Black Action Alliance
Putting The Bay Area's Future First

BLACK ACTION ALLIANCE

2026 California Gubernatorial Candidate Questionnaire

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ABOUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

The Black Action Alliance required all participants in the February 3, 2026 gubernatorial debate to complete this comprehensive readiness assessment. All responses are published verbatim as submitted by the candidate.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. GOVERNING PHILOSOPHY & EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP
2. FISCAL GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURAL DEFICIT (PART A)
3. FISCAL GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURAL DEFICIT (PART B)
4. HEALTHCARE SYSTEM STRATEGY
5. BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH
6. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE
7. SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS OWNERSHIP & CLOSING THE CREDIT GAP
8. REPARATIONS & ECONOMIC JUSTICE
9. STATE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR CLOSING THE EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT GAP
10. PUBLIC SAFETY, JUSTICE & PROP 36
11. HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS & SHELTER CRISIS (Part A)
12. HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS & SHELTER CRISIS (Part B)
13. THE TRANSIT FISCAL CLIFF

14. THE WILDFIRE-RELATED INSURANCE CRISIS
15. BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE INNOVATION ECONOMY
16. GOVERNING STYLE & FEDERAL RELATIONS (Choosing your battles)
17. FINAL QUESTION: WHY YOU? WHY NOW?

QUESTION 1

GOVERNING PHILOSOPHY & EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

California's next governor will inherit a structural deficit, federal volatility, and widening racial and regional inequities.

Part A: What do you believe is the primary job of the Governor over the next four years? When values collide with fiscal reality, what principle guides your final decision?

Part B: Describe a specific moment in your career when you had authority, limited resources, and pressure from allies. What decision did you make, who opposed it, and what lesson will shape how you govern?

RESPONSE:

PART A

The Governor's primary job is to be California's chief executive and advocate: making government work for working families, not just for those with lobbyists and lawyers.

When values collide with fiscal reality: its our responsibility to protect people first, then find the revenue to match our values. California became the world's fourth-largest economy by investing in education, healthcare, and infrastructure. When budgets tighten, the question is not which vulnerable population we sacrifice. The question is: who hasn't been paying their fair share?

PART B

As Attorney General, I did more with less. My office had fewer lawyers than major hospital systems with unlimited resources, yet we beat them anyway.

Take Sutter Health. They were gouging California patients and dominating markets

through anti-competitive practices. We took them on and won $575 million AND changed their practices. That's real money back to Californians and a healthcare system forced to compete.

Or when Trump tried to force California's local police to do ICE raids. I said no. So Trump denied California $28 million in community policing funds as punishment. I fought back and won BOTH: protected our local police from being conscripted into federal immigration enforcement AND got back every dollar of that $28 million.

We defended DACA all the way to the Supreme Court and won. They said defending the ACA was a long shot. We won. They said Medicare drug price negotiation would never happen. I delivered it at HHS.

The lesson: you do not need the biggest budget to win the biggest fights. You need to know what you're doing, pick your battles strategically, and refuse to back down when you're right.

QUESTION 2

FISCAL GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURAL DEFICIT (PART A)

Do you support closing corporate tax loopholes or enacting new progressive revenue measures (where wealthiest residents and businesses pay a higher percentage of their income in taxes compared to others)?

RESPONSE:

Yes, support closing corporate tax loopholes AND new progressive revenue.

QUESTION 3

FISCAL GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURAL DEFICIT (PART B)

Explain your revenue strategy (if Yes to Part A, specify which measures; if No, explain alternative funding mechanisms).

Identify one major program you would protect and one you would reconsider, and why.

RESPONSE:

I served 20 years on the Ways and Means Committee, the tax writing committee in Congress, so I know where all the trap doors are. My revenue strategy prioritizes STABLE sources. You cannot plan for K-12, healthcare, or housing when you do not know year to year if you'll have the money.

● Close Water's Edge election provisions letting multinationals shift profits offshore, which leads to significant, stable, recurring revenue.

