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LOS ANGELES
MAYOR
ELECTION GUIDE
★ PUBLISHED BY THE ★
MUSLIM PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL
★



MPAC Los Angeles Mayoral Guide

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INTRODUCTION

During each election cycle, the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) reaches out to the leading candidates to engage them about issues that are important to American Muslim voters. Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley are home to a diverse Muslim community with an estimated 250,000 Muslims living in the area. Our community will have a major impact on the city's elections.

The next mayor of Los Angeles will face multiple challenges from the city's budget debt to unemployment to improving the quality of education in LA Unified School District's 1000+ schools to bridging gaps between the communities that make this city one of the most diverse in the world.

As we thought about the issues that will impact the city, we focused on three areas where Muslim Angelenos are particularly invested: zero tolerance on intolerance, ensuring community safety and national security and addressing bullying in our city's schools.

Following the primaries on March 5, the candidates for Mayor, which is a non-partisan office, are:

- Eric Garcetti, Los Angeles City Councilmember
- Wendy Greuel, Los Angeles City Controller

MPAC submitted questions to each candidate to learn more about their positions and commitments. In the following pages, we provide you with a little background about the candidates, followed by their responses to our questions on community cohesion, safety and security and bullying in our schools.

Election Day is Tuesday, May 21, with the mayor taking office on June 30, 2013.

MPAC does not endorse any candidates in this race or any other. We encourage each person to study the candidates and vote your conscience. City elections have a notoriously low turnout rate, which means each vote can make a significant difference.

For more information, visit www.mpac.org, email elections@mpac.org or call (323) 258-6722.

ERIC GARCETTI



Eric Garcetti currently serves as the Councilmember representing L.A.'s 13th Council District, and he was L.A. City Council President from 2006 until 2012. A reserve officer in the U.S. Navy, Garcetti is also the chair of Democratic Municipal Officials. Before entering public service, he was a professor at University of Southern California and Occidental College. For more information about Garcetti, his track record and his vision for L.A., visit www.ericgarcetti.com.

Stated priorities if elected: Helping residents solve problems and make government more accountable, getting our economy back on track with good middle class jobs and bringing creative solutions and innovation to City Hall to make sure our city provides the best services to residents

Community Cohesion

During times of economic difficulty, there is often a rise in xenophobic attitudes and, by extension, bigotry toward Muslims. How will your administration deal with the rise of bigotry toward Muslims?

Diversity is one of Los Angeles' strengths, and bigotry has no place in our neighborhoods or City Hall.

Hate mongering and scapegoating fester even deeper when there is a vacuum of leadership on critical issues, such as the economy. Our next mayor must take control of key issues and build coalitions to find solutions.

We need leadership that is closely in touch with Los Angeles' diverse communities and neighborhoods. As a councilmember and council president, I have routinely walked door-to-door and held open-office hours to connect directly with the people I serve. I created a Neighborhood Leadership Institute that has graduated more than 1,000 Angelenos from workshops about effectively advocating for their communities. I have appointed a staff that reflects our diverse metropolis, including my deputy chief of staff who is an American Muslim.

To target bigotry, I would combine engagement and enforcement through LAPD with education and enlightenment through our Department of Cultural Affairs, Human Relations Commission, libraries, recreation and parks, after school programs, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment and new community engagement initiatives. We must have a deeper focus on how we are united as Angelenos, rather than a focus on misinformation and our differences.

Many Muslims are concerned that government officials are not vocal enough in their opposition to Islamophobia. Will your administration be vocal in opposing Islamophobia?

My administration will be aggressively vocal in opposing Islamophobia. Islamophobia is not only wrong and harmful to the Muslim community, it reduces everyone's public safety by focusing attention on stereotypes, not bona fide threats.

I will send a clear message from the top that Islamophobia – and bigotry of any kind – is not only un-American, it holds us back as an economy and a society. And I will leverage the full resources of the City – from the LAPD to our libraries – to promote tolerance and understanding on the ground in our neighborhoods.

Safety & Security

Racial and religious profiling hinders our efforts to counter terrorism because it overburdens our law enforcement system and breeds mistrust with the community. How will your administration ensure that our communities are safe and that racial and religious profiling no longer remains a concern for Los Angelenos?

I understand clearly that racial profiling of any community is not only un-American and harmful to that community, it is counterproductive because it directs resources toward stereotypes instead of accomplishing strategic safety goals.

