

LWV QUESTIONS FOR VOTERS GUIDE: RANDI SHADE

Education:

1988: B.A., University of Texas at Austin, Plan II Honors Program

1992: M.B.A., Harvard University Graduate School of Business

Experience:

- 18-year resident, currently at-home mom;
- Founder, Charitygift (sold to public company, 2005);
- Founder, AmeriCorps in Texas (Governor's Office, 1992 – 96);
- Executive Director, Entrepreneurs Foundation (2002 – 05);
- Past Boards: Austin Clean Energy Initiative, PeopleFund, Chamber of Commerce, UT 125 Commission, Leadership Austin, TexChange, Texas Hillel.

1. The Austin City Council appointed the Charter revision Committee, which recommended single member districts be placed on the ballot. In your opinion, what is the best system of representation for the citizens of Austin?

I don't believe our current system of representation is broken, but it's possible we could be better served by a mixed system incorporating both single-member districts and at-large seats. A mixed system ensures every citizen has more than just one representative, while still offering opportunities for more responsive, more accountable, and possibly more diverse representation. Without a detailed recommendation offered for this election, I support revisiting the issue after the 2010 census.

2. How would you define affordable housing for Austin? What programs would you recommend to provide affordable housing?

I define affordable housing as rental units accessible to families making 60% of median family income (MFI) and ownership units accessible to families making 80% of MFI. To deliver these options citywide, I would prioritize voter-approved bond funding, strengthening the City's relationship with leading local nonprofits working successfully in this arena, and developing the Community Land Trust and other mechanisms that encourage private sector participation in the delivery of affordable housing options.

3. The City of Austin has a tradition of supporting local businesses but subsidizing large corporations. How would you equalize the subsidies given to large and small businesses?

I believe incentives, whether for big or small businesses, should be used rarely and only when they provide a clear, direct economic benefit to current local residents. I will not support any economic development strategy that fails to generate job opportunities for a broad range of low and middle-income residents or that fails to create new local tax revenue sufficient to pay for the cost of the growth it has facilitated.

4. The City of Austin is promoting high-density development. How would you address the increase in traffic that this creates?

To build a truly transit-oriented community where driving isn't necessary to do everything, we must include transportation planning in all our zoning and neighborhood planning decisions. I support enhancing our mass transit system, promoting car-sharing and telecommuting, increasing our investment in sidewalk repairs, and facilitating biking and walking wherever possible, but especially in central neighborhoods and downtown, where it can pay the most dividends in terms of traffic (and pollution) reduction.