

# VOTER GUIDE

LONG BEACH, CA  
GENERAL ELECTION  
NOVEMBER 3, 2020





Long Beach Public Library Foundation  
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(562) 628-2441

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Dear Long Beach Voter:

The Long Beach Public Library Foundation and the Friends of the Long Beach Public Library are two nonprofit organizations that support the 12 Long Beach Public Libraries and their resources. We have jointly created this Voter Guide for the November 3, 2020 General Election to prepare supporters of the libraries, literacy, and education to make informed decisions regarding the candidates running for the office of City Council Districts 2, 6, and 8; Long Beach Board of Education District 2; and Long Beach City College Board of Trustees Area 4.

To prepare this guide, we sent a letter to all official candidates requesting a brief statement outlining their views about libraries in Long Beach and, if elected, their plans for their future. 10 candidates responded by the submission deadline and their answers are presented in this guide.

Please note both the Long Beach Public Library Foundation and the Friends of the Long Beach Public Library are 501(c)(3) organizations and, as required by law, will not endorse or advocate for any candidate. We have presented the responses from the candidates exactly as we received them, without edits. This guide is an educational piece without commentary.

We invite you to read the complete comments from all the candidates who participated and we encourage you to make sure you are registered to vote by October 19 and participate in this important civic process. Check your voter registration status online at [voterstatus.sos.ca.gov](http://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

Sharon L. Weissman  
President  
Long Beach Public Library Foundation

Barbara Sosa  
President  
Friends of the Long Beach Public Library

#### **About the Long Beach Public Library Foundation:**

The Library Foundation was created 24 years ago with the mission to provide support to enhance the Long Beach Public Library and encourage literacy and education for all members of our community. The Library Foundation raises about \$1.2 million annually for programs, technology, and enhancements at the Library in support of this goal. Learn more at [www.lbplfoundation.org](http://www.lbplfoundation.org).

#### **About the Friends of the Long Beach Public Library:**

The Friends are a membership organization founded in 1963 to promote, provide support, and advocate for the Main Library and 11 neighborhood libraries, and continue to guard against censorship. The Friends manage the used bookstore in the Main Library, support literacy programs, and provide scholarship opportunities. Learn more at [www.longbeach.gov/library/connect/friends-of-the-library](http://www.longbeach.gov/library/connect/friends-of-the-library).



# IMPORTANT DATES

## NOVEMBER 3, 2020 ELECTION



**OCTOBER 19, 2020**

Last day to register to vote.  
 Check your voter status at <https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov>.  
 Register to vote online at <https://registertovote.ca.gov>.

**OCTOBER 5 to  
 NOVEMBER 3, 2020**

The more than 400 secure Ballot Drop Boxes in Los Angeles County are available to voters until 8:00 p.m. on election night. Find your nearest Long Beach drop box at <https://bit.ly/33N86Ec>.

**OCTOBER 30 to  
 NOVEMBER 3, 2020**

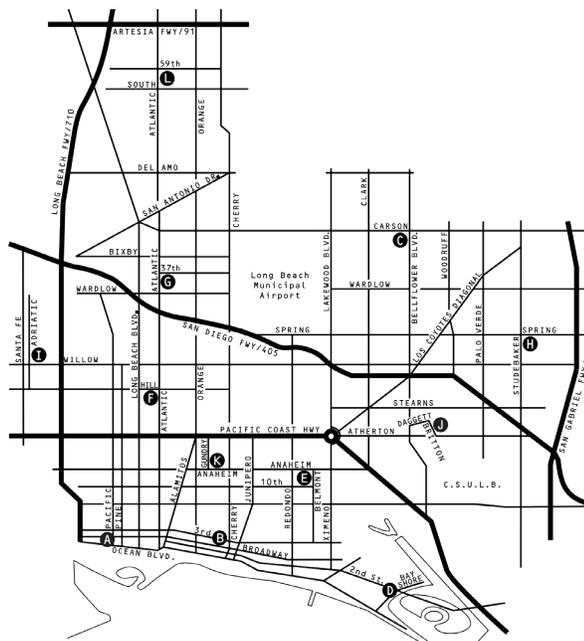
All Los Angeles County Vote Centers will be open during this period. Select Vote Centers will be available beginning October 24. Learn more and find your nearest Vote Center at <https://bit.ly/2H1P9VG>.

