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HISPANAS ORGANIZED for POLITICAL EQUALITY
Question 1: Vision for Los Angeles

What is your vision for Los Angeles? Why are you running for Mayor?

KAREN BASS RESPONSE Q. 1

Los Angeles is a city with limitless potential. We can and should be a model nationwide for how a city can treat all its residents with dignity and respect. We must end this homelessness crisis both by getting Angelenos off the street and into long-term affordable housing, and by preventing future homelessness by keeping our current renters and homeowners safely housed and ensuring that particularly vulnerable populations, like graduating foster youth and the formerly incarcerated, are given tools to help them succeed. Our streets, in every neighborhood, must be and feel safer – we do that by making sure we have officers available and allowing them to focus on stopping and investigating crime right now while building an infrastructure of co-responders to help address the systemic issues that lead to future crime. Los Angeles needs to be a city that works for all Angelenos.

I am running because I believe our city can do better and be better, and that I can bring about the far-reaching changes we need. Throughout my life, I have been a community organizer, non-profit executive, nurse, and Physician Assistant — experience that is more relevant than ever. In 1990, in response to the crack-cocaine and gang violence crisis that was gripping Los Angeles, I founded Community Coalition, a community-based social justice organization in South LA that empowers the Latino and African-American communities across generations to address substance abuse, poverty and crime. I can build coalitions of city, county, state, and federal allies and together we can cut through the red tape and make Los Angeles the city we know it can be.

RICK CARUSO RESPONSE Q. 1

I am running for Mayor because I believe Los Angeles can once again be a place where people can achieve their dreams. Issues like homelessness and personal safety are hindering economic growth and the people most negatively impacted are disadvantaged communities. People are living in fear of losing their job, not being able to support their family, or navigating a public transit system that isn’t safe. I believe we can have a city government that can work for the people of Los Angeles, where city services actually provide support for residents, where parents feel safe sending their kids to school, where people feel they can get a job that pays a living wage, and where women’s reproductive freedoms are secure. We have a choice if we want to continue on the same dismal course or vote for change and get on a trajectory that works for all Angelenos.

At over 50% of the population, Latinos for generations have worked hard to build this great city. I believe the community needs a more prominent voice in City Hall. It has been a priority for my campaign to connect with the community by sending staff into Latino neighborhoods and communicate in both English and Spanish. I hope this outreach speaks volumes to the importance I place on Latino communities and I will extend that emphasis into office.
RICK CARUSO RESPONSE Q. 1 CONT.

I expect a deeper relationship that just asking for your vote during a campaign season, I want the Latino community right there with me overcoming challenges and restoring hope.

Latinos are on the front line of every public policy issue - from transportation and education, to healthcare and business opportunity. It’s why I’ve signed the Latino Equity and Diversity Initiative’s pledge to appoint Latino and Latina leaders, listen to their counsel, and prioritize issues that impact them. I know HOPE has incredible training programs for women, and I want your graduates as leaders in my Administration.

I made the choice to be a Democrat because I believe in equity, opportunity, second chances and providing support for our diverse communities. These are fundamental principles that have guided my life and I know working with fellow Democrats we can make sure all people are equal under the law.

I’m an optimist, and I believe every problem has a solution. It’s how I built my business. People have told me things couldn’t be done my entire career; so I brought people together, found areas of agreement, looked at challenges from a different perspective - and with a great team accomplished great things. I have the experience to do the same for Los Angeles.

Question 2: Sexual Harassment

In and out of the workplace sexual harassment and assault is unacceptable. We all deserve to work in a safe environment as a basic human right and so that we can close inequities and strive for economic and political parity. An environment that allows or turns a blind eye to sexual harassment is promoting a culture of abuse, fear, and silence and is detrimental to women’s livelihoods and our democracy.

- As Mayor, what specific actions will you take to safeguard women and men working in and outside City Hall?
- What efforts/legislation have you been able to implement throughout your career to create safe work environments?

KAREN BASS RESPONSE Q. 2

As Mayor, as in all my offices over the years, there will be no place for sexual harassment or discrimination. I will create a culture of inclusiveness, hold managers responsible for creating safe and inclusive workplaces, ensure that the city responds thoroughly to any report of sexual harassment or assault, and hold those who commit these acts responsible.

Throughout my life, I have fought against wage discrimination, inadequate benefits, and inappropriate workplace misconduct. In Congress for example, I sponsored the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019, which was fundamentally about preventing and responding to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.
Unfortunately, the next Mayor will have to undertake a tremendous task of rebuilding a culture of trust in City Hall. Leadership in City Hall should be modeled on transparency, consistency, and accountability. The City of Los Angeles does have policies and training in place intended to inform the various ways harassment takes place and how to report the harassment, but does this training even work? Is the City holding itself accountable by assessing the success of this training and adequately safeguarding employees from harassment?

