

The candidates on the issues

by Kate Bradshaw

We asked the seven candidates for state Senate for their views on key issues facing the state and this region. Here's how they responded. For more in-depth information, including profiles and video interviews, go to PaloAltoOnline.Atavist.com.

	Housing	Homelessness	Senate Bill 50	PG&E	Transportation	Education	Health care	Environment	Carbon tax?	AB 5 (gig-work law)	State doing enough re: pension liability?	Reduce cannabis tax?
 <p>Josh Becker</p>	Tech companies and employers with over 1,000 workers should fund a unit of housing for every job created. State could help backfill impact fees if developers build affordable housing. Wants permanent, significant funds for the state's lower-income-housing tax credit.	Homelessness is a public health problem. Supports "safe parking" programs and the Downtown Streets Team model. Wants to put some mental health funding toward supportive housing for the homeless.	Opposed. Even if passed, it would take 3-4 years to take effect and would be tied up in lawsuits.	Favors co-op structure, with PG&E being a poles-and-wires company but not working in power distribution. "PG&E has disproved the adage of 'Too big to fail.' They're too big and they're failing."	Supports better coordination of schedules and fare systems at the region's 27 transit agencies. Wants Sacramento to fund \$11B for Caltrain grade separations. Supports Dumbarton rail.	Wants to repurpose excess property taxes intended for county boards of education to build teacher housing or create an equity fund that could help districts with lower per-pupil spending.	Favors expanding health services for undocumented residents, who contribute \$3 billion to economy, on par with what care would cost. Wants to increase reimbursement rates for county health physicians and improve outreach to ensure people know about services. Supports local biotech innovation.	Wants to make new buildings fossil-fuel free, supports EV and hybrid incentives, and supports innovations like carbon-neutral cement.	Yes, and some revisions to "tighten up" cap and trade policies.	Believes it's well-intended; supports benefits and protections for gig workers but acknowledges potential unintended consequences.	The governor has done a good job, but the state is trying to make up for lost time because of a lack of realistic return expectations. State should keep using surplus funds to pay down pension liabilities.	Probably. We need to keep tweaking it until it works, and if there's a huge black market, it's not working.
 <p>Mike Brownrigg</p>	Supports housing growth in cities by offering them state infrastructure funds, supporting school districts that want to build teacher housing, consulting the experts about what it would take for redevelopment, and creating a funding pool to help nonprofits buy existing affordable housing to curb gentrification.	For working homeless, like families in RVs, find them housing ASAP. Start with "safe parking" programs. For homeless with mental health or addiction problems, also provide social services. Favors funding pool for cities to try a range of approaches and seeing what works best.	Opposed; says it's bad policy and politics. Doesn't think it would work; has seen success in housing development in Burlingame by rezoning industrial areas. "We're doing it in a way that works for our city and not in some top-down approach from Sacramento."	PG&E should be a state-owned or community-owned utility. The 10% net profit margin that PG&E shareholders are promised should be reinvested in the power grid. The argument for private ownership is that it's better managed and better governed; 10 years of data say that isn't working.	State should invest heavily — \$50 billion to \$100 billion — in transit to broaden where people can live. Supports large employers expanding into areas where jobs are not so concentrated.	The state should create a fund that encourages school districts to build teacher housing and offer certain guarantees to reduce the risk districts would take on to do so.	Favors state producing generic drugs. Wants to make sure county hospitals and community health care systems are well funded.	Calls for zero carbon energy by 2030. Plan: reduce demand for fossil fuel, increase carbon free energy and storage, sequester carbon. Calls for experts to develop a plan to produce/store 10 GW of carbon-free energy in 7 years.	Yes, with a dividend that flows back to individuals.	Thinks AB 5 was well-intentioned but passed in too big of a rush. Supports the premise that full-time employees should have full benefits. But some professions like media, hairdressing or trucking with less traditional structures don't want that.	No. Leaders knew this would become a problem 15 years ago. The debt needs to get paid but the current generation shouldn't need to pay the whole debt off in 10 years. State should use reserves, surplus to pay it down and prioritize the education pensions (CalSTRS).	Yes.