● Revisit commercial property tax structures to ensure large commercial property owners contribute fairly.

● Ensure that those with extreme wealth pay rates closer to what working Californians pay. If you're paying tax rates lower than a nurse, firefighter, teacher, or police officer, you're probably not paying your fair share.

QUESTION 4

HEALTHCARE SYSTEM STRATEGY

Where do you place your healthcare approach on this spectrum:

*** State-run single payer**

*** Major Medi-Cal/ACA reform**

*** Incremental efficiency improvements**

Explain how your approach improves real access to care for Black and low-income communities.

RESPONSE:

I have been a supporter of Medicare for All for more than 30 years. This is a career commitment for me.

At HHS, I proved this commitment translates to results. We covered more than 300 million Americans, which was the most in the history of our country. After COVID, when people were losing coverage because they lost jobs, we reversed that trend by breaking records for Black and Latino families who signed up for health coverage.

A unified system eliminates two-tiered medicine that concentrates the best providers in wealthy communities. Under universal coverage:

Standardized reimbursement ends provider flight from low-income neighborhoods.

Medicare rates mean doctors can afford to practice anywhere.

No prior authorizations means treatment isn't delayed by insurer denial games.

And there are no coverage gaps when jobs change or hours get cut.

Immediate actions while we build toward single payer:

- Expand community health center capacity in underserved areas

- Enforce network adequacy so Medi-Cal patients can actually see specialists

- Invest in community health workers who build trust between healthcare systems and Black communities

At HHS, I enacted the first-ever national minimum staffing standards for nursing homes.

That’s proof I don't just talk about healthcare equity, I regulate for it.

QUESTION 5

BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH

Black women in California are three times more likely than White women to die from pregnancy-related causes.

*** Will you commit to permanent, state-funded baseline support for Black maternal health programs such as Black Infant Health? [Yes/No]**

*** How will you insulate these programs from federal funding volatility? Define measurable outcomes for your first term.**

RESPONSE:

PART A: YES, and I led a national effort on this issue as Secretary of HHS.

PART B: Black women in California die from pregnancy-related causes at three to four times the rate of white women. This is structural failure requiring structural commitment.

My wife Carolina is a perinatologist caring for high-risk pregnancies. I've seen how the system fails Black mothers even when they do everything right.

At HHS, I expanded postpartum Medicaid coverage from 60 days to 365 days.

Research shows that if a new mother has bad outcomes, it is most likely in the first 3-6 months after giving birth. The previous standard of 60 days meant we were dropping mothers from coverage exactly when they hit the most difficult and dangerous period.

Virtually every state now operates with 365-day postpartum coverage because of what we did at HHS. That means new mothers are healthy and alive because they didn't lose their coverage.

We also launched the national maternal mental health hotline and expanded Medicaid payments to cover doula care, which are proven to improve outcomes for Black mothers.

Insulating from Federal Volatility:

Federal funding instability cannot determine whether Black mothers live or die.

First: Dedicated General Fund allocations, removed from year-to-year budget negotiations.

Second: Medi-Cal waivers to braid federal and state dollars flexibly: reserves when federal funds flow, maintained services when they don't.

Third: Expand Black maternal health investments as part of comprehensive reparations implementation.

Measurable First-Term Outcomes:

- Achieve meaningful, measurable reductions in Black maternal mortality
- Dramatically expand access to Medi-Cal covered doula services for Black pregnant women
- Significantly expand Black Infant Health program sites in high-need counties
- All birthing hospitals implement implicit bias training with demonstrated competency—not just completion certificates

QUESTION 6

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

One in seven California adults live with a mental illness, and one in twenty-six has a serious mental illness. More than half of Californians who tried to schedule a mental health appointment report difficulty of finding a provider who accepts their insurance. A proven resource to expand capacity and efficacy of the states behavioral healthcare system is the Peer Support Specialist role, yet California has not fully integrated the 8,102 Certified Medi-Cal Support Specialists (CMPSSs) into Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan programs.