**NOVEMBER 3, 2020**

**Election Day!** Vote by Mail ballots must be postmarked by this date.

**The Long Beach Public Libraries highlighted below are hosting secure Ballot Drop Boxes.**

- A** Billie Jean King Main Library
- B** Alamitos Branch
- C** Bach Branch
- D** Bay Shore Branch
- E** Brewitt Branch
- F** Burnett Branch
- G** Dana Branch
- H** El Dorado Branch
- I** Harte Branch
- J** Los Altos Branch
- K** Mark Twain Branch
- L** Michelle Obama Branch



# VOTER GUIDE

## NOVEMBER 3, 2020 ELECTION

These candidates participated:



### CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 2



**Cindy Allen**  
Small Businesswoman/Commissioner  
[cindyallen.com](http://cindyallen.com)



**Robert E. Fox**  
Small Business Owner  
[foxforcouncil.com](http://foxforcouncil.com)

### CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 6



**Suely Saro**  
Teacher/Nonprofit Director  
[suelysaro.com](http://suelysaro.com)

### CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 8



**Al Austin II**  
City Councilmember  
[alaustinforlb.com](http://alaustinforlb.com)



**Tunua Thrash-Ntuk**  
Economic Development Director  
[tunua2020.com](http://tunua2020.com)

# VOTER GUIDE

## NOVEMBER 3, 2020 ELECTION

These candidates participated:



### BOARD OF EDUCATION DISTRICT 2



**Erik Miller**  
Non-Profit Director  
[erikmiller2020.com](http://erikmiller2020.com)



**Tonia Reyes Uranga**  
Educator/Non-Profit Boardmember  
[toniareyesuranga.com](http://toniareyesuranga.com)

### LONG BEACH CITY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AREA 4



**Herlinda Chico**  
College Advisor/Commissioner  
[herlindachico.com](http://herlindachico.com)



**Richard "Dick" Gaylord**  
LBCC Commissioner/Businessman  
[gaylord4lbcc.com](http://gaylord4lbcc.com)



**Lee Loveridge**  
Community College Professor  
[lee-loveridge-lbccd.com](http://lee-loveridge-lbccd.com)

# VOTER GUIDE

NOVEMBER 3, 2020 ELECTION

## CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 2

### CANDIDATE STATEMENTS



#### Cindy Allen

Growing up on the Westside of Long Beach, I knew education was my way out of poverty. Long Beach libraries gave me opportunities that I couldn't have had otherwise. I am running for City Council to ensure that all kids in Long Beach have the same opportunities as I did. Public libraries are a crucial service to ensure that opportunity, but libraries provide opportunity well beyond childhood. Many of our local small businesses started in libraries. Many of our adult residents have sought better lives in libraries. Our city is made better by a strong public library system and I will fight for our libraries as your next councilwoman.

#### Robert E. Fox

For too long we have undervalued and underinvested in our public libraries in Long Beach, which are such a crucial resource to residents of all ages, but especially to children in school and to the working poor who need access to self-help and workforce information and the internet in order to raise themselves up.

Our meager record on supporting libraries in the City began with deep budget cuts during the previous recession which categorized libraries, outrageously, as falling outside the definition of 'core city services'. As a result, we drastically cut hours, making it extremely difficult for kids, especially low income kids, to access the materials they require. We have never fully restored library hours, and I consider that one of the great failures of this City Hall. If we cannot even make our libraries available, what kind of City are we?

Then we compounded the problem by prioritizing the needless rebuilding of our civic center, despite the fact that our library and city hall building only required seismic retrofitting. I remember vigorous opposition from library advocates like the Foundation to this new plan shrinking the library. Instead of the old library (into which we had already invested millions in roof repairs) with its grand interior, we now have a library which is 30% smaller. And it's part of a new civic center, which we don't even own, costing us millions more per year. That money should have gone to expanding hours throughout the library system.

I believe a city's investment in its public library system is a sign of the health of the city itself, fiscally, morally, and socially. Therefore I would strive to be the biggest advocate for renewed focus on libraries on the Council. I also support partnership programs like the one with the Rotary Club.

