

Speaker 1 ([00:00:05](#)):

All right. Welcome everybody. Okay. Welcome to Pol second session of the day. Maybe first for some of you, happy to have you here. I'm Bella Ross, social media producer for Voice of San Diego. Um, if you're not familiar with us, we're a nonprofit, these organization, we are here to hold public officials accountable and give you all information to advocate for your communities and engage in the democratic process. So we're a nonprofit. We need members to, uh, fund things like this in jobs like mine. So if you support us, you can do that, and you are supporting us by being here today. That's great. Um, I'd like to take a minute to recognize our sponsors who helped make this event possible. A special thanks to the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of San Diego for being our partner now for the seventh year.

Speaker 1 ([00:00:58](#)):

Big thanks to the Qua Band of the Kuai Nation, the United Domestic Workers Union, A a RP, the San Diego Foundation Business for Good Hit Ski Development, the San Diego Municipal Employees Association, the Asian Business Association, planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest Atlantis Group, San Diego Art Matters, and the Southern California Rental Housing Association. We'd also like to recognize KPBS and I, news Source. We're all partnering this event today is part of that partnership. And throughout the election season and beyond that, you guys gonna be seeing content that's gonna be coming out from all of us. Part of this initiative called Public Matters, we are teaming up to hopefully help you guys be better informed, engaged with democratic process. So when you start seeing those collaborative posts on Instagram, that is what that's about. Um, and so throughout this, myself and the volunteers are be going around and picking up note cards. I'll do a couple rounds. They're back there, the volunteers. I'll do a couple rounds at any point. Raise your hand if you want a card or want to give me a note card and we'll figure it out. And then we'll have about 15 minutes at the end to answer all of those questions. Um, so now introducing to Lane, north County Reporter for Boys of San Diego. She's gonna take it from here. You Woo.

Speaker 1 ([00:02:17](#)):

Hi everyone. Thank you so much for joining us today. Um, my name is Tegu Lang. Like Bella said, I'm the North County Reporter for Voice of San Diego. Um, I'm joined by San Diego's current District three City Council member Steven Whitburn. It's given a hand and attorney and homeless advocate, Colleen Cusack. Thank you both for joining us today. All right. So behind me is a map of San Diego's

Speaker 2 ([00:02:59](#)):

District three. It covers downtown North Park, Hillcrest, and several neighborhoods around Aboa Park. The district's most pressing issue is homelessness. There are thousands of unsheltered homeless people in San Diego, and most of them are concentrated in District three. There's also a lack of affordable housing facing District three and the city of San Diego as a whole. The supply of affordable housing in San Diego is not close to meeting the demand of low income and very low income renters. There's also San Diego structural budget deficit issues of public safety and the need for better storm water infrastructure and more facing District three. I actually live in district three. I live in North Park. So I'm excited to get into all of these issues today. So let's start with homelessness. Hold on, let me fix this mic. <affirmative>. Okay. Um, candidate Whitburn, you spearheaded San Diego's unsafe camping ordinance, which prohibits camping on public property when shelter is available, and then in certain areas like some parks. And within two blocks of schools, camping is prohibited regardless of shelter availability. What is your response to critics of the ordinance who say the policy criminalizes people for being homeless and that criminalization may end up disproportionately impacting people of color?

Speaker 3 ([00:04:32](#)):

So the, uh, ordinance absolutely does not criminalize homelessness. I think, uh, everybody, uh, here in this room, everybody at the city and certainly I, uh, understand the very difficult circumstances that, uh, people can experience, uh, that can cause them to fall into homelessness. Uh, and the city has been, uh, doing everything that it possibly can to help people get back on their feet. Uh, I have spearheaded a couple of initiatives, uh, that have enabled the city to make progress. Uh, I champion our new safe sleeping sites, uh, which, uh, provide a safer and healthier place, uh, for people to go away from homes, away from businesses. We've had more than a thousand people take advantage of that come off the streets, uh, and go to those places that have, uh, security and bathrooms and connections to services. Uh, and the unsafe camping ordinance, what it does is it says, if we have shelter beds available for you, if we have a safe sleeping site available for you, if we have better options, then you can't choose to live in a tent on the sidewalk.

Speaker 3 ([00:05:38](#)):

I think that's common sense. I think that's reasonable, and most San Diegans agree with that. Uh, so we are going to continue to encourage people to take advantage of the many services that we are offering them. Uh, and the unsafe camping ordinance, not only, uh, has, uh, resulted in more people leaving the streets, um, it has, uh, led to a 60% decline in the upper encampments, uh, downtown, uh, and a nine point a half percent decline in the broken encampments citywide. Uh, this is better for people experiencing homelessness. It's dangerous on the streets, uh, and it's certainly better for our neighborhoods as well.

Speaker 2 ([00:06:17](#)):

Thank you. I actually have a follow up question before we get to, um, candidate <inaudible>. So the Downtown Housing Partnership released a new plan recently to address homelessness, and they're calling for a 24 7 no tent policy. Is that something you would support? And how would that policy interact with the existing campaign ban?

Speaker 3 ([00:06:38](#)):

Uh, the existing campaign, uh, says that if we have a shelter bed, if we have a, uh, safe sleeping site, if we have a home, a permanent housing unit available for you, uh, then you cannot choose to sleep in an encampment on the sidewalk. Uh, and I think that we want people to take advantage of that. I think we do need to encourage people to take care of that. The downtown partnership, uh, has really advocated for downtown residents and downtown businesses because one of the biggest, uh, challenges that we have faced downtown, uh, is in campus. We have had, uh, meeting planners come from out of state to downtown to look at holding a meeting here, and they decided against having their meeting in San Diego because of the encampments. I'm not okay with that. Uh, when I came into office, there were literally people, fortunately, not a lot, but there were people moving out of downtown businesses leaving downtown because they didn't feel safe because of the encampments. The status quo was not okay. We had to do something. We've done the right thing. It's safer and healthier for the people experiencing homelessness. It's better for our neighborhoods.

Speaker 2 ([00:07:54](#)):

Would you support a twenty four seven no temp call if it did come before the council?

