

***SAN DIEGO ALLIANCE for ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER AMERICANS
& FILIPINO AMERICAN CAUCUS OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY***

2008 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for your interest in the San Diego Asian Pacific Islander American community. Please answer each question in 250 words or less. Brief answers are satisfactory.

Please note: your questionnaire will be posted on our website, www.sdalliance.org, for members to review.

CANDIDATE/CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

- 1.) Candidate name: **Sherri S. Lightner**
- 2.) Campaign address: **8316 Clairemont Mesa Blvd., Suite 203
San Diego, California 92111**
- 3.) Office sought: **San Diego City Council**

Legislative district, if appropriate: **District 1**
- 4.) Are you the incumbent: **No (open seat)**
- 5.) Campaign website: **www.SherriLightner.org**
- 6.) Campaign email: **Campaign@SherriLightner.org**
- 7.) Campaign phone: **858-454-4764**
- 8.) Campaign manager: **Jesse Mays**

PERSONAL INFORMATION

9.) Are you a member of an Asian American (including West, Central, North, East, South, Southeast, and East Asian) or Pacific Islander organization? No

10.) If yes, please list your affiliations: N/A

Please limit your answers to no more than 250 words:

11.) What makes you the most qualified person for office?

As a mechanical engineer, I know how to assess issues in detail as well as by the whole picture. As a small business owner, I have real experience with budgeting and know how to make tough financial decisions. And as a community leader, I have kept access to our beaches open to the public and led the charge to keep our streets and beaches free of paid parking.

For the last decade, I have been very active in the District 1 community, serving on my local town council as President, on the boards of planning associations and my local historical society, and working as a member or leader of numerous other community groups.

My community work has taught me a lot about our City—how it is run and how it should be run. I believe our neighborhoods should no longer be ignored. We have a right to a city government that ensures public participation and works for all of us. We have a right to a city government we can trust—one with restored fiscal integrity that provides the neighborhood services that are essential to our quality of life.

12.) Why seek support from the Asian Pacific Islander community? 78

The Asian Pacific Islander and Filipino communities are an important part of the societal fabric of our communities and are spread throughout District 1. Were it not for the range of San Diego's international communities, cultures, and ethnicities, our city would not only be culturally impoverished (such as the loss of the spectacular festival held by PIFA at Crown Point this past September), but our businesses, high tech and telecommunications industries, and biotechnology firms would be far less successful than they have been.

On a personal note, several members of my husband's family have or currently reside on Guam, and we actually spent several years raising our nephews and nieces. It was also around this time that I was a member of the Scripps Mesa United Methodist Church, where I had my first taste of choir and Bible Study in Tagalog

13.) If elected, what are your top priorities during your term?

- ?? Engage residents with public outreach programs and in-District office hours to foster an ongoing, continuous, and honest dialogue with communities and to foster participatory government.
- ?? Put neighborhoods first by demanding robust Fire and Police protection, fixing streets, keeping parks and libraries open, and listening to the actual wishes of residents.
- ?? Apply fiscal discipline to ensure that the City lives within its means without placing further burdens on taxpayers or reducing City services, and to regain control of the growing pension debt.

- ?? Preserve our Quality of Life by accounting for such cumulative impacts as traffic and overdevelopment, and never, ever, compromising our beaches, coastline, parks, or open space.
- ?? Plan for the future by encouraging Green industries and technologies, creating jobs and preventing our children from being saddled with our debts.
- ?? Restore citizen trust in City Hall by not only following the above, but also treating the Public's concerns with respect and sincerity.

14.) What distinguishes your priorities and goals from the other candidates?

I know that change cannot be achieved with a single magic bullet or shortcut—it requires lots of hard work, attention to detail, and adherence to the processes, rules, laws, and codes that govern our city, state, and country. Demonizing segments of our community or stoking the fears of others, while an easy political ploy, is not constructive to solving the problems we face.

My support has come from thousands of small donations from residents across District 1— everyday people like you and me, not fat cat developers. Even while running my campaign, I have championed the wishes of residents from across San Diego and stood up for important issues. You have only to look to your neighbors to know where my loyalties lie.

I will run my Council office as I run my campaign: I will focus on the issues and the public good. I believe that performance is a reflection of character. I do not stoop to half-truths, inaccuracies, “gotcha” moments, or smear tactics that other campaigns employ; likewise, none of these practices will have any place in my Council office. I will represent my constituents with honor, respect, integrity, and principle, and offer honest, thorough answers to questions so that voters know where I stand and why.

That, I believe, is how one builds *true* trust in leadership.

15.) How have you in the past and how will you in the future used your position to expand the presence and influence of Asian Pacific Islanders in public policy and politics?

A cornerstone of my campaign has always been to make the political process a participatory one. It is important that the public—including the API community—become part of the system, rather than a bystander to the business of decision-making. “Transparency” is a term used often by those running for office, but it implies only a view from the sidelines. The people of San Diego deserve an open and honest dialogue with their representatives. They also deserve to be heard. Too often, our leaders have treated residents with arrogance and disrespect. I will change that.

Communication and accessibility are key to making this happen. I am committed to community outreach, regular and frank discussions with community organizations and planning groups, as well as respectful, truthful answers to even the toughest of questions. Difficult decisions sometimes create bitter divides, and not everyone will agree with decisions I make, but my door will always be open, and I will strive to clearly

explain my reasons for any conclusion I reach so that every resident of District 1 will know where I stand.