Given the lack of trust in City Hall today, my efforts to address sexual harassment would involve the following:

- Undertake an audit of the City’s Sexual Harassment training. Survey City Employees, civil service and exempt employees, and contract employees to discern whether the training is useful, if they have experienced or witnessed harassment, have experienced the reporting process and what they learned from the experience. Perhaps they chose not to report. If so, we are obligated to understand why that is and how to address it.
- Establish an employee-led committee to review and update the City’s sexual harassment policy, training and reporting processes.
- Prepare an annual report that discloses and summarizes the number of sexual harassment trainings held, reports filed, and the corrective actions that were taking, including written warnings, suspensions, and dismissals, all while ensuring employee privacy.
- Engage an outside agency or organization that is specialized in auditing sexual harassment programs to oversee sexual harassment reports to ensure that the Personnel Department is similarly being held accountable for its ability to fairly, consistently, and urgently address these workplace violations.

Throughout my career, I’ve learned that women make the best advisors. In the early days of my career, it was through the urging, support, and astuteness of women that I was able to take the leap in starting my own business. And as the business grew, it was evident to me that having a safe work environment allowed the women in my company to do their job well. It is no accident then, that I named Corinne Verdery to be my CEO.

I believe in surrounding myself with talented and dedicated people. As the Chairman of the Board of Trustees at USC I recruited Wanda Austin as President of USC and subsequently recruited Carol Folt. At my company, beyond my direct teams, female entrepreneurs have found success as tenants and vendors at the properties I’ve built. In fact, over half of the tenants at Palisades are women-owned businesses.

I will also add that it is through my experience with Operation Progress and other organizations, such as Para Los Ninos, that I understood the value of safety, reliability, and consistency in fostering an environment conducive to learning, growing, and achieving success. I’ve engaged the best organizational and legal advisors to develop all of our workplace policies, including sexual harassment at the company. I’m grateful to add that the executives in the company are great role models and advocates for promoting a healthy workplace culture.
Question 3: Latina & Women's Representation

Fostering a more representative democracy is at the center of HOPE’s mission of economic and political parity. We actively seek appointment opportunities for Latinas to serve especially in underrepresented fields. The City of Los Angeles’ population is comprised of 50.5% women, 23.45% of whom are Latinas.

- As Mayor, what specific plans do you have to create a framework for equitable appointments? How will you support women in seeking and serving on boards and commissions?
- Are you willing to pledge that 60% of your appointments will be women and that all commissions have women representatives?

KAREN BASS RESPONSE Q. 3

I believe it is critically important that my staff is representative of the diversity of Los Angeles, which is why our campaign team includes diversity across gender, race, sexual orientation, religion and geography, including Latinas serving in key leadership roles on our Field and Communications teams.

As Mayor, I will similarly be committed to creating an administration that reflects the diversity of our city. That commitment includes appointing Latina leaders in the Mayor’s Office as General Managers, Commissioners, Trustees and Appointees of Governing Bodies, and any other position that are important in governance. And, as I’ve always done, I will look forward to partnering with leading Latina/o organizations such as HOPE to gather suggestions of who those appointments should be, and develop and invest in a leadership pipeline for Latinas (and Latinos) across all levels of city government.

RICK CARUSO RESPONSE Q. 3

First and foremost, I am giving a firm commitment to appoint general managers and commissioners in a manner reflective of the rich cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity of the City. Latinos are responsible for the fastest growing economy in the country, responsible for an average of 38,610 workers a year in the LA region- that’s 84% of LA’s labor growth. The LA Latino GDP ranked 8th in the world in 2018. There is tremendous promise and value in what Latinos have contributed to this City and its economy. At the same time, homelessness amongst Latinos is growing at an exponential rate; over 220% since 2015, with 65% of Latina-led households identified as rent-burdened.

Despite incredible strides, there is tremendous opportunity to improve the quality of life of Latinas in this City. It would be an abject failure on my part if I did not recognize the value of Latina leadership in my administration. Beyond that, I am well aware of the value that it provides to the youth of this City to see people who look like them, and that grew up like them, in leadership roles.
RICK CARUSO RESPONSE Q. 3 CONT.

Are you willing to pledge that 60% of your appointments will be women and that all commissions have women representatives?

YES. As I mentioned, women will serve prominently as General Managers, on Boards and Commissions, structurally ensuring women’s issues and perspectives are central to policy development. I signed a 5 point pledge that goes beyond promising high level appointments. I want more Latinos to gain access to contracting opportunities with the City and commit to regularly auditing the process to ensure that they reflect the diversity of the City. I will prioritize contracting opportunities for infrastructure projects in Latino communities, commit to equitable pay and representation in the City’s workforce, and I commit to working with the LA Latino Equity and Diversity Initiative to make this happen.