Speaker 3 ([00:08:00](#)):

Well, I think that that is in effect what we have right now. Um, at the moment. Uh, if we have a safer and healthier place for you to go, uh, then, uh, you are not, uh, allowed to have a tent on the sidewalk. Um, we typically don't enforce it at night. Uh, but if we have a safer and healthier place for people to go, I think they need to take advantage of it.

Speaker 2 ([00:08:25](#)):

Okay. Thank you. Um, Colleen <inaudible>, you've been critical of the camping ban since it took effect. Can you explain why?

Speaker 4 ([00:08:39](#)):

So, hi, my background is in law. I've been a trial attorney for three decades, and I'm also an educator. I've educated college level, uh, criminal justice classes for 18 years, a lot of police in my classes. And then starting in 2001, I became a K 12 substitute teacher. So when I'm not in court, I drop a class to substitute, um, and I'm really enjoying that. But my background here is, uh, humanitarian approach. I'm very, uh, I'm into education, science, evidence, best studies, and every single study out there. And there are lots of them say that when we criminalize folks, uh, when we punish them for acts that are incumbent upon, uh, because of their status as homeless, um, then we entrench chronic homelessness. We make homelessness longer, worse, more traumatic. We are not getting us anywhere closer to solutions. Um, so let's not mix any words.

Speaker 4 ([00:09:41](#)):

When we, um, are talking about encampments, we're talking about groups of homeless people, breaking up groups of homeless people. Um, it doesn't reduce homelessness every month for the past 29 months, more people have become homeless for the very first time than have been housed. That's the reality. And if we break up encampments, that just means we have more individual homeless people scattered throughout our communities. Now, there's the re there's the gaslighting that you're told that, oh, this ordinance is only gonna be enforced if we have enough, uh, shelter beds. Well, the reality is we don't have any shelter beds except between the hours of 8:00 AM and noon, because 8:00 AM is when about 25 or so open up. And if you're eligible for those, those fill up very quickly by, um, noon or so. So that would mean we wouldn't be doing any enforcing outside those hours.

Speaker 4 ([00:10:37](#)):

Since those are the only hours enforcement is possible, shelter beds would practically be available. There are the have-nots that CANNOT and the will knots people who have no shelter, who want shelter. 80% of people who ask for shelter in the city of San Diego were turned down 80%. Um, CANNOT people that even if every single bed was open today, they will not be allowed in. And then the, um, will knots people for various reasons, um, who won't enter the shelter system. Right now, we are not even servicing those who want shelter and can't get it. It makes no sense to have police officers chasing around breaking up encampments in one of our 13 council districts and moving people into a 10 from that one council district into another council district and calling it a success end of day. We're not any closer to solving the problem.

Speaker 4 ([00:11:33](#)):

And it frustrates me as a resident of San Diego, I've lived here for 26 years. We need to get closer to solutions. Since this ordinance has been enacted, since my opponent has taken all this chronic homelessness has doubled. Chronic homelessness is the population that's hardest to house, and it's very predictable that it's doubled ending The criminalization of homelessness would free up funds. Right now. We are, um, we get asked if we are engaging in criminalization when we apply for competitive hu funding. Uh, federal government doesn't want to give cities money when those cities are wasting it and contributing to increasing homelessness. So it would be cheaper in the long run to end criminalization much more effective. All of these shelter beds, um, have been filled since this ordinance started, um, and remain filled. The, um, when the police approach somebody, they have absolutely no idea whether there's a shelter bed for that person. They arrest first or threaten arrest first, ask questions later. They're not the intake that decides whether or not that person's eligible. And so, um, there's a fundamental lack of

understanding about how enforcement is working on the ground, um, as opposed to as to what it's designed to accomplish. You like to

Speaker 3 ([00:12:55](#)):

Respond? Sure. I'd love to. Uh, a few points. First of all, we have not lost any funds as a result of our approach to homelessness. In fact, we receive quite a bit of federal and state funding. Uh, second of all, our ordinance is much less restrictive than what the US Supreme Court has allowed. And what, uh, other cities, such as Grants Pass Oregon currently do. Uh, we are focused on tent structures, not individuals, tent structures. Um, and when there is a shelter bed or a safe sleeping site available, and in fact, because we have the law, we have had to do relatively little enforcement. People experiencing homelessness by and large, um, have been willing to abide by the law. But most importantly, I want you to think about the consequence of my opponent's approach. If my opponent had her way and overturned the ordinance, then you would see all those encampments back on the streets downtown, all those encampments back on the streets throughout district three a year ago in many, there were 2,104 encampments on the streets downtown in the last year and a half. As a result of my ordinance in the safe sleeping sites, we have gotten that number down to 857. That is a 60% drop. That is progress. That's 857 to many. We've got more work to do, but we're moving in the right direction. If you want to go backwards and put those thousands encampments back on the street, then colleague Ack is the candidate for you.

Speaker 4 ([00:14:34](#)):

Did you want to Absolutely. Council members disingenuous at best and lying at worst. He knows that I don't want to put people back on the street because he's heard me see this over and over again at multiple events. I want people to have safe, sane options right now. They don't have safes and sane options. Every single building that's declared a shelter in the city of San Diego, the, the Health Safety and Habitability Codes cease to exist in that building because of a declaration that this council signed. So if these buildings are among the, the most dangerous buildings, I want to make these buildings safe so that people want to be in them and don't fear them. The tent camp has rat infestations, moldy wooden platforms that form the, the floor to a tent that doesn't have a floor. 'cause it's an ice fishing can. People are, uh, being moved from one unsafe place to a safe place.

Speaker 4 ([00:15:37](#)):

They're being moved from one unsafe place to another unsafe place. And the second unsafe place, the unsafe is setting place, is dramatically by the city. So I think it's our job if we're putting tax money into these options, and we, we should be, and we need to have these options while people wait for housing to become available, that we make these options safe, and that we hurry up the process so people aren't waiting on 10 years on average. And these options for housing to become available. And we use other options in addition so that we are speeding up the process and we aren't allowing people to remain. Do not think that I want people to, to remain on the street. In fact, I know through a webinar I would be applying a human rights based approach using, um, directives that are in place that help people, uh, across the globe protect residents from the exploitation of their communities, private equity and, um, free up housing options for people that live there instead of investors.

