable society by our example and actions through our schools and churches. We will never condone those traditions that have done so much damage to the health and aspirations of women and girls.

We ask the assistance of all people of faith to help us channel our resolve toward our vision of God's justice for all.

Don Stump, Paul Bro, Ted DeAtley, Norman Bardsley, Richard Black, Joe Warren, Frank Scudero, John Mendenhall
Members of The Men's Breakfast Group of Lafayette Christian Church

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