Please share your top three priorities to expand the behavioral health workforce, and patient access.

What is your commitment to exploring policy options to make Peer Support Services a covered Medi-Call benefit?

RESPONSE:

PART A: Yes, I commit to addressing the behavioral health workforce crisis. As HHS Secretary, this was a top priority.

I expanded the National Health Service Corps to over 20,000 participants- the largest in history. We launched the 988 Crisis Lifeline from concept to nationwide implementation. In the first two years, we answered over 10 million calls, texts, and chats. We added specialized lines for Spanish speakers, LGBTQI+ individuals, veterans, and ASL users. We dramatically expanded Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics that provide 24/7 access to behavioral health services by making historic investments to grow the network. These clinics serve anyone who walks through the door regardless of their ability to pay.

We also expanded Medicaid coverage for substance use and mental health treatment, including coverage for people leaving incarceration.

Here's what I will do in California:

I will create a Behavioral Health Corps with substantial loan forgiveness for behavioral health professionals who commit to serving Medi-Cal patients in underserved communities..

I will deploy Prop 1 bond funds aggressively for psychiatric beds and crisis stabilization centers, with a primary focus on the communities with the greatest unmet need. We will utilize real-time bed registries so ERs can place patients and have mobile crisis teams as alternatives to police response. I will also enforce mental health parity to prevent commercial insurers from dumping sick patients onto Medi-Cal.

I will enforce mental health parity. When commercial insurers dump their sickest patients onto Medi-Cal through denial and underpayment, behavioral health workers flee.

PART B: Yes, I commit to exploring these policy options. We need to expand the behavioral health workforce with people who have the most valuable credential: lived experience. Peers are essential—especially for Black Californians facing both a provider shortage and justified mistrust. I will pursue Medi-Cal coverage for peer support services as a priority.

QUESTION 7

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS OWNERSHIP & CLOSING THE CREDIT GAP

Will you commit to meeting or exceeding the state's 25% Small Business and 5% Microbusiness procurement participation goals across all state contracting? [Yes/No]

Beyond procurement, identify TWO specific policy actions to increase business ownership by historically marginalized populations and address the credit access gap. For each, specify:

(i) Whether you will expand, reform, or replace existing programs [CalCAP, IBank, etc.]

(ii) Dollar amounts and funding sources

(iii) How you'll measure wealth creation - not just participation

RESPONSE:

PART A: Yes, I commit to meeting and exceeding the 25% Small Business and 5% Microbusiness procurement goals.

PART B:

I'll establish a California Community Reinvestment Fund as a revolving loan fund for Black, Indigenous, and historically excluded entrepreneurs, utilizing a mix of General Fund and redirected bank settlement funds. This will provide access to capital paired with built-in technical assistance.

Accountability matters. We will publish annual dashboards tracking business equity growth, employee wealth indicators, intergenerational transfers, and net worth changes. If the numbers do not move, we change the approach.

I'll also reform CalCAP by significantly increasing the contribution percentage for businesses in historically redlined census tracts. We fund this by reallocating from economic development programs that failed to reach marginalized communities. And we add a credit repair runway: flexible capital access tools that help entrepreneurs build toward conventional financing.

QUESTION 8

REPARATIONS & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

California has established the Bureau for Descendants of American Slavery, while several restitution bills were vetoed due to legal risk.

Are you willing to support legislation that tests current interpretations of Proposition 209? [Yes/No]

What tangible economic outcomes should the Bureau deliver within four years? Name at least two concrete policy actions.

When legal counsel advises that a policy may face constitutional or statutory challenge, where is your line between caution and moral obligation?

RESPONSE:

PART A: Yes, I support legislation that tests the boundaries of Proposition 209 where there is a reasonable legal pathway. Proposition 209 constrains but doesn't eliminate California's options. Race-neutral programs with race-conscious targeting, descendant-based eligibility, and place-based investments in historically harmed communities all remain viable.