The results from the LAPD's shift from an “us vs. them” posture to one of community policing is clear. Today, despite a poor economy and Los Angeles having one of the lowest officer-per-capita rates among American large cities, crime levels are where they were in the 1950s. While there is a lot more work to do, I would deploy successful strategies that have improved relations with the African American and Latino communities, for example, within the American Muslim community and wherever they could make a difference.

Our police officers must be educated about Los Angeles' diverse communities. LAPD must work to develop direct, open and informative lines of communications.

Muslim Americans have helped expose two out of every five al-Qaeda plots against the American homeland since 9/11. How does your administration propose to keep the Muslim community a partner in the fight against terrorism?

I have seen how the NYPD's approach of stereotype-based surveillance only serves to alienate key sources from law enforcement. I will make sure LAPD and the American Muslim communities are working together as true partners toward public safety and peace.

By fostering close engagement between LAPD and the American Muslim community, I would not just be seeking to protect American Muslims – I would be working to protect us all by creating relationships that would allow American Muslims to share information as well as specific skills they may have to assist LAPD.

MPAC has conducted important programming and policy work related to national security and law enforcement. Continued advisory work from the Muslim community should be formalized so that LAPD has specific resources close at hand to help them in their work. I

believe in engagement across the board, from our senior lead officers in our neighborhoods to our Counter Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau.

Bullying in Our Schools

With the city facing budget cuts, how will you ensure that schools in the city are financially equipped to address bullying on campus?

We need better cooperation between the LAUSD and the City of Los Angeles across the board. I believe that strategic partnerships between our schools and the City's Departments of Cultural Affairs, Libraries and Recreation and Parks; the Human Relations Commission; after school programs; law enforcement and other efforts can increase the number of anti-bullying programs while actually saving money. We need a unified strategy and tactical approach that spends resources efficiently and effectively.

How will you ensure that students' freedom of expression is maintained while providing a safe educational environment for students?

The city and LAUSD must develop clear guidelines for city and district staff to follow so that we protect our First Amendment and protect our kids from misinformation and bullying. Without that clarity, mistakes that either put our children at risk or that quash democratic dissent are made. Neither is acceptable. I believe it is government's overarching duty to protect and promote the rights enshrined in our Constitution, and I would tirelessly work to do so as mayor.

Muslim students and those perceived to be Muslims have become a target for bullies on campuses. In certain instances this has occurred because students are poorly educated about Islam and feel it is appropriate to target Muslims. What will your administration do to address the bullying of Muslim students in Los Angeles schools?

Promoting tolerance isn't just an ethical imperative of mine, it's a practical one. Los Angeles' diversity is one of our greatest strengths, and I will do everything I can to make sure we can move our city forward by bringing ourselves together.

I just co-hosted a town hall meeting on hate crimes last week. We brought together community organizations, neighbors, elected officials, media and law enforcement to promote a message of tolerance and to build stronger links within the neighborhood so that people had a strong network through which to share information and feel comfortable coming forward with reports of bigotry and discrimination.

I believe closer ties between the school district and key city departments can create efficiencies that can increase our anti-bullying and cultural awareness initiatives to make a real difference. As a former world affairs professor, I understand that it's not just about lessons in treating one's neighbor with respect—academic instruction on cultures around the world not only provide critical knowledge for our global economy, it would reveal we have more in common than we think.

WENDY GREUEL



Wendy Greuel is the current [Los Angeles City Controller](#) and former President Pro Tempore of the [L.A. City Council](#) representing the 2nd District, which includes portions of the [San Fernando Valley](#). Formerly, Greuel served as an aide to Mayor Tom Bradley, worked for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development under President Bill Clinton and was an executive with DreamWorks Studios. For more information about Greuel, her track record and her vision for L.A., visit www.wendygreuel.org.

Stated priorities if elected: Create jobs and get Los Angeles' economy back on track, build strong schools and create a modern, interconnected transportation system and be a watchdog for taxpayer funds and fight waste, fraud and abuse

Community Cohesion

During times of economic difficulty there is often a rise in xenophobic attitudes, and by extension bigotry towards Muslims. How will your administration deal with the rise of bigotry towards Muslims?