Question 4: Public Safety

Women often experience violence at the hand of a domestic partner. Undocumented children and women are victims of sex trafficking rings. There is a lack of faith in the police force, and the criminal justice system overall to solve crimes without prejudice or racism.

- On day one, what tone will you set with the LAPD to ensure they protect and serve all communities?
- As Mayor, what policies will you advocate for to tackle sex trafficking?

KAREN BASS RESPONSE Q. 4

As Mayor of Los Angeles, I firmly believe that the Mayor’s most important responsibility is to keep Angelenos safe. On Day 1, I am going to set a tone of equity, inclusivity and accountability when it comes to keeping ALL Angelenos safe.

I fought successfully to protect victims of domestic violence and human trafficking through my sponsorship of the Violence Against Women Act and authored the Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act. I will continue to lead that fight as Mayor. I will implement a comprehensive approach to detect and prevent human trafficking and domestic violence, by ensuring that LAPD has a robust corps of specialized investigators who are experienced in sex trafficking and forced labor investigations, and that those investigators work in close partnership with community-based organizations. To effectively reach survivors and put an end to human trafficking in our city, we must employ evidence-driven and community-based public health approaches to facilitate trust and long-term recovery for survivors.

I plan to prioritize a community based approach to get victims the help they need. I will prioritize funding for the City’s Human Trafficking Task Force and work alongside our Council President to ensure this is included in the city’s budget while I am Mayor.
KAREN BASS RESPONSE Q. 4 CONT.

As Mayor, I will also elevate hate crime enforcement and prevention within the LAPD and, recognizing that many hate crimes go unreported, will work with communities and lead a citywide public education campaign to build trust and awareness. Los Angeles recorded the most hate crimes among large U.S. cities last year, posting a 71% jump in incidents – including a steep rise in anti-immigrant violence. Hate crimes have no place in the City of Angels. I will vigorously protect the right of every Angeleno, regardless of their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or immigration status, to live safely and freely in our city.

I have spent my adult life working on police reform and will continue to do so if elected mayor – by focusing on how to safeguard our communities, preventing the conditions that lead to arrests, and rehabilitating people. I will look to the police reforms proposed in the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, which I sponsored, and recommendations made by President Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, so that community concerns over officer-involved shootings are addressed. While we do need police to respond to and help prevent crime, policing requires accountability, civilian oversight, and zero tolerance for harmful policing practices, like racial profiling and excessive force, that actively undermine public safety and community trust in law enforcement.

RICK CARUSO RESPONSE Q. 4

As Mayor I plan to make safety for all Angelenos my number one priority from Day One. As President of the Police Commission I worked to increase public safety, we reduced crime and fought corruption. I took leadership of the LAPD during a period of turmoil when the department was operating under a federal consent decree. Under my leadership we were able to restore public trust in the LAPD across neighborhoods. In partnership with LAPD officers, City leadership and community members I oversaw a 30% reduction in crime, fought for community policing and police accountability. I believe we need to invest in more training, both to reduce unnecessary use of force incidents and to eliminate any elements of unconscious bias. I will work to reduce response times because when an emergency strikes we want all our first responders to arrive quickly and save lives. We need to foster a culture that respects and shows gratitude to our first responders, along with a constant and firm demand for integrity, fair treatment and professionalism.

Community-based policing is the best way to increase safety and restore trust in LAPD. I will increase community-based policing through hiring more senior lead officers who will work hand-in-hand with community groups and neighborhood leaders to prevent crime. These partnerships between LAPD and communities build trust and ensure each neighborhood has police officers that reflect their values and demographics. Police officers who know their neighborhoods will also help fight homelessness, intervening before community members become homeless and ensuring that encampments don’t claim sidewalks, parks and other public space.

We also must address the link between mental health and crime. The data doesn’t lie: we know that those suffering from mental health and addiction are more likely to commit crimes and are more likely to be victims of crimes. According to publicly available LAPD crime data, there is a trend of rising crime involving the mentally ill in the City of Los Angeles. Crimes involving the mentally ill have increased 338% from 2010 to 2018.
RICK CARUSO RESPONSE Q. 4 CONT.

As Mayor, what policies will you advocate for to tackle sex trafficking?

In order to address complicated criminal enterprises like sex trafficking schemes, we need significant and comprehensive coordination from law enforcement and institutions of justice. Task forces such as the one which currently exists at the city of Los Angeles that create partnerships between the city, county, state, and federal governments as well as non profit organizations doing the work to eradicate trafficking are an essential tool. Task forces have the ability to accomplish many goals in support of victims including: service delivery, executing joint investigations and prosecutions, and building out training and outreach programs. I will listen to the victims and the experts.