Part B: The Bureau must deliver outcomes that change material conditions for Black Californians. On housing and homeownership, I am committing significant, dedicated funding for down payment assistance and anti-displacement for verified descendants of American slavery. The target is 10,000 families into homeownership with substantial equity stakes—actual wealth in Black families' hands. On small business creation, I am committing non-dilutive grants to Black-owned businesses, prioritizing employee wealth-sharing models. The target is thousands of businesses capitalized with tracked net worth increases.

On education, we need targeted support structures that ensure Black students not only enroll but graduate.

PART C: This is personal for me. My father told me stories of how when he was a young man, he would see signs outside establishments that said "No dogs, Negroes or Mexicans allowed." My moral compass tells me you've got to push the envelope and push open those doors. If you follow only caution, you'll never let people through those doors..

Economists advising California's Task Force estimated over $800 billion in damages

from housing discrimination and over-policing alone. The moral obligation doesn't

disappear because a lawsuit might follow.

I will never hide behind legal caution to avoid moral responsibility. I've stood in federal

court defending California against a hostile federal administration. We build the strongest record, craft defensible programs, and push where the law permits. Where it

doesn't yet permit, we must build the case for change.

QUESTION 9

STATE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR CLOSING THE EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Despite laws intended to limit exclusionary discipline in early childhood education, Black children are expelled at rates 3.6 times higher than other K-12th graders. These early disparities have long-term consequences. Despite rising graduation rates, Black students continue to experience the lowest academic proficiency statewide.

Do you support a state-level accountability dashboard measuring Sacramento's effectiveness, not just district performance? [Yes/No]

How will you ensure state investments translate to measurable academic gains for Black students? Identify one strategy you would expand and one you would end.

RESPONSE:

PART A: Yes, I support a state-level accountability dashboard with metrics that give our students the best chance to succeed.

As Attorney General, I opened an investigation into the Stockton Unified School District for overusing police to address disciplinary challenges among students and reached a settlement that changed their practices. Far too often children are being treated as criminals instead of students.

I also brought the Sausalito desegregation case, the first desegregation action in California in 50 years. We succeeded in changing how that district operated with reporting requirements and accountability structures that tracked whether children were segregated into classrooms based on race.

When Black children face suspension at 3.6 times the rate of their peers and rising graduation rates mask low academic proficiency, we cannot claim progress without honest measurement.

PART B: Here's what I will do.

Strengthen the Local Control Funding Formula so supplemental dollars actually reach

high-need students. Publish transparent tracking of every dollar from Sacramento to classroom. Districts that absorb targeted funds into general operations face

consequences.

You cannot close an achievement gap when students face trauma, housing instability, and untreated mental health crises. I will fund community schools with wraparound services: healthcare, counselors, mental health resources on every campus.

Black students benefit when they see themselves in their teachers. We need to improve pay, benefits, and working conditions. The target is securing a major, measurable increase in Black teachers in California public schools within my first term.

The strategy I will expand is community schools with healthcare, mental health, family support, and community voice on campus.

The strategy I will end is zero-tolerance discipline policies and over-policing that push Black children out of classrooms and into the justice system. Children must be treated as children who need to learn, not sent to law enforcement and detention.

Accountability means annual public reporting on Black student outcomes: proficiency, discipline disparities, college readiness. My administration's effectiveness gets measured alongside the districts. The Stockton and Sausalito cases proved that monitoring works. If numbers don't improve, we change the approach.

QUESTION 10

PUBLIC SAFETY, JUSTICE & PROP 36

Proposition 36 increases penalties for repeat offenses while mandating treatment alternatives.

What investments will ensure treatment mandates function as intended rather than defaulting to prison? Include fiscal commitments.

How will you implement Prop 36 without recreating racially disproportionate mass incarceration?

RESPONSE:

PART A: The people of California voted for Prop 36 and it's our responsibility to put this into practice. Prop 36 promises treatment but California doesn't have the beds or infrastructure for proper implementation.