I am committed to being mayor for all of Los Angeles, which means I will not tolerate xenophobia or bigotry in any form. I will work to strengthen diversity training for public officials and law enforcement officers, hold town halls and other community engagement events to promote intercultural acceptance and work with leading organizations and individuals to make sure that the Muslim community does not stand alone in decrying bigotry of any kind to which it may be subjected.

Many Muslims are concerned that government officials are not vocal enough in their opposition to Islamophobia. Will your administration be vocal in opposing Islamophobia?

Los Angeles is a city made up of an enormous variety of diverse communities, and my administration will be committed to inclusiveness as well as tolerance and mutual respect for all of them. It is not acceptable that any group, including the Muslim community, be subject to racism or discrimination of any kind. I will partner with community organizations, including MPAC, to make sure that grievances are aired and any instances of Islamophobia are loudly and rapidly denounced.

Safety & Security

Racial and religious profiling hinders our efforts to counter terrorism because it overburdens our law enforcement system and breeds mistrust with the community. How will your administration ensure that our communities are safe and that racial and religious profiling no longer remains a concern for Los Angelenos?

I am committed to diversity and tolerance. My administration will support diversity training for all public officials and law enforcement personnel to eliminate profiling wherever it exists. Profiling is harmful to our community and distracts law enforcement from the actual crime on our streets – I will work with the community, LAPD, neighborhood councils and community organizations to make sure that we fight real crime. Also, I will increase funding for gang reduction programs and give law enforcement the tools they need to ensure that crime rates continue to drop in our city.

Muslim Americans have helped expose two out of every five Al-Qaeda plots against the American homeland since 9/11. How does your administration propose to keep the Muslim community a partner in the fight against terrorism?

Los Angeles depends on partnerships with the many diverse communities to protect and strengthen our fight against terrorism. Muslim Americans have consistently taken an unambiguous stand against terrorism. In a city celebrated for its diversity and inclusion, Muslim Americans are one of the integral pillars of Los Angeles, and they must continue to be partners in the fight against terror. Too often, Muslim Americans have been profiled, stereotyped, stigmatized or shunned. However, Muslim Americans in Los Angeles and across the country have condemned terrorism around the world and have become some of the most important partners in the fight against terror. I will work with the Muslim community to build trust and respect and partner with Muslims and law enforcement to maintain the strength of the Muslim community as a crucial partner in combating terrorism, because I know that Muslim Americans are critical allies in this fight.

Bullying in Our Schools

With the city facing budget cuts, how will you ensure that schools in the city are financially equipped to address bullying on campus?

As the only candidate with a child in an LAUSD school, the question of bullying is extremely personal. As a mother, I would be heartbroken to hear that my son was a victim of bullying, and I will work tirelessly to protect children and their families. Anti-bullying programs are vastly cheaper than the harmful and potentially devastating consequences of bullying, and I will work to expand afterschool programs and encourage parental involvement to ensure that children are given a safe, accepting environment in which to learn and grow. As one of the people who helped found LA's BEST afterschool program, I understand the importance of funding these essential programs to keep our city's children safe.

How will you ensure that students' freedom of expression is maintained while providing a safe educational environment for students?

Censorship or limitation of freedom of expression is not a requirement of providing a safe educational environment for students. However, hate speech must never be tolerated in schools. In many cases, the simple presence of an adult is enough to prevent the worst of these instances. I am committed to expanding programs, such as LA'S BEST, which I helped found as part of Mayor Tom Bradley's administration, to give children productive outlets for their energy and the necessary guidance to make sure that they are not acting out in ways harmful to themselves or other students.

Muslim students and those perceived to be Muslims have become a target for bullies on campuses. In certain instances this has occurred because students are poorly educated about Islam and feel it is appropriate to target Muslims. What will your administration do to address the bullying of Muslim students in Los Angeles schools?

I believe that educating students about the importance of cultural diversity and tolerance is a foundational part of any successful curriculum. My administration will not tolerate bullying of any kind, and I will fight to ensure that all children are protected and given a safe and healthy school environment. I will support both anti-bullying programs and diversity training for teachers and public staff to make sure that embracing diversity is a cornerstone of our city's schools.



Founded in 1988, MPAC is an American institution which informs and shapes public opinion and policy by serving as a trusted resource to decision makers in government, media and policy institutions. MPAC is also committed to developing leaders with the purpose of enhancing the political and civic participation of American Muslims.

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