Speaker 3 ([00:16:40](#)):

That was a lovely world salad. But you have publicly said that you would overturn the ban on encampments. What do you think the consequence would be if we overturn the ban on encampments and allow those encampments back out of the sidewalk?

Speaker 4 ([00:16:57](#)):

We aren't allowing anything. The ban doesn't do anything effectively because we don't have available shelter beds. So, effectively, right now, since we have our shelter beds, police shouldn't be approaching anybody to see if they need housing. There's a wait list at the tent camp, and like I said, 80% of folks that are that seek these beds are turned away. So all we would be doing is what you promised to do four years ago, making social workers the frontline of this problem and not police officers taking that 20, uh, \$28 million. We're paying to 73.15 police officers who are assigned to nothing else but the chase. Homeless people are out. Yes, they are. Every time the police ask them to move, they move. And that's what we're doing. It's just whack-a-mole. We're just moving people from one place to another place, keeping them constantly moving. That's not a solution, and that's not, um, sustainable long term either.

Speaker 4 ([00:17:52](#)):

Now, the, um, the tent structures that are out there, uh, they want to expand tent structures. We need to make sure that those tent structures are safe, not just simply hiding people behind somewhere where we can't see what's, what's taking place. Um, and so the repeal of the ordinance just means that police officers would be free to enforce the short term vacation rental ordinance. Instead, we would, they would be free to respond to, um, 9 1 1 calls. Right now, none of those 73.15 officers will respond to a 9 1 1 call. They're nine to five, six to three Monday through Friday. So we need solutions. But this ordinance is not providing us a solution. It's in such prominent chronic homelessness. It is counterproductive, futile, expensive, and pro.

Speaker 3 ([00:18:46](#)):

The city's response to 9 1 1 calls actually is better than its goal for response to 9 1 1 calls. Uh, the city is very effective in responding to emergency. So that's simply false. Um, secondly, uh, you have publicly stated that you are running with a specific intent of overturning the ban on encampments. Uh, there is no question whatsoever that that would result in more encampments on the street. You would be specifically reversing the ban that has gotten encampments off the street. So to suggest anything otherwise is nonsense. Secondly, one of the reasons why the safe sleeping sites and the shelter beds are full is because we have gotten people off the streets as a result of the unsafe camping ordinance. That's why our shelter beds are full. That's why our safe sleeping sites are full, because people are taking advantage of the opportunity to get off the streets and into a safer and healthier place.

Speaker 3 ([00:19:44](#)):

And if we continue to add more safe sleeping sites, if we continue to add more shelter beds, we'll get more people off the streets because they will be complying with the law. Your suggestion that there's something wrong with safe sleeping sites is absurd. Obviously, a place where people can go that has security, that has showers, that has bathrooms, that has laundry, that has meals, that has connections to services, that is of course better than living in a tent on the street where 600 people died on the streets last year. We are making so much progress that it is so important that we don't go backwards.

Speaker 2 ([00:20:25](#)):

Thank you. Um, I want to keep this conversation moving. So, candidate Woodburn, um, some have argued that the camping ban doesn't address, you know, lack of shelter. Um, the shelters are full. And then at the beginning of next year, we'll see a reduction in about 700 shelter beds. So what are your plans for creating more shelter in San Diego if you're elected for a second

Speaker 3 ([00:20:49](#)):

Term? Well, we are gonna be taking an important step on that this coming week. Um, we are gonna be considering a short term shelter action plan. Uh, that'll be Tuesday. That'll be Tuesday afternoon. Uh, I support that plan. Uh, it prioritizes, uh, several different things. Number one, uh, we will be expanding the

safe sleeping sites that more than 1200 people have taken advantage all of already. That's 1200 people who have come off the street and taken advantage of them. Uh, and we have a waiting list of 300 people who want to get into those safe sleeping sites. So the second that we expand those safe sleeping sites, you're gonna see hundreds of people come off the streets and take advantage of those safe sleeping sites. So that's number one. Um, and immediately after we do that, we're actually gonna fund that program. That'll be Tuesday afternoon.

Speaker 3 ([00:21:36](#)):

Um, the second thing that we're looking at is the use of vacant hotel rooms that we have in various places that we can get at a reasonably good cost. Uh, those will be valuable for people who are particularly vulnerable, families with children and other, uh, constituents. Thirdly, uh, we have a request for information that is out. Uh, we are asking property owners around the city to let us know if they have a property that they think would be a good candidate for the city. Leasing it as a shelter. We want to hear, we wanna make sure we know all the properties that would be eligible and a good candidate for that. And fourth, we're looking at expanding our diversion program. Uh, that is another thing that I support. It has been shown that were it not for \$300 a month, so many people would be able to stay in their apartments. It is so much more cost effective for us to provide a \$300 subsidy to help somebody stay in their home than it is to spend thousands of dollars to try to get them into a home, uh, after they've already ended up into homelessness. So that is a four crime plan. We're gonna be considering it Tuesday afternoon. If you support it, please come support it, how they'll be supporting it. Uh, it will help more people get off the streets, and we'll be taking action on it right after that.

Speaker 2 ([00:22:57](#)):

Thank you. Uh, candidate q that, what are your plans for creating more shelter if elected?

Speaker 4 ([00:23:06](#)):

So we have close to 6,000 home home rentals in San Diego that have been taken away from the local residence. The option of renting there or, or possibly purchasing the home, and are reserved for, uh, vacationers reserved as short term vacation rentals on and Airbnb that. So 5,800 in the city, excluding Mission Beach and, um, 1,522 in our district alone. So these units, we have, these units should not be held and reserved road counters when we have a housing and emergency crisis. Now, the plan put forth by my opponent to, uh, for request for information, why four years into his term, three and a half years later, is, is this request being put out? Why wasn't this done three and a half years ago? These shelter beds are coming offline. It's not a surprise. They've known for, for years that this is gonna be what's happening.

