

Candidates in the Special Election to Fill the Vacant Post of State Senate 28th District Answer the Beachhead's Questions

The election is Tuesday, Feb. 15.

List of candidates responding: Mike Chamness, Mark Lipman, Kevin Thomas McGurk, Ted Lieu, Jeffrey E. Fortini, James P. Thompson

MIKE CHAMNESS
No Party Venice
Non-Profit Organization Consultant

1. Why should voters in Venice, specifically, support your candidacy?

Venice has a strong tradition of citizen activism, embracing diversity, building community, and basically giving a sh*t. By running as an independent candidate and member of the "Coffee Party", I think the campaign honors that spirit and hopefully compels other folks to consider running for public office on any level.

2. What are your top pro-environment priorities, if elected?

- 1) Cleaner air via supporting more effective mass transit solutions and less auto-dependence. We need to "kick the carbons";
- 2) Fresh water conservation, sustainable water resource planning, and ocean/coastal protection;
- 3) More effective recycling programs and a dramatic reduction in the use of throw-away plastic;
- 4) Preservation of green space and protection of regional wild lands such as the Ballona Wetlands;
- 5) Reduce oil dependency by aggressively promoting the use of renewable energy systems on a wider scale and increasing taxes and fees on energy industries;
- 6) Promoting the development of Green Zones to clean up polluted commercial areas and create jobs;
- 7) Increase awareness about environmental racism and mitigate the impact of pollution on our communities;
- 8) Fight to overturn Prop 26, which redefines environmental impact fees and fines as "taxes" requiring a 2/3 legislative vote to implement.

3. What are your other top priorities, if elected?

- 1) Fight proposed state budget cuts to crucial services that serve low income and poor populations;
- 2) Support small business by reducing tax, fee and bureaucratic burdens on them. The majority of new jobs today are created by small businesses.
- 3) Implement a more progressive state tax policy that shifts existing tax burdens on the poor and middle income to the highest income levels;
- 4) Support clean election laws, more transparency in government, and a public financing option for elections;
- 5) Work to stop the criminalization of homelessness and protect the rights of all residents, regardless of their choice of shelter;
- 6) Expand light rail to include less expensive options like running lines down existing highways;
- 7) Stop the enormous expansion of the prison industry, which is now more than double what the state spends on environmental protection and consumer services combined.

4. With the recession/depression more people are becoming homeless. What would you do as a member of the Senate to provide housing, services and jobs for this population, and for the unemployed in general?

- 1) Fully support local job training programs, a shorter work week and job sharing;
- 2) Implement an expansion of tax incentives for green technology industries;
- 3) Increase the number and availability of small business and microloan programs;
- 4) Legislate equal pay for equal work;
- 5) Elimination of treaty provisions and financial incentives that encourage American-based employers to relocate in other countries;
- 6) Use vacant housing - whether at closed military bases, or housing being kept off the market by speculators or landlords delinquent in taxes - to shelter the homeless;
- 7) Build human-scale, low income housing and create a rent subsidy program for the poor;
- 8) Pursue more efficient use of our existing housing supply, such as home-sharing and cooperative conversions of existing dwellings;

5. Gov. Brown is proposing cuts that would adversely affect some of the poorest Californians, students and state workers, including \$1.7 billion from Medi-Cal, \$1.5 billion from the welfare-to-work program (CalWORKs), \$750 million from the Department of Developmental Services, \$500 million from the University of California, \$500 million from California State University, and \$308 million from the take-home pay of many state employees in the form of a 10 percent pay reduction. Will you support these cuts in the new state budget?

No. But I do advocate for more efficient and effective spending programs and a reduction in the overall level of waste by state government. But just cutting programs will not solve the crisis. Closing existing corporate tax loopholes, overturning/modifying Prop 13, and implementing a more progressive state tax policy are two major areas of reform required to potentially lessen the impact of the proposed cuts in state services. More specifically, I would advocate budget solutions that align with proposals forwarded by the Greens.