# VOTER GUIDE

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## CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 6

### CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

#### Suely Saro

My name is Dr. Suely Saro and I am running for Long Beach City Council to put people first and use my experience and knowledge to make District 6 better. I am the first in my family to graduate from college and I holds a Doctorate in Education (Ed.D) in Organizational Leadership from the University of La Verne. I currently serve as a is a professor at the Cal State LA and serves as a Project Development Specialist at the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC). Public libraries play a crucial role in neighborhoods, particularly in the 6th district where it has few open and safe public spaces where people can access information, resources, the computer, or the internet, especially during this COVID-19 pandemic. I would be a strong advocate to increase investments in our libraries and strategically think about conducting activities and social programs in partnerships with city departments, nonprofits organizations, and neighborhood associations to support our residents during this challenging time. Specifically, I would expand library hours in the weekdays and weekends to serve the high need for digital resources, virtual programs, and coordinated services. Especially when people are limited to social distancing activities to stay safe at home. Additionally, libraries serve as an important place for historical and cultural preservation and education. I support the special collections such as the Khmer Collection in Mark Twain Library and the African American Resource at Burnett Library.



**Other District 6 candidate did not provide a statement.**

# VOTER GUIDE

## NOVEMBER 3, 2020 ELECTION

### CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 8

### CANDIDATE STATEMENTS



#### Al Austin II

Our libraries are an invaluable community resource for the entire City. During the pandemic, our libraries are providing important online learning opportunities and resources for free, while still providing access to curbside and walk-up pickup of library materials.

I will continue to support our libraries, as I have throughout my eight years on the City Council, during which time I have a proven record advocating for our libraries:

- Authored the motion to keep our libraries open when COVID restrictions are lifted, by restoring proposed cuts in library hours in the Fiscal Year 2021 budget
- Worked to open several of our libraries on Sundays, including the Michelle Obama Neighborhood Library.
- Led the fight to secure the funding to build the Michelle Obama Neighborhood Library, and get the new modernized library for North Long Beach completed on time
- Voted for more than \$1.5 million in improvements for our neighborhood branch libraries, including the Dana Branch Library, utilizing Measure A funds.
- Supported the building of the new Billie Jean King Main Library to provide state-of-the-art facility for Long Beach residents.

Moving forward, we must continue to make sure are Long Beach Public Library system is accessible and available to support literacy and education for all members of our community, as we continue to provide the latest in resources and technology to help bridge the digital divide and support lifelong learning.

#### Tunua Thrash-Ntuk

Libraries serve a vital role in creating more equitable and inclusive cities. When we promote literacy, we address the disparities that exist in our education system and economy. I will do everything I can to ensure our residents continue to have access to the resources provided by Long Beach's libraries. During this pandemic, I have utilized and promoted the virtual activities provided by our libraries. I look forward to a time when my family and I can safely return to the Michelle Obama, Dana Branch, and the Burnett libraries.

Because of the economic downturn, our City Council will be faced with tough decisions about our budget and how we allocate our resources. I believe our city budget is a reflection of our values and we need to make sure that we preserve critical services that make our communities livable, such as libraries and parks, and ensure they remain open. I look forward to working with the Friends of the Long Beach Public Library and the Long Beach Public Library Foundation on creating strategies that will best serve our residents in this unprecedented time.

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## BOARD OF EDUCATION DISTRICT 2 CANDIDATE STATEMENTS



### Erik Miller

As a product of LBUSD schools raised in a low-income, single parent household, I would not have been able to become the first in my family to go to college without Long Beach public libraries. Public libraries are the lifeblood of our learning community, particularly for young people who face challenges at home, whether that be lack of access to reliable Internet or lack of quiet places to study. We must do more to ensure that libraries are a hub for learning, growth and connection for our community.

If elected to the LBUSD Board, I will work to modernize, expand and support our public libraries. We must ensure that our public libraries have adequate funding to provide the latest technology, amenities and facilities that enhance learning for all of our students and families.

### Tonia Reyes Uranga

Long Beach Public Libraries have been a lifeline for many of our neediest families for a long time. Libraries provide a connection and communication with family, businesses, and education via their free use of the internet and computers for those without technology. Our libraries have been a sanctuary for students and young people over the years and a quiet place to learn and study. Now, during the Pandemic, they have maintained connection with our community by continuing to offer books and information as well as a safe location for voting drop boxes. Our librarians are special people trained to assist our students and are sorely missed during this Pandemic.