Speaker 4 ([00:24:19](#)):

And yet they wait until the last minute and act like it's a emergency. So this, um, city is not being serious about these options. We would, we could open up, um, I'm sorry, we could master lease the underutilized Airbnbs, the short term vacation rentals at air market value. For those folks who are denied shelter bed, these are the cannots people that will never be able to get shelter bed. And this includes, um, caretaker couples, it includes disabled persons. Um, it includes the L-G-B-T-Q community over age 24. There's no affirming beds for them. So if, um, and families, there are only 200 shelter beds in the city of San Diego for families. And there were 11,636 students age K to 12 that experienced homelessness in one year alone. So opening up the short term vacation rentals for possible master lease or enforcing the ordinance to reduce these units, um, would help put these individuals in our communities.

Speaker 4 ([00:25:33](#)):

We would see that the homeless problem is not simply we people with mental health issues, people with substance abuse issues, but there's a, um, lot of folks that need our help and support that need these

housing options to be made available to them. Um, and I want to expand the, uh, tent options and as well as make the safe, the indoor options more safe. So people will wanna go to them. But the outdoor options, the indoor options, they have to be safe. We can't just put the word safe in front of the camp and, um, call it a day. They have to, in fact be safe. Thank you.

Speaker 3 ([00:26:11](#)):

So let me address this sort of notion that shortterm ification rentals are, uh, part of the solution and also the, uh, question about our work to, uh, identify shelter sites. Uh, the fact of the matter is that, uh, we passed restrictions on short-term vacation rentals a couple of years ago. And I voted in favor of that. It was a compromise proposal. I supported it. Uh, it has improved the situation, but my opponent is fixated on this magical notion that if we somehow eliminate short term vacation rentals, then abracadabra, it's gonna solve our housing crisis. It's gonna solve our homelessness crisis. Uh, that is not a serious position. Uh, we are not going to convert million dollar homes into, uh, affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness. That's not the way that's gonna happen. We need to build more affordable housing. That's how we're going to get people, uh, into affordable housing and back on their feet.

Speaker 3 ([00:27:13](#)):

As far as the search for shelter sites, we have been adding hundreds of shelter beds. If we've been doing that during the entire term, uh, we have added, uh, hundreds of shelter beds. Uh, but because in part of the work that I've been doing, more people are wanting to come off the streets and we need to have the shelter for them. We have a line of people every morning at the Homeless Navigation Center on Imperial Avenue who walk a shelter bed. Uh, and I believe that we have an obligation to provide it for them. And so that is why we are pulling out all the stops to make sure that we have shelter and we can get people into a safer and healthier place.

Speaker 4 ([00:27:51](#)):

Thank you. Kennedy, did you want to respond? Yes, please. So the restrictions that were passed, you were, you were led to believe that only one, um, uh, one owner per per unit. That's not the case. Owners can have multiple units and just designate different hosts for those units. So that's not, not changed. I've never said that there's a single solution to homelessness. Homelessness is caused by a, is a death by a thousand cuts. There are a lot of responses that we can provide that will mitigate, um, and, and, uh, ease the, the, the homelessness crisis. The, um, I went around and certain went to the short term vacation rentals in our district, and I'm still going to these and they're not, uh, well, the average price of our homes, right? A million dollars. We have nice little one bedrooms that are un underutilized cottages, clusters of eight of 'em.

Speaker 4 ([00:28:47](#)):

Um, these, uh, are not, would, there's different levels of their homelessness crisis. Homelessness isn't just a person on the street corner that doesn't have a bed. It's also the, uh, four people that are living in a, um, or the eight people that are living in a house meant for, for two or four. It's, um, also the workers that are moving a trip commuting out of our county because they can't find affordable houses here. And that would free up, um, more houses for purchase and for, uh, utilization here locally. Um, and there's additional solutions to that problem as well. Um, and in terms of adding hundreds of bags, nothing could be further from the truth. The neck balance, this administration has added 59 beds total 600 beds are slated to come offline. Um, and so the, everything that this administration has done has been very reactive and not proactive. The pro action should have started when the, uh, oath was sworn and the, at the beginning of the term and not at the end when the campaigning, again.

Speaker 2 ([00:29:58](#)):

Thank you. Um, candidate Woodburn, I wanna ask you about, um, the affordable housing shortage that we're seeing in the city of San Diego. Numbers from the city's most recent housing element progress report show that the city is not on track to meet its state mandated goals for affordable housing. So if we elected, what are your plans to encourage and secure development of more low income housing?

Speaker 3 ([00:30:22](#)):

The city has not been on track, uh, to, uh, meet as mandated goals of affordable housing for many years. It either had many cities in California, uh, which is one of the reasons why I have been so focused on the affordable housing crisis, uh, not only in district three, but citywide. It is one of, if not the biggest challenge facing so many of the people who live in our city, particularly, uh, working folks, uh, as well as many of our seniors, uh, who, uh, in the case of working folks have simply been unable to afford, uh, uh, a home, uh, and are struggling to, to be able to live here, uh, in many cases, uh, in, in the city of which they grew up. And we have many seniors who retired on what they consider to be a, uh, um, uh, an adequate income, uh, when they retired.

Speaker 3 ([00:31:09](#)):

But with red skyrocketing, their, uh, income has not kept up with the cost of rent. And today, people who are retired are the fastest growing number of people falling into homelessness. It's tragic, and we can't let that continue. So what have I done about it? Um, a number of things. Number one, I voted in favor. Um, every single housing proposal that has come before the city council, um, and, uh, they have been approved. Every single housing proposal, uh, in district three has been approved. And that includes income restricted, affordable housing. What do I mean about income? Restricted, affordable housing? That is housing where the rent is specifically tied to the household's income. So it is, uh, affordable. We have added citywide, uh, more housing and more affordable housing, uh, in the last four years than we have in decades. Um, and that has been led by the addition of housing and income restricted affordable housing in District three.