 <p>Alex Glew</p>	Cities, counties and the state have failed to plan at a regional level. Job growth should go to other areas with more land and capacity for growth, and if municipalities can't support additional infrastructure, they should decline new job growth.	Don't let people become homeless. Nonprofits can offer short-term temporary loans so people don't end up on street. Provide mentally ill homeless with treatment. People who break laws can be given the choice of treatment or jail. Favors "safe parking" programs for RV dwellers. Counties, not cities, should provide safe areas.	Opposed, in all forms. "It basically creates central planning at the state level." Creating higher density doesn't address traffic or the problems that come with too many people in an area without enough geography or infrastructure in place.	PG&E should have more competition and have to fight with other utilities. Trees that PG&E is supposed to be trimming should be trimmed, and if they are not, it should be held accountable.	Supports "lanes and trains": more highways and rail infrastructure investment.	Good teachers should be paid more; the few bad teachers should be let go. Invest more in programs proven to help kids learn. Does not favor generic drug production or Medicare for undocumented people.	Wants a market-based health care system where everyone gets a \$5,000 health care spending account, and prices for medical services are explicit and upfront. People will choose to reduce costs.	Favors converting to cleaner energy using heat exchangers. Thinks electric-building requirements are a good idea, but it requires a plan; industrial capacity should be in place first.	Yes, with dividend program that goes to back to lower-income individuals.	No. People should be able to maximize their time and financial compensation and to choose how they work. Don't want employers abusing the situation.	No. The state needs to switch to a fixed contribution plan, similar to a 401K, so that the system isn't putting all the risk on the taxpayer. "That's not good, and it's not fair, and it's not working out."	Yes. "We're basically supporting organized crime and the black market." State needs to step up enforcement of taxes and reduce taxes.
 <p>Sally Lieber</p>	Save the housing people are already living in, create funding for nonprofits to buy existing affordable housing. Offer at-risk households legal services, along with the new renter protections passed last year. State should study surplus public properties for affordable housing.	"Housing first" approach to homelessness hasn't yielded enough housing for people to get off streets. Favors single-room occupancy programs with supportive services shelters near transit and increased safety for women. Opposes RV bans. Wants to explore how vacant units can be used by homeless people.	Was waiting for final version but didn't think there were enough affordable housing provisions. Favors enforcing each city's Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) as a requirement by linking compliance to transportation funding or fining noncompliant cities.	Wants "most stringent conditions" put on PG&E. "They've proven themselves untrustworthy time after time." Wants publicly owned power that is locally generated and locally stored. PG&E should be required to use better technology to observe power lines and predict where failures might happen.	Transportation agencies should establish protocols when transit is used as shelter by the homeless.	Favors greater funding for subsidized child care. "It's either (paying for) housing or child care for so many families."	Favors Medicare for all in state, including undocumented residents. "If you eat in a restaurant, or buy food at the grocery store, you're buying something that has been handled by a person who's undocumented, and I want them to have health care services."	We're in an existential crisis with climate collapse. Supports a ban on fracking.	Yes. Supports oil-extraction tax as well and other incentives, strategies and mandates to move to electric power.	Would have voted for it. Supports addressing people caught in gig economy and not having supports that come from employment. It will probably be fine-tuned in the legislature.	No. Served in the State Assembly during the biggest shortfall of "any state in U.S. history. It scared me about what can happen in a downturn."	"Not something I've thought about."