We need to build the infrastructure now: Deploy Prop 1 dollars for psychiatric beds and crisis stabilization in high-wait counties while starting emergency procurement for assessed needs for goods and supplies. We must also build modular facilities where doors open on a more aggressive timeline. As Governor, I will propose a Treatment Mandate Implementation Fund for county navigation, transportation, and transitional housing. At HHS, I launched the 988 crisis lifeline from concept to nationwide implementation. I know how to build fast and at the largest of scales.

PART B: As Attorney General, I saw how discretion without structure becomes discrimination. As HHS Secretary, I treated addiction as public health and expanded coverage for people leaving incarceration.

My accountability framework starts with quarterly public data on every Prop 36 charging decision by race, county, and offense type. Real-time dashboards will be implemented so we can intervene before disparity patterns occur.

We will also create baseline diversion guidelines for each District Attorney to follow so

that treatment eligibility isn’t dependent on which courtroom you land in.

I’m committing funding for public defenders and alternative sentencing in the zip codes with the highest historical incarceration. Defendants need advocates who can fight for diversion and treatment waiting when they win.

QUESTION 11

HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS & SHELTER CRISIS (Part A)

Identify your top three priorities for addressing homelessness

RESPONSE:

Accelerate production of permanent supportive housing with wraparound services, Increase rental subsidies and homelessness prevention programs, Reform zoning and permitting to reduce housing production costs

QUESTION 12

HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS & SHELTER CRISIS (Part B)

What specific actions will you take to reduce per-unit costs while maintaining quality and accessibility? Include at least one politically difficult decision you're willing to make (e.g., override local zoning, challenge labor agreements, reform CEQA, restrict design requirements)

Identify two interventions to prevent and rapidly rehouse Black Californians experiencing homelessness, with specific funding sources and measurable outcomes.

RESPONSE:

California's $700,000-plus per-unit costs in cities like San Francisco are an accumulated failure. Every permit delay, every hearing adds dollars while people sleep outside.

First, we must streamline approvals with strong enforcement. This means implementing mandatory, by-right approvals for code-compliant affordable housing, particularly near transit, and limiting discretionary review. I will institute and enforce aggressive permitting timelines with public-facing dashboards.

Second, we need targeted CEQA reform for infill. Duplicative environmental review for infill sites that have already been analyzed in general plans must end. We will focus environmental rigor on greenfield development and sensitive areas with the goal of ending prolonged litigation on previously approved sites.

Finally, I will establish enforceable statewide housing standards with a baseline statewide housing policy with clear standards to ensure every local government contributes its fair share. Cities that persistently fail to meet their RHNA allocations will face clear consequences, not merely optional suggestions.

My first intervention is a Homelessness Prevention Fund for Black Renters.

This provides emergency rental assistance and legal representation for Black

households facing eviction in high-displacement neighborhoods. I will measurably reduce Black entries into homelessness within my first term.

My second intervention commits funding for rapid rehousing with Black-led navigation. We'll fund community organizations rooted in Black neighborhoods to provide culturally competent outreach and case management. I will permanently house thousands of families into homeownership with substantial equity stakes.

QUESTION 13

THE TRANSIT FISCAL CLIFF

Bay Area transit agencies face a combined $800M annual deficit beginning in FY 2027-28 and Bay Area voters will consider a regional sales tax measure to address this deficit.

Do you support the SB 63 regional sales tax measure for Bay Area transit agencies? [Yes/No]

If voters reject it, what specific state-level intervention will you pursue?

RESPONSE:

PART A: Yes. The Bay Area faces an $800 million annual transit cliff starting FY 2027-28. Without action, we're looking at service cuts that strand 400,000 daily riders who depend on BART and Muni to reach jobs, school, and medical appointments.

I support regional solutions driven by the people who use and fund these systems. SB 63 puts the question to voters where it belongs.

PART B: We'll work with the communities and the region to help them garner the support they need to bring in local resources.

The Governor already put in money as a loan that has to be repaid back- the state's funding bridges the gap while regions build sustainable local funding. This has to be done in close coordination with the state and local entities to ensure that this is done correctly.