Speaker 3 ([00:32:13](#)):

And we are seeing the results of that. Um, in the, prior to the last couple of years, we were seeing double digit increases in rent every year. People were seeing their rents skyrocket year over year, over year. And that was what was forcing people and seniors out of their homes as a result of the increased supply. What we are seeing now, and there have been a couple of stories in the media about this, is rents have leveled off in some cases are going up a little bit. In some cases they're actually going down a little bit. But overall, year over year, rents have leveled off, and that is specifically attributed to the increase in supply, supply and demand. It is, uh, a result of the iru supply and result of the, uh, supply that this city council, uh, has created. Uh, and so if we are able to continue to increase the supply, if we're able to keep red's level and as people increase their incomes through annual raises, that delta between, uh, what they're paying in rent and the increase in income, that puts more money in people's pockets. And that's what we need to do.

Speaker 2 ([00:33:23](#)):

Thank you candidate, Zach. Um, why do you think the city is behind on meeting and affordable housing goals? And what would you do differently?

Speaker 4 ([00:33:31](#)):

Well, we're kind of handing to developers the opportunity to develop San Diego without, um, uh, requiring anything enough back from them. And their incentive is profit. And so we're getting a lot of high deals when what we need is sneakers. Um, and so we ask for more, um, sneakers and they say, okay, we'll put out a whole bunch more on high heels first, and then, you know, every now and then we'll throw

you a sneaker. So a hundred fifty six eighty in North Park, only eight of those were affordable. Um, San Diego was one of the most affordable unaffordable cities in the world. The, uh, August, 2024, Sandy home prices were up 4.7% compared to last year. And with the median price of 974,000 median, we have a 26% office vacancy that's not going to improve. We should be, um, converting those offices to SROs, uh, single room occupancy units.

Speaker 4 ([00:34:37](#)):

We lost a whole bunch of those back in 2010 to 2016 with the promise that those would be replaced. They never have been. We have roughly 3,500 unsheltered folks on the street right now. And, um, if we had those 10,000 SROs, we would have places for all of them to go. Um, we have new laws in place, uh, coming. We had a, a law last year passed that allows, uh, properties to be built on school district land and church land without zoning restriction. And that will allow for properties for, um, uh, workers, uh, to live their, I as a, um, substitute teacher. We have parent educators that work in a district that can't afford to live in the district. Um, and these folks are helping our students. Um, the, the most, I think, important component in the classroom. The, uh, so we, we have to stop, um, with this big and switch.

Speaker 4 ([00:35:39](#)):

We had a housing report that came out that said that, um, we're doing pretty good, maybe BB plus on our production of market rate housing, but we are at like an F minus for a production of affordable housing. And, um, we need to improve upon that, not make excuses. The, even if we were to meet all of our <inaudible>, um, goals, our regional health housing needs assessment goals, um, that would only put 13,000 houses into the market. Um, each year we only getting about 6,000 of those 13 five each year. Um, even if we did each, each of those 13 five we're way far away from the 70,000 units that we need. So we need to think outside the box. It can't simply be the affordable housing projects. And speaking on that, this council passed, uh, in its housing reform package, a provision that affordable housing doesn't have, that has to be produced with respect to a market rate project, doesn't have to be produced in that same zip code.

Speaker 4 ([00:36:47](#)):

It can be produced in another zip code excluding promise zone. So that restricts the areas that we're gonna have affordable housing to fuse zip code, expect a bunch of Mira Mesa, Claremont Mesa, um, and it excludes it from other areas, which makes it less likely we're gonna be able to meet our affordable housing needs. Additionally, those units that have to be produced don't have to be produced for up to five years after the original project. The emergency is now, we have to act now. And so that was the complete wrong direction to take, and I would seek to reverse that and collect it.

Speaker 3 ([00:37:26](#)):

That statement that the city got an F minus on the construction of affordable housing. I think you made that up because that's simply not true. Do you know that 27% of the housing units, uh, that the city built last year were income restricted, affordable housing? 27% more than a quarter. That is far more than what is required. It is far more than the city has ever built in its past, and most of it was built in the district that I represent in district three. We've got Harrington Heights. It is under construction right now. Hundreds of units of income restricted, affordable housing. The court has held apartments are under construction right now. We have had units come line that are affordable housing and people have already moved in. We've got units under construction right now. We've got more units in the pipeline. I am proud of what our city is doing to add affordable housing to the mix we're doing more than ever before. We need to do more, but we're moving in the right direction. It's exactly what we need to be doing.

Speaker 4 ([00:38:23](#)):

Wanna give you ready to respond. DCF minus is my assessment based on the fact that 10%, 10%, there's no letter grade, but there is. What you could do, each of you could do right now is Google the San Diego housing report and look at the recommendations and look how it says that we're meeting our market rate and we are not meeting our, um, affordable housing goals. And we should be, this is an eight year plan, so we should be, and we are three years, so be eight year plan. So we should be roughly around 25, 37 0.5% for that. So 27% is below where we should be for three years, and we should not be accepted. We should not be, um, proud of that, and we should work to improve it.

Speaker 2 ([00:39:11](#)):

Thank you. Um, I want to talk a little bit about the city's budget deficit candidate Cusack. The city of San Diego is facing a \$200 million structural budget deficit, which city leaders had to close using one-time funds to finalize the most recent budget. Do you support Measure E, which is the 1 cent sales tax increase that will be on the November val ballot and is projected to bring in roughly \$400 million each year in revenue?

Speaker 4 ([00:39:41](#)):

Oh, short answer, no, I don't. Um, the reason I don't is because we wouldn't have a structural budget deficit for it, not for Ash Street. So this tax should say, just should be called the Todd Tax. So, uh, 233 million is what we're paying for a building that was appraised at 67 million and that we purchased for 87 million. And that can't be occupied because it's filled with asbestos. Um, we are paying \$32,000 a day on that to pay for that. Uh, the mayor took funds rated the, um, capital Projects Fund. And the Capital Projects Fund pays for things like storm water drains and infrastructure. And so this, how can we trust this, uh, our government over with another fund increase where they haven't shown to be good stewards of the money? We've been trust them before. Will this just be additional funds that they can slide to their donors in another billionaire bailout? Um, we need to be, um, more responsible with this. I think we need to hold the criminals accountable for Ash Street accountable and get ourselves out of that and not continue to, um, there has to be some accountability and there has not been any accountability by this Council for the Mayor and the, um, as sheet that they've, uh, delivered upon us.