When elected, I will continue to work closely with the city and our Department of Library Services and our community librarians to highlight our neighborhood libraries. As we start the slow and deliberate process to open our schools, the libraries will be essential in our road to learning loss recovery for our neediest students from strategically placed tutoring services to homework help and language appropriate translation services.

I have always supported and will continue to support our local libraries today and in the future.

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## LBCC BOARD OF TRUSTEES AREA 4 CANDIDATE STATEMENTS



### Herlinda Chico

Earlier this year, a Remote Student Learning Survey was administered online to Long Beach City College (LBCC) students. Of the students surveyed, 56 percent replied that they require a technical accessibility accommodation to help them succeed in the online learning environment. We have seen this digital divide and lack of access to technology exacerbated by the COVID 19 global pandemic. While almost all students own smartphones, 20% of Black students and 20% of Hispanic students surveyed say they rely solely on their smartphone to take classes, complete assignments and take tests. Many Long Beach City College students rely on our Long Beach Public Libraries for access to the internet, technology and more importantly, a quiet place that is conducive for learning, which 30 percent of students surveyed stated they did not have.

Through my work in the community, I've fostered partnerships with Long Beach City College and local non-profits working with former foster youth, young women who escaped human trafficking and formerly incarcerated individuals including youth on probation. I believe education has the power to break the cycle of poverty. These under-resourced populations need our Long Beach Public Libraries to provide a safe and welcoming learning environment. I am also an advocate for bringing resources to the community and was instrumental in bringing LBCC classes to the Carmelitos Housing Development, the largest subsidized public housing in the area. I look forward to continuing my work with LBCC and to strengthening the partnership with the Long Beach Public Library.

Long Beach Public Libraries are more than a place where folks can access books. They provide students access to the technology needed to thrive. Libraries are a place where students can go to to master skills and learn new ones via the many services and programs provided by our libraries. I am grateful for the resources provided by the 3D Printing Lab, the Center for Adaptive Learning, the Learning Lab at Michelle Obama Library, the Studio at the new Billy Jean King Library and more. I truly believe libraries are crucial in the success of our communities as a whole.

### Richard "Dick" Gaylord

Libraries provide a crucially important service for our community, especially in context of the Long Beach City College. Often, libraries exist as our students' only resources for a safe, quiet, and productive place to study or offer their only option for a reliable internet connection. Long Beach libraries also act as an extension of Long Beach City College in many ways when considering the trainings in job readiness and technical skill that the library offers.

If elected Long Beach City College Trustee, I will work to improve the cooperation the City College has with our public libraries, especially as we are all trying to provide safe and secure learning spaces for all of our residents as we continue to deal with the pandemic. We should also explore options for partnership that may allow Long Beach residents to use completion of courses at the library to waive certain remedial math or English requirements that often hold students back at completing their time at the City College.

There is no greater source of empowerment for our community than education. And just like Long Beach City College, Long Beach Public Libraries are a main facilitator of that education. We must be sure that access to education which includes access to a reliable internet source and adequate study environments, is available to everyone in our community. A recent report from the City of Long Beach on Digital Inclusion identified libraries as a critical link in our community, and I fully support efforts to better resource them. Long Beach Libraries will have a strong ally with me as City College Trustee.

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## LBCC BOARD OF TRUSTEES AREA 4 CANDIDATE STATEMENTS



### Lee Loveridge

I'm a firm believer in government working efficiently for the good of the people. In that respect, two services that really stand out are community colleges and libraries. Each delivers multiple services to the community with a cost benefit analysis that should be the envy of private companies across the world.

Too many people think that libraries no longer serve a useful function, but not only are books still a powerful and valuable resource to all of us, but they offer so much more including internet access, research advice from skilled librarians, and community gatherings. I have many fond memories of using our local libraries to grow and improve myself and bringing my children there for study and enrichment.

If I am elected as a trustee for the Long Beach City College District, I will do all that I can to advocate for continued funding and accessibility for libraries throughout the city. I will be an advocate for maintaining services in a safe remote way during the current crisis, and returning to full service as soon as possible when the crisis ends.