- 1) Conduct annual cost-effectiveness studies in state and local government agencies.
- 2) Foster and implement a more progressive tax policy that raises the state income tax for higher income people and reduces income taxes for low-wage workers, which will encourage people to seek employment rather than relying on public assistance.
- 3) Decrease the cap on the mortgage tax deduction in both federal and state income taxes.
- 4) Reinstate the renter's tax credit on the state income tax.
- 5) Discourage leveraged buyouts and mergers which extract working capital. Instead, we must promote community development and job creation.
- 6) Enact a Tobin tax on financial transactions across state borders and increase the gas tax to accurately reflect the true cost pricing and negative impacts of the automobile & petroleum industries.

6. If elected, will you establish an office in the Venice/Marina/Mar Vista area? Will you hold regular town halls to get input from your constituents?

Yes on both. And there would be free coffee.

7. Would you support or author a bill to amend the law to make it easier for a former city, such as Venice, to regain its cityhood by requiring a vote only within the boundaries of the former city (in this case, Venice)?

As an individual voter and Venice resident, I support Venice cityhood. As a state representative, I would support such an effort if it was determined that there was significant interest within the Venice

community to propose such legislation.

8. Do you support any other electoral reform such as public financing of elections, repeal of Prop. 14, instant runoff or proportional representation?

A primary motivation behind entering the race is to build awareness about and hopefully overturn CA Prop 14, which dramatically limits voter choice, violates candidate's rights, and effectively eliminates the possibility of 3rd party candidates advancing to a General Election. Public financing of elections should be an option available to all candidates. I also support Instant Runoff Voting, Single Transferable Voting, Preference Voting, and proportional representation systems over the current winner-take-all duopoly.

9. Do you support single payer health care in California, either by legislative action or an initiative petition?

Yes.

MARK LIPMAN

No Party
Mar Vista
Publisher/Community Organizer

1. Why should voters in Venice, specifically, support your candidacy?

Venice is a deep part of who I am. It is from my involvement and roots with the community of Venice that has led me to seek office – because I care deeply about what is happening here.

2. What are your top pro-environment priorities, if elected?

Solar energy – I want solar panels on every government building and I want those panels and all the parts made here in California – instead of China.

Water – Conservation is the key. We cannot choose between people's drinking water, agriculture, or protecting the environment – we need all three. So I suggest a good place to find a lot of water is at the golf courses.

Preservation – protecting what we still have, which locally means keeping Ballona Wetlands out of the hands of the developers.

3. What are your other top priorities, if elected?

My top priority is ending poverty. Other issues that I will focus on are Universal Healthcare, properly funding our schools and creating jobs, specifically in rebuilding our infrastructure.

4. With the recession/depression more people are becoming homeless. What would you do as a member of the Senate to provide housing, services and jobs for this population, and for the unemployed in general?

As we all know, there are more empty housing units than homeless people and that it costs us much more financially to keep people on the streets than to simply give them housing. One of my main

objectives is to pass a moratorium on homelessness, where we find a fair and equitable method of putting people in those empty units.

5. Gov. Brown is proposing cuts that would adversely affect some of the poorest Californians, students and state workers, including \$1.7 billion from Medi-Cal, \$1.5 billion from the welfare-to-work program (CalWORKs), \$750 million from the Department of Developmental Services, \$500 million from the University of California, \$500 million from California State University, and \$308 million from the take-home pay of many state employees in the form of a 10 percent pay reduction. Will you support these cuts in the new state budget?

No. I will not support cuts to our education and needed human services. I would instead work to put an end to the wasteful spending methods of our elected officials – that is where a lot of the money we need can be found.

6. If elected, will you establish an office in the Venice/Marina/Mar Vista area? Will you hold regular town halls to get input from your constituents?

Absolutely. This campaign is about all of us and our issues as progressives and community input is vital for us to find the necessary solutions to the problems we face.

7. Would you support or author a bill to amend the law to make it easier for a former city, such as Venice, to regain its cityhood by requiring a vote only within the boundaries of the former city (in this case, Venice)?

I am very familiar with this movement and am not opposed to it. However, to put a bill forward, the people of Venice, must first deliver to me either a petition with the required number of signatures (I believe – if not mistaken – the current law states 5,000), or an endorsement of cityhood, by public referendum with the VNC AND present a clear plan of just how a successful transition would take place.

8. Do you support any other electoral reform such as public financing of elections, repeal of Prop. 14, instant runoff or proportional representation?

All elections should be publicly financed – that’s the only way to keep them (and the candidates) clean. I do believe in proportional representation, which gives a much broader, equal voice to the people. Let’s though give Prop. 14 a chance – if I get elected (and with the way this race breaks down – I stand a good chance) it will be thanks to Prop. 14.