If elected Governor, I will convene transit agencies, labor, housing advocates, and local governments to develop a framework that can ensure public trust and build broader support.

I will also push legislation giving agencies value capture authority. Transit-adjacent development that benefits from public investment should contribute to transit operations so that agencies are given flexible tools to reach their goals.

Working families are getting squeezed on housing, childcare, and healthcare. We cannot add failing transit to that burden.

QUESTION 14

THE WILDFIRE-RELATED INSURANCE CRISIS

Wildfire risk and other natural disaster risk has driven insurance premiums up dramatically, destabilizing housing markets.

Part A: Do you support restricting development in the wildland-urban interface (WUI)? [Yes/No]

Part B: How will you stabilize the insurance market? Identify one politically difficult action you are prepared to take.

RESPONSE:

Part A: No. I do not support blanket restrictions on development in the Wildland Urban Interface.

I support sensible development during a time when California has a housing crisis. Telling communities they cannot build isn't a fire policy and it makes our home shortage worse. The answer is building smarter, not building less.

As Attorney General, I raised concerns about developments with dangerous evacuation infrastructure, projects with only one point of egress that become death traps when fires move fast. I filled comment letters on the wildfire risks associated with projects in Lake, Monterey, and San Diego counties.

Developers who meet fire-safe standards should be able to build. I support aggressive building codes, defensible space requirements, home hardening mandates, and community firebreaks. The distinction is not where you build, but whether you build safely.

Part B: Insurance carriers did not flee California because of over-regulation. They fled because they collected premiums for decades while ignoring climate risk, and now they want Californians to bail them out.

My administration will break their stranglehold. Carriers can use catastrophe models

and reinsurance costs, but only if they commit to writing policies in distressed zip codes, provide documented mitigation discounts, and meet FAIR Plan depopulation targets tracked on public dashboards. I will demand that there is no more hiding behind actuarial tables while abandoning communities.

Rate relief comes with expanded access, meaningful discounts, and transparency families can verify. But I won't pretend we can have a functional market while holding rates artificially below actual risk. That's how we got carrier flight and a FAIR Plan overwhelmed with more than 650,000 policies.

I will never trade away consumer protections to make insurance executives comfortable.

QUESTION 15

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE INNOVATION ECONOMY

California leads globally in artificial intelligence, large language models, autonomous transportation, and precision medicine—yet the economic gains are unevenly distributed.

Part A: What role should the state government play in shaping partnerships with major corporations in advanced technologies? How will you ensure equitable job creation, worker protections, and workforce pathways for marginalized communities?

Part B: Where should California draw boundaries between innovation, regulation, and accountability? Identify one sector you'd aggressively invest in and one safeguard you'd impose.

RESPONSE:

PART A: My position on AI and technology is straightforward. AI is supposed to supplement workers, not supplant them. It should support workers, not replace them.

I don't just talk about taking on powerful corporate interests- I beat them. The $575 million Sutter Health settlement I won as Attorney General proved that even the biggest healthcare monopolies can be held accountable.

California's position as the global leader in AI, autonomous vehicles, and precision medicine gives us leverage, and my administration will use it. Our state government must actively shape how these technologies develop rather than celebrate job announcements while communities get left behind.

I will use purchasing power, permitting authority, and investment capital to negotiate real commitments from technology corporations. That means community benefit agreements with teeth, including local hiring targets, apprenticeship pipelines, and workforce investments that reach communities locked out of tech prosperity. Tax incentives will include enforceable job quality provisions, not just quantity.

On worker protections, I support "Human in the Loop" requirements that prohibit

automated systems from replacing licensed workers in healthcare, education, and critical sectors. Technology should enhance what workers do, not eliminate the workers themselves. Workers should be protected from invasive surveillance like biometrics, constant cameras, and productivity trackers. Before major employers deploy AI systems affecting workers, my administration will require impact assessments examining displacement, safety, and equity.