Speaker 2 ([00:41:20](#)):

Um, candidate Woodburn, do you support Measure E? And, um, if you wanna respond to anything, can Ick said as well? I'll

Speaker 3 ([00:41:29](#)):

Respond to everything she said. Um, so, uh, yes. Uh, so Measure E is gonna be on, uh, the ballot, uh, uh, that everybody will receive, uh, the, the proposed one set sales tax. Um, and everybody will have to make their own decision about whether or not they want to, uh, support that penny increase. Um, I'm going to vote for it, and I'll tell you why I am going to vote for it. Um, San Diego right now is tied for having the lowest sales tax, um, of any city in San Diego County. In fact, if you go, uh, and shop in National City, you pay more in sales tax to fund their city services then when they come to San Diego and spend money, uh, in our city. I don't think that's right. Um, I think that, uh, our sales tax should be on par with the other cities, uh, in our region.

Speaker 3 ([00:42:21](#)):

And if we did that, that would bring in \$400 million a year to our city. That's \$400 million that we could use to help get people experiencing homelessness back on their feet that we could use to help create more affordable housing that we could use to help repair the streetlights, fix the streets, and all the other things that we need to do. The city of San Diego has had a structural budget deficit for years far before 1 0 1 s Street. The city's structural expenses exceeded the city's ongoing revenues. That's a structural budget

deficit. It's been a problem for many, many years, and it's one of the reasons why some of our, uh, conditions are as poor as they are. We need to address that. We've been filling the gap with one time funds, for instance, the Pandemic Relief that got us through for quite a bit. Uh, we filled the gap by making subtle cuts here and there.

Speaker 3 ([00:43:23](#)):

If we had \$400 billion a year, we would be able to address the structural budget deficit, and we would be able to fully fund the programs and services that our constituents have every right to expect their city to provide. Now, one of what Ash three contributed little, if anything, to the city's structural budget deficit one oh Ash Street is absolutely a source of frustration for every San Diego. It is a source of frustration for me, but the answer to our city's problems, the answer to the structural budget deficit, the answer to the need for programs and services that our cities deserve, is not to look backward and wr our hands over the mistakes of the past, and to look forward and find solutions that are gonna improve our future for the people who live here. And that's what I've done for four years, and it's what I'll continue to do.

Speaker 2 ([00:44:16](#)):

Thank you. Uh, candidate q Zach, I want to go back to you. You said you don't support the sales tax increase. So if elected, what would your solutions be to addressing the budget deficit? So,

Speaker 4 ([00:44:30](#)):

I, I think we should be, uh, seeking to get more from developers when we develop projects to then have them contribute to our infrastructure needs that would reduce our budgetary needs. Um, I think we should be imposing a vacancy tax on underutilized vacant property in order to encourage its use during a housing and homelessness crisis. Um, and, um, a I think we should be enforcing on the short term vacation rental ordinance, and that would be producing revenue as well, that would go towards, uh, addressing the housing and homelessness crisis. We also have the revenue coming in, um, from measure, uh, C not measure B, the convention center, get my letters all confused sometimes. Um, and that's coming in and, and we'll have those funds as, as well. We also have many, many funds where funds are set aside not being used. Projects that haven't started yet, and, um, uh, that can be applied for this. I don't think we've been creative enough, and I don't think, um, uh, it's, I think it's disingenuous to say the whole reason we can't have nice things is because of, uh, once in sales tax. It hasn't been implemented yet, so that it, it absolves them over the last four years of doing anything 'cause that, uh, sales tax wasn't in place.

Speaker 2 ([00:45:57](#)):

Thank you. Um, candidate Whitburn, when budget talks were ongoing, um, mayor Todd Gloria had proposed cuts to certain programs, homelessness programs, um, some community programs for underserved communities. Now, those ultimately did not get approved. However, moving forward, if budget issues persist, how would you ensure that San Diego's budget problems aren't disproportionately impacting underserved communities?

Speaker 3 ([00:46:25](#)):

Well, that's a decision of the city council, and you're right. Uh, when those, um, initial proposals came forward, uh, the, uh, city council, uh, essentially said that that was not a direction that we were looking to go in. And I think that you would see that the city council would continue to take that stance. Now, um, one of the challenges, uh, is that the city budget, the initial version of the budget gets developed very early. Uh, and oftentimes, uh, there is, um, a lot that is not known about, uh, what revenues are gonna be coming in. And that's why you see, uh, an initial budget proposal. You see a revise, you see, uh, the, the city council. Uh, so it's, it is an evolving process. Uh, but I think one thing that you have seen in recent years is that the city has been very conscious of equity considerations.

Speaker 3 ([00:47:17](#)):

Uh, we have, uh, created, uh, an office of Race and Equity. Uh, we have made equity a budgetary principle, uh, and the city council has lived up to that. Uh, we have really looked at the budget through an equity lens. And it is because of that, uh, that we have ensured that, uh, some of the programs and services that, uh, get, uh, the most attention are those that benefit the people who need them most. That is one of the reasons why we changed our approach to development impact fees. Uh, previously, uh, we had a situation where, uh, development was occurring in the wealthiest neighborhoods. The development impact fees were staying in those neighborhoods. Uh, and therefore, uh, the, the, the neighborhoods with the most, uh, were getting the most, uh, we had taken a portion of those funds, uh, and said that those need to also be used to help lift up the neighborhoods that are struggling the most. Uh, we are doing that, we are moving money, uh, to ensure that every San Diego, uh, is supported by their city. Uh, the city council has been consistent on that. I've been consistent on that, and I would continue to be.

Speaker 2 ([00:48:28](#)):

Thank you. Um, candidate Cusack, do you have any response to that? Or I can go to the next question? No. Um, I asked if, so, during the budget talks, there were talks about cutting community programs for underserved communities. If you're elected, how would you ensure that underserved communities are disproportionately impacted by budget cuts?