9. Do you support single payer health care in California, either by legislative action or an initiative petition?

Having experience Universal Healthcare first hand, while living in Europe, I can say without a doubt that it absolutely works and is a lot cheaper to manage than the Corporate Care we have today. Universal Healthcare is the only real solution.

KEVIN MCGURK

Democrat
Venice
Public Defense Lawyer

- 1) I currently live in Venice and have done so for the vast majority of my time in Los Angeles. I believe that gives me an edge in terms of relating to the specific problems this community faces. I'm also a deputy public defender by trade, so I have the opportunity to work with people from all walks of life on a daily basis. If the citizens of Venice are looking for someone to bring a fresh perspective to Sacramento to get things done, I'm it.
- 2) One priority would be to loudly support what Californians have already endorsed which is the immediate implementation of AB32. Suspension of this crucial environmental legislation is a step in the wrong direction. Other top priorities would be to set ambitious targets for renewable energy and to aggressively protect our oceans and beaches including but not limited to finding creative solutions to urban runoff.
- 3) To use our current perilous economic situation as an opportunity to implement systemic change that can spur job growth and eliminate wasteful spending. A place to start is our criminal justice system. We need to suspend the death penalty saving us \$1 billion in five years. We need to develop alternative sentences for non-violent offenders such as vocational and skills based "penalties" to bring recidivism down. We simply can't pay \$50,000 annually per inmate when crucial social services look at the axe.
- 4) Considering California holds roughly a quarter of the national homeless population I would demand that we are applying for every available federal dollar for assistance. I would also do whatever possible to expand access to affordable housing and improve coordination among agencies to maximize what funds are available to provide needed services.
- 5) Our current economic climate simply forces us to make cuts that make those of us who understand who they hurt cringe. But some cuts must be made. I would not support the stated cuts to higher education at the current number. It simply transfers costs to young adults and parents and is counterintuitive to emphasizing education to gain a competitive advantage. Any cut to state employees' pay should be commensurate to a cut in lawmakers pay.
- 6) It would be my strong preference to establish an office in the Venice/Marina/Mar Vista area. I will absolutely hold regular town halls in gain input from constituents. Constituent services is a primary responsibility of any elected representative and I pledge they will be carried out in an exceptional manner.
- 7) I wouldn't be prepared to do lend my support at this time simply because I'm not well versed enough on the issue. It would seem that anytime there is a relationship between two entities (in your hypothetical Venice and Los Angeles) both sides have an interest in potential separation. But I will certainly do more research on the issue in order to respond adequately to constituents' concerns.

8) I support the principle of publicly financed elections but I don't think it's feasible in the current economic climate. I'm also intrigued by the concept of instant runoff voting when compared to our current system of first past the post. I think instant runoff would lead in many instances to candidates being elected who had a higher level of support from a greater percentage of the electorate than our current system.

9) I support the concept of single payer health care. Considering practically every other industrialized country in the world has some form of it I'm not alone in that sentiment. The key would be how California could enact something like that within the current federal framework.

TED LIEU

Democrat

Torrance

Legislator

1. Why should voters in Venice, specifically, support your candidacy?

California's Senate is one of the best places to advance progressive values. From education to the environment, I want to help Californians who don't have a voice.

2. What are your top pro-environment priorities, if elected?

I will fight to protect our coastline and expand green job opportunities. That's why I have the endorsement of both the California League of Conservation Voters and the Sierra Club.

3. What are your other top priorities, if elected?

Protecting education funding must be a top priority. As a legislator, I have consistently voted to support budgets that protect education funding.

4. With the recession/depression more people are becoming homeless. What would you do as a member of the Senate to provide housing, services and jobs for this population, and for the unemployed in general?

Essential services for the needy have been cut to dangerous and inhumane levels. That's why I support more revenues to fund these services, healthcare and job training.

5. Gov. Brown is proposing cuts that would adversely affect some of the poorest Californians, students and state workers, including \$1.7 billion from Medi-Cal, \$1.5 billion from the welfare-to-work program (CalWORKs), \$750 million from the Department of Developmental Services, \$500 million from the University of California, \$500 million from California State University, and \$308 million from the take-home pay of many state employees in the form of a 10 percent pay reduction. Will you support these cuts in the new state budget?