 <p>Shelly Masur</p>	Supports MTC's Casa Compact and federal and state tax credits to spur below-market-rate housing construction. Other policy suggestions: inclusionary requirements, collecting hotel taxes on Airbnbs for cities' affordable housing funds, and affordable housing impact fees from commercial development.	Supports "housing first" approach to homelessness, dedicating surplus state land for housing. Favors approach that lets the homeless stay in housing for longer so they develop savings. Believes regional coordination plus state funding and technical assistance are needed to support people in RVs.	Supported revised version that gave cities time to develop their own plans to comply with mandate to build more housing, gave priority for affordable housing to current city residents, included smaller counties and other steps.	Says that the state can't legally take over PG&E; it's a regulator and wouldn't be able to regulate itself. PG&E debts and costs to improve infrastructure belong to whoever owns it. Favors microgrids; open to ending 10% return guarantee for PG&E.	Sits on Caltrain Local Policy Makers Group and says more funding is needed for grade separations. Supports transit-oriented development.	Say funding has to be No. 1 priority. Supports the Split Roll initiative to reform Proposition 13 to increase school funding. Paying down pension liabilities is an important priority as well. Wants to work within current state education systems and tweak as needed.	"Expanding access to health care to everyone that's affordable and quality is a high priority for me." Supports reproductive health care. Interested in sitting on Senate health committee.	Favors reach codes to restrict natural gas in new buildings and expanding recycled water systems. Does not support nuclear energy. Focused on protecting water supply and increasing county's resiliency to sea level rise.	Yes.	Supported initial bill but says it's had unintended consequences. Favors revisions to give court reporters, freelance writers and some other workers greater ability to participate in gig economy.	The state needs to invest more. Employees, cities and school districts are paying significantly more than before. Governor's budget proposal should not require cities and school districts to backfill what state was paying before. School districts need to stay solvent and not have to divert all their money for pension liabilities.	From a public health perspective, supports doing more to bring the cannabis trade into the legal realm and monitor its safety. Wants some revisions to keep it out of hands of minors, make it available to adults.
 <p>Annie Oliva</p>	Favors streamlining the permitting and project-review processes at the city level to expedite the development process. Supports reforming the California Environmental Quality Act to limit when people can file lawsuits over development proposals as part of the environmental review process.	Because of her son, homelessness is a major campaign priority. Has proposed expanding conservatorship and transitional jail diversion programs. People shouldn't be on the street unless they're well and should be hospitalized if necessary. Cities shouldn't be solely responsible for homelessness.	Opposed. Every local jurisdiction has a purpose for zoning and should be able to say where housing or height restrictions should remain. Incentives make sense, doesn't want to make requirements.	Born and raised in San Bruno; can't forgive PG&E for San Bruno pipeline explosion, which deeply affected her community and network. The utility must be watched; open to idea of smaller, locally owned utilities.	Says trains going north to south need to be more frequent, cleaner and electrified. Wants transit to the Central Valley to transport workers to the Peninsula and suggested a train from San Bruno to Tracy.	Addictions and mental health problems can start young, in children, and they need to be addressed.	Favors state manufacturing generic drugs to reduce costs. Supports expanding Medi-Cal for all undocumented residents, aging and otherwise. "We need to take care of everybody that hurts."	Supports natural gas ban in new buildings; undecided on nuclear power.	Would have to see where it would go, what tax would do for climate change.	Supported it for the workers. State should have listened better to workers. Is an independent contractor herself; real estate industry was exempt. Supports law's protections and is open to making changes to it.	"We signed up for it and we'll get out of it." Supports using budget surplus to pay down school pension liabilities.	Was not in favor of legalizing marijuana. "I come from raising a child where substance abuse is an issue. I can't support anything that might harm somebody in the future." Opposed allowing dispensaries in her city of Millbrae.
 <p>John Webster</p>	He favors making zoning easy to change and letting supply and demand play out. People should have the right to build backyard granny flats and rent them out. People should be allowed to build cheaper housing or mini-houses. Doesn't favor subsidized housing.	No answer. (A scheduling conflict prevented his endorsement interview.)	Seems like the obvious thing that a free market would do.	Break up PG&E.	Free market should address that. Need houses near jobs; more workers could use co-working spaces near where they live or work from home.	Education shouldn't be free. Families should pay tuition for their children's schooling.	Private groups like churches or nonprofits, not government, should provide health and social supports. Wants to end subsidized health care. "One of stupidest things I've ever heard is the idea claiming that health care should be a right."	The climate is going to change; water levels are going to change. "As far as the human-caused impact of carbon dioxide, I think that's being totally overblown." More concerned with people trashing the ocean.	"I think there should be more concern about the oxygen and not the carbon."	No answer.	No answer.	