16.) What have you done that demonstrates your commitment to and effectiveness in promoting Asian Pacific Islander interests (and if you have not contributed, please discuss any area(s) where you could make a contribution &/or improve the current condition)?

My approach to actively communicate with community groups during my term would not be limited to just local planning groups and town councils. The API community stretches through many different neighborhoods in San Diego; likewise concerns and issues may traverse geographical boundaries and may not be picked up through traditional channels. Providing a voice at City Hall means more than just reacting to complaints that have grown so large that they must finally be dealt with at the City level—it means listening to and following concerns within the community as they arise, and keeping them in mind when considering proposals that have even an indirect relation. That is why reaching out is so important and one of my top priorities.

17.) In a difficult budget year, how would you prioritize raising taxes and cutting public services?

Our city is in the shape it is in because of mismanagement, waste, and failed priorities. Sweetheart deals, inattention to detail, and a lack of political courage have cost the City millions. Restoring our city's financial integrity will take a lot of work, and—I'll be honest—we will need to make some tough choices. At the same time, it is important to remember that government's purpose is to serve the people, not the other way around.

Being elected is not a blank check to spend taxpayer money. We need to live within our means, our budget must be balanced, and we need to know where our money is going. As a City Councilmember, it would be my fiduciary duty to say no to bad deals and unnecessary projects. I will go through the budget, line by line, to cut wasteful spending and prioritize our city's spending, ensuring that essential services such as fire, police, water, and sewer are fully accounted for before all others.

Raising taxes is not an option in these trying financial times. Adding an additional burden on people already just trying to scrape by might actually *decrease* City revenue by pushing more folks into foreclosure and bankruptcy. Along these lines, private party bonds, which only defer the cost to taxpayers, should only be used as a last resort. We need to get out of debt, not add to it. We need to be financially responsible now, not beggar our children and grandchildren for years to come.

18.) Due to periods of drought, the impending water shortages will have a drastic affect on small business and San Diego residents' quality of life. What are your plans to help meet the demand for water resources?

Voluntary conservation measures have only taken us so far. Our population continues to grow while our sources of potable water do not. Until we figure out how to address this

fundamental problem, we should try everything we can to use what resources we have more efficiently.

Mandatory water restrictions should be imposed only if we are willing to place a moratorium on any increase in the number of dwelling units in the City of San Diego, and cannot—and should never—be used as a long-term solution.

19.) Foreclosures affect the whole community, with consequences like lack of property tax contribution, displaced families and potential blight. What solutions do you propose to address the housing crisis?

The two best ways to counter the ravages of the financial crisis on homeowners throughout San Diego are to provide some measure of protection of what people already own and as well as a means for them to maintain that ownership.

To maintain property values and combat blight, the beginning outline of a structure for a proposed Land Bank seems to hold quite a bit of promise. I hope that further details, as they are fleshed out, will be as encouraging.

The second, and most important, solution is to encourage 21st-century industries such as biotechnology and so-called “green” technologies such as solar and wind power, fresh water alternatives, and marine utilization. To compete in the national—and increasingly global—economy, we must look to the future and lay the groundwork for what it will bring. Even as biotechnology continues to explode, other research fields as disparate as information technology, robotics, and nanotechnology might be lured to our city through the appeal of potential crossover applications. An important part of encouraging new industry is to partner with our institutions of higher learning—most notably UCSD and SDSU—for not only raising and attracting educated, knowledgeable, and brilliant minds, but also in helping to form the solid and stable base necessary to generate and maintain new industries and fresh businesses.

The ultimate goal is to improve our quality of life, create jobs, increase our self-sustainability, and lay a foundation that will pay dividends well into the future.

20.) What is your position on constructing a new Charger stadium in San Diego?

While I recognize the important economic impact and prestige San Diego receives by hosting the San Diego Chargers, it would be irresponsible to commit any City resources—either by preferential rates, guarantees, or real estate giveaways—to any one particular private enterprise, even in the best of financial times. Unfortunately, the City finds itself in the financial mess that is in because of far too many special favors granted by our past public representatives.

21.) Have you failed to vote in any national, state, legislative general elections or statewide ballot proposition elections in the past five years? If yes, why?

No. It would be a shame to waste such a glorious privilege that too many in this world do not have.

22.) Do you have plans to seek higher office? If so, what office and when do you plan to run?

I am not, by nature, a politician. I have no ambitions to use a term on City Council as a stepstool to higher office. Even as recently as fifteen months ago, I never even thought I would throw my hat in the ring. But our crumbling infrastructure, our dwindling City services, the increased pressure to change—even obliterate—neighborhoods in the name of progress, and the deaf ear that has been turned to us from City Hall changed my mind. I am running from my own personal conviction that San Diegans deserve a better and more responsive government.

Please list any endorsements you have received:

(Partial list, for a more, please visit my website at www.SherriLightner.org)

United States Congresswoman Susan Davis
United States Congressman Bob Filner
Former United States Congresswoman Lynn Schenk
California State Senator Christine Kehoe
Former California State Senator Dede Alpert
California State Assemblymember Lori Saldaña
Former California State Assemblymember Howard Wayne
San Diego City Councilmember Toni Atkins
San Diego City Councilmember Donna Frye
San Diego City Councilmember Ben Hueso
San Diego City Councilmember Tony Young
San Diego School Board Member Sheila Jackson
Former SD School Board Member Frances O'Neill Zimmerman

San Diego City Firefighters
San Diego Police Officers Association
Sierra Club (San Diego Chapter)
League of Conservation Voters (San Diego County)
Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley
San Diego Municipal Golfers Alliance (SDMGA)