There are no easy choices. Without competitive higher education, we lose our edge. Eviscerating social services programs only make pursuing economic opportunities more difficult. We must increase revenues.

6. If elected, will you establish an office in the Venice/Marina/Mar Vista area? Will you hold regular town halls to get input from your constituents?

The campaign has an office in Venice. If the state budget allows, I would open a state office in the Venice/Marina/Mar Vista area. I will continue to hold town halls.

7. Would you support or author a bill to amend the law to make it easier for a former city, such as

Venice, to regain its cityhood by requiring a vote only within the boundaries of the former city (in this case, Venice)?

As a former City Councilmember, I have always supported local control. As a State Senator, I would actively work with stakeholders to examine this issue.

8. Do you support any other electoral reform such as public financing of elections, repeal of Prop. 14, instant runoff or proportional representation?

I support a Clean Money system. I was a co-author of Proposition 15, which would have created California’s first publicly financed election for the office of Secretary of State.

9. Do you support single payer health care in California, either by legislative action or an initiative petition?

Yes. I have coauthored every Single Payer bill in the Legislature.

JEFF E. FORTINI

Republican
Hawthorne
Retired CBP Officer

1. Why should voters in Venice, specifically, support your candidacy?

I believe that this is natural extension of my career in the Federal Government. My career was about service to the American people, service to the public, I feel I still have something to contribute. I have always been a servant of the people.

2. What are your top pro-environment priorities, if elected?

Maintain our pristine coastline, clean water and more green technology

3. What are your other top priorities, if elected?

We need to ensure our children are educated; ensure our educational funding is properly allocated and eliminate the duplication of administrative functions. We can never forget that our children are our future.

We need to give businesses a reason to do business in California, as such; we need to stimulate job growth, create more jobs, enable small businesses to grow through incentives, thus reducing the high unemployment rate here in our state.

We need to protect the rights and the essential services for our senior community ensuring that they are not excluded from the benefits that they worked so hard to attain.

But most importantly, we need to live within a realistic state budget. We need a budget that meets the needs of all Californians and not just the privileged few. We need to achieve this by reviewing the entire budget in order to identify and eliminate unnecessary expenditures of public funds while still maintaining critical services to the people of California.

4. With the recession/depression more people are becoming homeless. What would you do as a member of the Senate to provide housing, services and jobs for this population, and for the unemployed in general?

We need to take care of Californian’s first by finding funds to help assist in job training, vocational skills and grants for affordable low cost housing. We need to look all avenues for funds to make this happen.

5. . Gov. Brown is proposing cuts that would adversely affect some of the poorest Californians, students and state workers, including \$1.7 billion from Medi-Cal, \$1.5 billion from the welfare-to-work program (CalWORKs), \$750 million from the Department of Developmental Services, \$500 million from the University of California, \$500 million from California State University, and \$308 million from the take-home pay of many state employees in the form of a 10 percent pay reduction. Will you support these cuts in the new state budget?

I believe that the funding is there to continue these services without these cuts. What needs to be done is a top to bottom review of the wasteful spending practices of our State Legislature. That is where reform needs to begin.

6. If elected, will you establish an office in the Venice/Marina/Mar Vista area? Will you hold regular town halls to get input from your constituents?

I have not decided where I would establish an office as of yet. I would have regular town halls to listen to the concerns of my constituents. In my career, I have always maintained an open door policy.

7. Would you support or author a bill to amend the law to make it easier for a former city, such as Venice, to regain its cityhood by requiring a vote only within the boundaries of the former city (in this case, Venice)?

I could not say one way or the other until I had time to examine the issue and determine if it would be cost effective and in the best interests of the citizens of the proposed city.

8 Do you support any other electoral reform such as public financing of elections, repeal of Prop. 14, instant runoff or proportional representation?

I believe that the Supreme Court made the wrong decision regarding corporate financing of elections and needs to be revisited. I think that a person should be able to participate in the entire electoral process regardless of party affiliation.

9. Do you support single payer health care in California, either by legislative action or an initiative petition?

Yes, I think that it is time to bring the cost of health care down and affordable for all Americans.