Speaker 4 ([00:48:52](#)):

Um, and I've been fighting for marginalized populations now for three decades. Uh, the, so we have a huge humanitarian crisis right now that's equity related in the, uh, flood, uh, specifically the, the flooding, uh, as a result of the January, um, flood that was called the, was claimed to not be predictable, but, but anymore of these, uh, climate reactions, climbing disasters are becoming predictable and we need to, uh, account for them Here. We had a situation where folks were writing in to get it done, saying clean, our storm drains, clean storm drains, and some storm drains were being cleared, and others were having those get it done. Reports closed out without any action. And those were in D four, um, where we saw the flooding. And so that's a human, uh, that's a huge issue. And those 8,000 folks who were displaced and affected by that flooding, uh, there's zero city funding to assist them. There's been county funding, but the city has not stepped up to address that. And their role again, um, a lot of that occurred because they pulled the money out of capital improvements project. So they had to make up for that pullout some way, and debt took debt

Speaker 3 ([00:50:11](#)):

That could not be more false. There was no money whatsoever that was pulled out of infrastructure funding. There was a financing capital project

Speaker 3 ([00:50:19](#)):

That's infrastructure funding capital projects. Uh, they, there was a financing mechanism, uh, that, uh, that instead of funding some of those things with cash, uh, they were funded with resources that were based on debt financing. Whether the money was spent on infrastructure, uh, there was never any question about that. There was no reduction in funding for infrastructure. Uh, a financing mechanism does not necessarily impact, and in this case, it did not impact, uh, the resources that went into that. Um, so, um, the city of San Diego has a real need to improve its storm drain system, its infrastructure system. Um, as someone who opposes the sales tax, apparently, um, I hope you're gonna be able to, uh, find the dollars through your short term vacation levels, uh, and such that are going to fund the hundreds of billions of dollars we need, uh, to improve it. Because so far I haven't heard an answer for how you're gonna accomplish that, if you need one.

Speaker 2 (00:51:24):

Um, if you'd like to respond, I can give you one minute before we go to questions from the audience.

Speaker 2 (00:51:31):

Um, alright. So we're gonna transition to questions. Um, so our first question today will actually be asked by an Erin Price fellow. Her name is Adelina. You wanna come up here each year? The Aaron Price Fellows program selects 40 kind, inquisitive, open-minded ninth graders from a pool of 300 applicants for a three year journey. They go behind the scenes to see how cities function, explore the role of community members in shaping society, and develop empathy and skills for navigating a diverse world. The program is a high school leadership experience, started in 1991 by the Price family for the founders of the Price Club and Price Smart. The mission of Aaron Price Fellows program is to prepare a highly motivated and diverse group of San Diego public high school students to be responsible, engaged, and caring members of their community. Today there are over a thousand Aaron Price Fellows alumni with 500 locally carrying out the mission of the program by making a difference in their family's careers and communities. So we'll have our first question. Bye aina. Um, but again, my name is Anina Ramirez. I also live in District three, and I'm currently a senior at San Diego High School. Um, so my question revolves around, um, the justice system pipeline and how it has created a systemically, um, inequitable impact on, um, how individuals. We've seen that several marginalized groups, including black and Latinx individuals, experience homelessness at alarmingly higher rates than their white counterparts. So with that being said, I really wanted to ask what each of your plans are to eliminate the criminalization targeted towards this specific vulnerable homeless population.

Speaker 2 (00:53:17):

I will take that first. Okay.

Speaker 5 (00:53:19):

Okay.

Speaker 2 (00:53:21):

So we, we see in, um,

Speaker 4 (00:53:24):

The, the homeless population, the, uh, minorities are vastly overrepresented. This only makes sense if we are, uh, racially, um, ping a certain demographic. That means we're helping some get opportunities and we're we're taking away opportunities of others. So it naturally would have a consequence in housing opportunities as well. What we were also able to measure, I worked with, um, students at UCSD and their professor, and they studied the issuance of citations in San Diego against homeless persons. And they found that even amongst the, a population that predominates, um, with more minorities, the ticketing was issued to more racial minorities amongst that population than even in that, that stronger concentrated demographic. Um, every person who has contact with the police officer that lowers their score and eligibility for housing, it affects their housing assessment. And so, um, folks that get identified early on as being homeless and get targeted multiple times, that is meeting other people are moving up the ladder and are gonna be closer to getting into housing than these individuals. So we're keeping them on the streets and entrenching that chronic criminalization. And, um, we know this because all studies out there show this. There's no studies that show anything else.

Speaker 4 (00:54:56):

<inaudible>?

Speaker 3 ([00:54:58](#)):

Absolutely. Um, to begin with, uh, the number, oh, first of all, congratulations on being an Aaron Christ fellow. Uh, that is quite an honor and a lot of people who've been Aaron Christ fellows have really got on to do some fantastic things. So, uh, thank you for, uh, the good question as well. Um, people experiencing homelessness, whether they're unsheltered or in shelters, um, are disproportionately people of color. Uh, that has been the case for a long time, and that is a function of institutional racism. Um, the enforcement of the unsafe camping ordinance, uh, has specifically, um, been done to be conscious of the history of institutional racism. And the city council with my support, uh, has required a monthly report of people, uh, who have been contacted or cited, um, uh, as a result of the unsafe camping ordinance, specifically because we wanna make sure there are not disproportionate impacts on people of color.

Speaker 3 ([00:56:09](#)):

And the monthly data shows that we're not seeing disproportionate impacts. I will continue to monitor that now. I don't think it's safe or healthy for anyone to be living in a tent on the street. And I think that goes for, regardless of their race, their age, uh, or any other characteristic. We saw 600 people die on the streets last year. Those were disproportionately people of color. It is unsafe, it is unhealthy. We need to get people that are safer and healthier places where it's safe sleeping, whether it's shelter. And that's what motivates me. That's why we're making progress and that's the kind of progress we need to continue to see.

Speaker 2 ([00:56:57](#)):

Thank you. Um, we're very briefly.

