



## Santa Clara County Democratic Party

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Santa Clara County Democratic Party released a statement today urging the San José City Council to adopt a fair, transparent, inclusive, and expeditious process to appoint members to represent Districts 8 and 10 until the next regular election. Appointing members who do not have to immediately run in a special election is the surest way to maintain constituent services for residents of Districts 8 and 10 and ensure they have a voice in the budget process.

Historically, voter turnout in special elections is very low, as much as half the turnout in midterm elections and a third the turnout in a presidential election. Based on turnout in the recent midterm elections for San José City Council, turnout could be as low as 20%, or lower, which would result in a candidate being elected with support from barely 10% of the voters in their district. Research shows that communities of color, young people, and workers would be greatly underrepresented in such a low participation election. That's not true democracy.

Santa Clara County Democratic Party Chair Bill James noted, "Holding an off-cycle, low participation special election to fill these vacancies would result in the choice being made by a small fraction of eligible voters, who research shows likely would not represent the diversity, needs, values, and interests of the entire District 8 and District 10 communities."

A special election likely would not be completed until August 2023, just one month before the start of the fundraising period for the regular city council election.

The estimated cost of a special election would approach \$12 million, according to information provided by the City Clerk, which would have to be funded by making cuts elsewhere in the City's General Fund budget. James queried, "Which services would the City Council cut to hold a special

election just a short time before the next regular election? Very likely, the cuts would fall more heavily on the already underserved communities whose voices would not be included in an unrepresentative off-cycle election.”

The Santa Clara County Democratic Party joins a growing list of community leaders who are calling for the City Council to fill the vacancies through an open and inclusive process of appointment and allowing the more fully representative electorate to elect members in the upcoming regular election.

These leaders include Bob Nuñez, President of the San Jose/Silicon Valley NAACP, who stated, “The council should be trusted to do its work which should include the appointment of individuals to fill vacancies for districts 8 and 10 until the next regular election, as allowed by the city’s charter.”

David Bini, Executive Officer of the Building Trades Council, observed, “Holding expensive off-cycle special elections will ensure low voter participation and diminish the voices of most residents. This June, the voters of San Jose overwhelmingly approved moving local elections to ensure the highest degree of participation at the ballot box. Now more than ever, we need leaders who bolster, not deflate opportunities for fair elections.”

The Party encourages its members to join these and other community leaders in urging the San José City Council to adopt a fair and transparent process to appoint members to represent Districts 8 and 10 until the upcoming regular election.

The Santa Clara County Democratic Party is the official Democratic Party body in Santa Clara County, California. The Santa Clara County Democratic Party represents and speaks for the Democratic Party in Santa Clara County and has sole authority to confer the Democratic Party endorsements in non-partisan elections wholly within Santa Clara County.