JAMES P. THOMPSON

Republican

Lomita

Attorney/Housing Provider

1. Why should voters in Venice, specifically, support your candidacy?

Californians enacted term limits for a reason. We don't want career politicians who get entrenched with special interest money, constantly seeking higher political office while term after term creating a 28 billion dollar deficit and a 500 billion dollar state pension liability. My opponent, termed out Assemblyman Ted Lieu, recently stated that his priorities are "environment, mortgage reform and transportation." I disagree with his priorities.

2. What are your top pro-environment priorities, if elected?

The most urgent issues are (1) jobs (2) the \$28 billion deficit (3) \$500 billion in state pensions and (4)

reducing the size of government. These problems are caused by state over taxation and overspending.

3. What are your other top priorities, if elected?

I am opposed to extending "temporary" income, car and sales tax increases or any tax hike at all. Businesses are leaving California to create jobs in Texas and Arizona where taxes are lower. We need tax relief! Cutting taxes, especially sales tax, will make California products less expensive for everyone and let Californians keep more of our money to spend. Increased demand for California products will result in more jobs for Californians. More employed Californians means more taxpayers and more revenue to help reduce the deficit.

Our \$500 billion state pension liability must be immediately addressed by changing the ruinous pension formulas. California must lobby to change the federal bankruptcy law to allow states to file for bankruptcy protection. But that change is unlikely. Alternatively, California might divest itself of these obligations and requiring that these plans incorporate. Thereafter these pension plans are able to seek protection and reorganization in bankruptcy court. This is the shameful situation that our elected officials have gotten us into!

4. With the recession/depression more people are becoming homeless. What would you do as a member of the Senate to provide housing, services and jobs for this population, and for the unemployed in general?

I own a small business that provides housing for the disabled and very low-income families. As a citizen, I'm already privately addressing this urgent need -not just talking about it. But I can't grow my business to create more jobs and provide more housing due to high taxation.

It is not the Government's duty to create jobs or to provide housing. Taxpayers pay for government housing projects and government jobs. It is the government's duty to encourage the private sector by creating an attractive environment for business, housing and job creation. This will be accomplished only by cutting taxes to retain businesses that are currently leaving for states with lower sales and business taxes. California ranks near the bottom in business friendliness. High taxes are devastating our economy and strangling our businesses ability to create more housing and jobs.

5. Gov. Brown is proposing cuts that would adversely affect some of the poorest Californians, students and state workers, including \$1.7 billion from Medi-Cal, \$1.5 billion from the welfare-to-work program (CalWORKs), \$750 million from the Department of Developmental Services, \$500 million from the University of California, \$500 million from California State University, and \$308 million from the take-home pay of many state employees in the form of a 10 percent pay reduction. Will you support these cuts in the new state budget?

Yes. I support these proposed cuts by our new Governor with the exception to cuts to higher education. The deficit can be eliminated by cutting entire state commissions, agencies and departments where those services are either unnecessary or already being provided by the local and federal governments and the private sector (more jobs). Our Governor & I will eliminate the massive waste and fraud in welfare to work, stop EBT for fast food, cut prison guard six figure salaries and overtime, day care in courthouses etc., etc. The list of waste is massive.

6. If elected, will you establish an office in the Venice/Marina/Mar Vista area? Will you hold regular town halls to get input from your constituents?

Absolutely. I'd love it. As a Superior Court Judge Pro Tem for over 15 years, I have learned to actively seek out all opinions, arguments and facts, fully and fairly before making an informed

decision.

7. Would you support or author a bill to amend the law to make it easier for a former city, such as Venice, to regain its cityhood by requiring a vote only within the boundaries of the former city (in this case, Venice)?

Yes. I fully support Governor Brown's efforts to return more control and responsibility to local governments. Allowing Venice to become a Municipal Corporation will certainly further this worthy goal.

8. Do you support any other electoral reform such as public financing of elections, repeal of Prop. 14, instant runoff or proportional representation?

Yes. I support further restriction on the amount of individual & corporate contributions to political campaigns. However, if individuals, businesses and corporate unions wish to advertise on their own that's a private free speech right for the individual union members and shareholders to decide.

9. Do you support single payer health care in California, either by legislative action or an initiative petition?

No. I do not support any legislative action, initiative or law that would force Americans to buy any product. I believe in individual freedom, liberty and personal responsibility.