



## Candidate Questionnaire

### 1. **General Information**

Candidate Name:

Gail Pellerin

Office Sought:

California's 28<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

Proposed Ballot Designation:

Retired County Clerk  
(Or Occupation Listing)

Campaign Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 4100  
Santa Cruz, CA 95063

Candidate/Body Person Cell Phone:

Plasha Will: (831) 521-5840

Candidate Email Address:

[gail@gailpellerinforassembly.com](mailto:gail@gailpellerinforassembly.com)

### 2. **Campaign Team**

Provide the names, email, and cell phone numbers for your campaign team:

Name: Plasha Will

Email: [plashawill@gmail.com](mailto:plashawill@gmail.com)

Phone: (831) 521-5840

### 3. **Elected Office**

Do you currently, or have you ever held public office?

Yes

If yes, which public office(s) have you held and when did you do so?

I served as the chief elections official in Santa Cruz County from 1993-2004 when I was appointed to serve as County Clerk. I was elected four times after that in 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018. I retired in December, 2020.

### 4. **Personal and Political Background**

Current Occupation:

I retired as County Clerk in December of 2020. Since retirement, I have joined the board of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) and am involved with Girls Inc. and Women's Educational Success at Cabrillo College. I am currently involved in the

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process of creating the Cabrillo College Local Government Fellows program, to encourage first generation students to pursue an education that can lead to a career in local government and to provide scholarships and paid internships and mentorships. I am also involved with Breaking the Glass Ballot and WILDR (Women in Leadership for Diverse Representation), organizations dedicated to increasing the number of elected and appointed women in local, regional and state offices. I have also become involved with the California Democratic Party's Voter Protection Committee and Civitas Public Affairs to advocate for the Election Infrastructure Initiative to provide for long-term, sustainable federal funding for local elections offices over the next 10 years.

Are you a registered Democrat?

Yes

Have you ever been registered with another political party or selected "Decline to State" or "No Party Preference" for your voter registration party affiliation, and if so, for what period?

My parents were very conservative, and when I first registered to vote as an 18 year old, I registered Republican. A couple years later when I was living on my own in college, I re-registered as a Democrat, and have been a Democrat ever since.

In less than 250 words, briefly summarize your personal background (work experience, education, community involvement, etc.).

As County Clerk, I managed all elections conducted in the county and served as the Commissioner of Civil Marriage. I have 35 years of experience in public service – over seven years working for the State Legislature in Sacramento, including for an Assembly office representing Morgan Hill, and 27 years working for the people of Santa Cruz County.

I served as President of the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials from 2010 to 2012 and served as co-chair of the Secretary of State's Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee.

I am on the board of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) and am involved with Girls Inc. and Women's Educational Success at Cabrillo College. I am currently working with a local group to create the Cabrillo College Local Government Fellows program to encourage first generation students to pursue an education that can lead to a career in local government and to provide scholarships and paid internships and mentorships. I am also involved with Breaking the Glass Ballot and WILDR (Women in Leadership for Diverse Representation), organizations dedicated to increasing the number of elected and appointed women in local, regional and state offices.

Additionally, I am involved with the California Democratic Party's Voter Protection Committee and have been working with Civitas Public Affairs to advocate for the Election Infrastructure Initiative to provide for long-term, sustainable federal funding for local elections offices over the next 10 years.

I have a BS in Journalism from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo.

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What endorsements have you received from organizations and prominent individuals? (You may either use the space below or attach a separate list.)  
Please see attached list.

**5. Check boxes:**

Previously held positions in the 2022 election cycle:  
In the 2022 cycle have you:

|    |  |
|----|--|
| No | Have you affirmed to any other organization to boycott or not take trips to Israel from any particular sponsor to learn about Israel or Palestine? |
| No | Have you endorsed, supported or opposed any bills as a result of your position, would reduce, withhold or condition aid to Israel?                 |

In the past five years, have you:

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| Yes     | Participated in an organized activity, including a forum, on Israel or related issues? <sup>1</sup>   |
| Not yet | While holding office, introduced or co-sponsored legislation (other than purely ceremonial, supportive measures) on Israel or related issues or the Jewish community? If yes, please specify which kinds in this box below: |

**6. Policy Questions**

Please describe your positions on the following issues. Please limit your responses to 250 words for each response. If you wish, one response may include up to 500 words.

1. Please describe your relationship, if any, with the Jewish community in the area you serve as an elected official:

As County Clerk I was not able to take any positions publicly.

Personally, my husband, who died in 2018, was Jewish. We have two children, ages 24 and 27, and as a family we celebrate Jewish holidays and attend temple on occasion.

I worked closely with the Jewish community as County Clerk. Temple Beth El served as a voting location and a place where we conducted poll worker training.

I was invited to speak at the temple a few times about voting rights. I was always impressed with the congregation's support of voting as they encouraged 100% turnout among their members.

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Also, when same sex marriage was legalized, I worked with the Out in our Faith group to ensure we had a sufficient number of officiants to conduct marriage ceremonies for couples who wanted to get married on that first day of legalization.

I have also supported the Temple financially over the years.

2. Hate Crimes: Do you see Antisemitism as a Hate Crime? How do you propose working on Hate Crimes if you are elected?

Yes, and we cannot allow this type of behavior in any way. I will support legislation to expand the definitions of hate crimes to include Antisemitism, and would support funding for more education and awareness campaigns. I have marched in the NAACP March.

3. Do you support or oppose efforts to boycott Israel (BDS)? Have you had any discussions with your community about BDS?

I oppose efforts to boycott Israel.

4. Ethnic Studies Program: Would you support state policies that ensure that Jewish-American lesson plans are included in the Ethnic Studies curriculum? Would you work to change lesson plans that denigrate Jews, Judaism and Israel?

Yes, I think they should be included in California's ethnic studies curriculum and should not include anything that denigrates Jews, Judaism and Israel.

5. As a Democrat, what steps can we take to help fight antisemitism on both the left and the right?

Democrats do not believe in discrimination in any form. Opposing antisemitism is a core value of mine. We must continue to educate people and speak out against hate. And, when hate crimes are committed, perpetrators must be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

6. What other issues do you think are unique or important to the Jewish and pro-Israel community, and how do you propose to make a difference with these issues and keep in touch with the community?

I have always been impressed with the local Jewish community's dedication to social justice and equality. Programs like Mazon to feed the hungry and Communities Organized for Relational Power in Action, a network of 35 faith-based and nonprofit organizations in Santa Cruz County are ones I applaud and have supported for years. Our Jewish community is dedicated to addressing the shortage of affordable housing, homelessness, climate impacts, education equity, affordable health care, racism, and

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other important issues in our community. I look forward to working together to address these issues to create a more sustainable and vibrant community for everyone.

I have always been one to fight for equality, and if elected, I will take that fight with me to Sacramento. I believe that it is our responsibility to create policies that provide equal opportunity for everyone. I have a great working relationship with our elected leaders at all levels of government and am honored to have earned the endorsements of California Legislative Jewish Caucus Members Rebecca Bauer-Kahan and Christopher Ward. In addition, I will work with my dear friends Congressman Jimmy Panetta, State Senator John Laird and Assemblymembers Robert Rivas and Mark Stone to ensure we are addressing these issues at the local, state and federal levels. I will also look to you for guidance and will always have an open door.

Thank you for your time and effort to complete this Questionnaire

Contact information:

Dorene Kastelman

President Jewish Democratic Club of Silicon Valley

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