Privacy protection is essential. AI systems that collect, analyze, and act on personal data must be subject to strict privacy safeguards. Californians shouldn't have to choose between technological progress and control over their own information.

For marginalized communities, workforce pathways must be intentional. I will expand apprenticeships, community college training, and employer partnerships so students can move into clean energy, healthcare technology, and skilled trades without crushing debt.

PART B: California draws the line where innovation creates unaccountable harm. Algorithmic tools must be independently evaluated before deployment in healthcare. Developers face liability when AI causes patient harm or worker injury. Auditability requirements ensure bias can be detected and corrected.

The sector I will invest in is clean energy and climate technology. That means union jobs, climate progress, and benefits distributed across regions. Infrastructure funds should go first to frontline communities who bore the most pollution.

The safeguard I will impose is mandatory AI impact assessments before deployment in workplaces, healthcare, and public services. These assessments come with enforcement, transparency, and protecting workers. The principle is simple- technology should make workers' jobs better, not make workers obsolete.

QUESTION 16

GOVERNING STYLE & FEDERAL RELATIONS (Choosing your battles)

California frequently clashes with federal policy, often at fiscal risk.

Part A: In your first 100 days, how will you decide when to litigate versus negotiate?

Part B: Under what circumstances would you compromise to protect funding for Medi-Cal, housing, or infrastructure? Name one line you will not cross and one you might.

RESPONSE:

PART A: Litigation should not be the first option- negotiation should be. But if that doesn't work, you go to court.

I have proven I can do both. On negotiation, I led the first-ever Medicare drug price negotiations, achieving up to 79% off list prices on drugs like Januvia for the first time in the program's history. As Attorney General, I reached a $575 million settlement with Sutter Health, the largest healthcare antitrust settlement in California history. I secured billions from opioid manufacturers. These weren't friendly conversations. They were tough negotiations where the other side knew I would follow through if they walked away. But when negotiation fails when rights are at stake, I litigate and win. I filed over 120 legal actions against the first Trump administration.

We took the ACA to the Supreme Court and won.

We took DACA to the Supreme Court and won.

We fought for clean car standards.

We stopped ICE raids.

I know how to protect California from Washington because I have beaten them in courtrooms with real consequences. My framework is this: negotiate from strength first and make clear what California will and will not accept. But never negotiate away

constitutional rights because those are not bargaining chips.

PART B: I will compromise on administrative flexibility to protect funding. That includes how programs are structured, reporting requirements, and implementation timelines. Federal dollars keep Californians housed, healthy, and connected. Losing that funding to prove a political point is negligent.

The line I will not cross is mass deportations. I will not accept any requirement forcing California to participate in mass deportation, discrimination based on immigration status, or denial of services based on identity. I will never trade human rights for highway funds.

The line I would cross is protecting reproductive rights even if the federal government says they no longer protect reproductive rights. I would cross that line. California will be a sanctuary for reproductive healthcare regardless of what Washington demands.

QUESTION 17

FINAL QUESTION: WHY YOU? WHY NOW?

Why are you prepared to govern California at this moment—not just to win an election, but to manage fiscal constraint, unfinished justice, and public trust? - Avoid campaign rhetoric. Be direct.

RESPONSE:

It is time that the hardest working and lowest earning finally get their share in the fifth largest economy in the world.

My parents came to this country with $12 in their pockets. My dad was a construction worker and a proud union member. My mom was a clerical worker. They raised four kids, bought a home my father built with his own hands, sent us to college, and retired with dignity. That was the California dream. I am running to make sure the next generation can do what my parents did.

I have run large organizations under impossible pressure. At HHS, I managed 90,000 employees and a $1.7 trillion budget while navigating a pandemic that killed over a million Americans. As Attorney General, I took Donald Trump to court 122 times and won. I know what it means to govern in crisis.

California now faces a hostile federal government, a structural budget deficit, and an affordability emergency pushing working families out of the state my parents built their lives in. This moment requires someone who has already operated at this scale, already fought these fights, already made hard calls with real consequences.

I have done this before. I am ready to do it again.