Question 5: Small & Micro-Business

To encourage entrepreneurial growth, HOPE advises that more government and corporate investments are needed in Latina and minority women-owned micro and small businesses. Favorable investment strategies include targeted increase in public-private contracts and cooperating with financial institutions to facilitate access to capital. Ensuring the success of Latina and minority women-owned benefits the City greatly, and thus we advise the next Mayor, ensures that the City’s procurement policies and systems are equitable and fair.

- As Mayor, how will you prioritize and promote investment in Latina and other minority women-owned businesses
- What efforts will you make to ensure that the $4.5 Billion per year the City spends on procuring goods and services include women run businesses?

KAREN BASS RESPONSE Q. 5

It is vitally important to me that Los Angeles embrace and support Latina and minority-owned micro and small businesses. If I have the honor of being elected as Mayor of Los Angeles, I will appoint a Deputy Mayor for Small Businesses who will ensure we have an Outreach Team that advocates for and liaises with our small business community, ensuring we are listening to the specific needs of Latina and women of color small business owners.

I will also work to increase access to capital and technical assistance, cut burdensome regulations, and promote new opportunities for underrepresented businesses and entrepreneurs. I plan to hire Procurement Navigators who will be dedicated to helping small businesses – and especially women-owned businesses – navigate the city’s procurement process. I will streamline the process – and expand eligibility – for small and minority-owned businesses to receive certification with the city, and partner with community organizations to assist small businesses through the process – but I know certification doesn’t mean much if small businesses never win city bids. I will explore innovative techniques like unbundling city contracts to ensure that more minority-owned businesses have a shot at winning those bids.
Small businesses will always be at the table when decisions are made that impact their operations. Small businesses should expect a timely consideration of permit and licenses. Small businesses should be able to get off the ground and open without needing to hire lobbyists. Small businesses will be considered when city policy is being developed and economic analysis of impacts will be done to inform policy decisions. Small businesses can rely on the city for a clean and safe place to do business. Small businesses can rely on the city for a clean and safe place to do business.

We need new tools to tackle the challenges LA is facing. The first thing we need is a Small Business Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights will ensure:

- Small businesses will always be at the table when decisions are made that impact their operations.
- Small businesses should expect a timely consideration of permit and licenses.
- Small businesses should be able to get off the ground and open without needing to hire lobbyists.
- Small businesses will be considered when city policy is being developed and economic analysis of impacts will be done to inform policy decisions.
- Small businesses can rely on the city for a clean and safe place to do business.

My plan also includes centralizing support for small businesses by streamlining regulations and recalibrating the city’s business processes. I will create a city-wide procurement office to increase opportunity for small businesses by breaking up big contracts and increase transparency.

I also want to highlight street vendors. Street vendors are entrepreneurs who work hard to take care of their families and make their dreams come true, often expanding food options in underinvested communities. When I am Mayor, I’ll introduce a microloan program to buy carts. The program would be developed in partnership with vendors and community-based organizations that can provide technical assistance. Microloans like this provide a financial break to the communities who need it.
Business issues and women’s issues are interconnected. We need to break down barriers so women can gain economic equity in the public and private sector. Whenever a crisis hits, from COVID to inflation to personal safety– women bear a disproportionate impact and this ultimately limits their options. I worry about the panic that must set in when women are forced out of the paid workforce and the financial uncertainty they face, all while still having to be responsible for the “Invisible Labor” that rarely gets compensated like caregiving for their loved ones.

For instance, LAUSD afterschool programs do not serve all the parents who need them, leaving many parents without needed afterschool care. When you couple the cost imposed on women for “Invisible Labor” with the fact that women in the workforce are compensated less than men, this double penalty strains families, communities and the economy.

This year March 15 marked how far into the year women must work to earn what men earned in the previous year, underscoring how women must work longer for the same amount of pay. And for Women of Color, it’s much longer – May 3, 2022 marks the date for Asian Americans, September 21st for Black Women, and December 8 for Latinas. Latinas must work 21 months to match what a man made the previous year.

That’s why I am excited to launch my plan to strengthen and support the needs of women in the workforce, including the key job creators - business owners.

I’ve evaluated major projects as part of the Coliseum Commission and at USC, so I know what to look for and how to hold people accountable. I will address discrepancies in city contracting by focusing on access to capital and increase women-owned businesses as prime contractors.

To make progress you need to start with data, so one of my first actions as Mayor will be to audit for a baseline of public and private sector figures to drive accountability. We need to see audits of previously stated goals and have an analysis of women’s career tracks in city departments.

Los Angeles should be a place that rolls out the red carpet for businesses of all sizes, and makes it easy to not just start, but grow dreams. I want everyone to succeed – that’s why I want to be Mayor.