Speaker 4 ([00:57:02](#)):

I disproportionality exists at all levels of the system, so it also exists in terms of who gets into those shelter beds. It also exists into who gets DNR, which is a do not return. So shelters can DNR kick people out for, um, pretty much anything 'cause there's no due process hearing regarding keep them out for anything. Then they go on a list that even if there's a shelter bed available, they don't get in. And so, um, the city's aware that those, that those individuals predominate black on those due DNR list and is trying to work with, uh, father Joe's to change that. But if so far there have not been meaningful changes that we've seen put forward in that. So there's, um, and then in terms of who gets into the, the housing itself, um, that predominates and who gets which options. So each of those levels needs to be addressed. And because we know, um, this population as a whole, the homeless population as a whole predominates, uh, as a racial minority, the criminalization ordinances themselves act as Jim Crow, extension of Jim Crow laws targeting people, chasing them, um, away just like, uh, they chase people to the back of the bus or away from water pounds.

Speaker 2 ([00:58:19](#)):

Thank you. Um, okay, so this is for both of you. We'll start with Candidate Woodburn. Um, question from the audience, since the city owns 101 Ash Street, how do you feel about renovating that site for homeless shelter rather than leasing and renovating ketner and buying from scratch?

Speaker 3 ([00:58:37](#)):

I would be delighted, uh, to see 101 Ash Street, uh, be used, uh, to house people experiencing homelessness. That would be, uh, taking a, uh, building with a sorted history and putting it to an excellent purpose. Uh, so I would be fine with that. Um, I lived downtown. I live three blocks from a shelter right now. Uh, and it's been a good neighbor. It's been no problem at all. And I think that if we had people experiencing homelessness in 101 Ash Street, um, uh, that would be a benefit to them and to, um, the

surrounding neighborhood. Now, a lot of work has to be done before 101 Ash Street, uh, could be used, uh, to house anyone. Uh, there is asbestos in there that needs to be encapsulated. Uh, but there are ways to do that, that's done all the time. What we currently have proposals for, and I'm supportive of this as well, uh, is for, uh, the conversion of 101 ancestry to income restricted, affordable housing.

Speaker 3 (00:59:41):

Uh, there are, uh, three, uh, folks, well, uh, companies, uh, the groups that have, uh, submitted proposals to convert 101 F Street into income restricted, uh, affordable housing, um, with, in some cases hundreds of units. Uh, and I look forward to seeing, uh, the details of those proposals, seeing the financing mechanisms, seeing how they're gonna ensure that 101 Air Street is safe. Um, and if we could do that again, that would be another fitting end, uh, for a building that's had a sort of history. So whether it's people experiencing homelessness, uh, or income restricted, affordable housing, using that building to help people in need is exactly what I want to see.

Speaker 2 (01:00:29):

Thank you. Candidate Cusack, would you support 101 off Street being a homeless shelter?

Speaker 4 (01:00:34):

So every dollar that we put into a homeless shelter, um, is ultimately, uh, a loss force. We wanna move people into housing and housing sooner, and we wanna be able to divest ourselves of the shelters. So we need more shelter beds right now. We, we shelter fewer people in San Diego than, uh, we more people unsheltered rather in the streets than New York does. Um, but the, I think 101 street should be converted to SROs and, um, SROs make more sense. SRO means a single room occupancy. I mentioned earlier we lost a thousand of those between, um, uh, I'm sorry, 10,000 of those between, uh, 2010 and 2016 we had those beds. Right now we have places for people. Um, and these office buildings have a lot of interior space that's not so much designed for, uh, homes. Um, and that could be used as common space supporting the SROs that get the windows. So, um, I'd like to see that promise be, um, be realized, the promise to replace these SROs.

Speaker 2 (01:01:45):

Thank you. Um, another question from the audience. What is your plan to address the highest electrical rates in the nation? Are you pro-public power? Kenny <inaudible>? We can start with you.

Speaker 3 (01:01:58):

I, uh, have supported, uh, studies, uh, and, uh, voted to fund, uh, the current studies, uh, that are exploring the possibility of municipal San Diego's power. Um, I think that, uh, there are a lot of challenges in getting there, uh, to municipalize the city's uh, power grid would be a multi-billion dollar investment, um, in a city that currently has a structural budget deficit. Uh, so how you finance that, uh, is a challenge that that would have to be worked through. But I'm open to the idea. Um, and, um, right now there is an ongoing study, uh, about whether or not it is realistic and feasible, uh, to municipalize the power supply. Uh, I look forward to the results of that study, and if it's feasible, I would entertain that idea.

Speaker 2 (01:02:51):

Can you accuse that

Speaker 4 (01:02:53):

What's not feasible is continuing to pay these high rates that do nothing more than to fill the pockets of shareholders. This money does not come back into our community and help strengthen our electrical

needs. Um, this council member had the opportunity and pass that the opportunity to give you the choice as to whether or not we should have a municipal power option. Enough signatures were collected to play, to go before council and ask that this be on the ballot. And this council member said, no, did not trust you to make that decision, um, on your behalf and on behalf of the city. So I do support municipalization of power. Our water bills are going up. We're gonna, um, people are gonna be paying trash collection that didn't pay those before. Um, and these all add to the, uh, unaffordability crisis that we're facing. So anything, all those death of thousand cuts, this is another one of those, um, a hundred of those thousand cuts. And we should be, um, exploring ways to, to mitigate against that.

Speaker 3 ([01:04:00](#)):

It sounds like my opponent is, um, interested in rushing headlong into a multi-billion dollar investment, uh, that would be, uh, fraught with lawsuits in overtaking the public power supply. Um, and I think that that is something that we need to consider thoughtfully and we need to consider seriously, which is why we have a feasibility study that is currently underway. It would make absolutely no sense to commission a feasibility study and prior to getting the results of the feasibility study that would tell you whether it's feasible or not, suddenly commit billions of dollars to overtaking the power supply. I don't think that would be wise. I don't think that would be prudent. Uh, uh, I'm open to the idea, but let's do it in a responsible, thoughtful way.

Speaker 2 ([01:04:54](#)):

Thank you. Um, next question from the audience is about Proposition 33, which is on the statewide ballot. Uh, prop 33 would allow cities to control rents on any type of housing. Um, if prop 33 passes, will you seek to expand rent control in San Diego? If so, to what extent? Candidate with

Speaker 4 ([01:05:17](#)):

Burn? I'll start with you.

Speaker 3 ([01:05:19](#)):

No, I would not right now. Um, currently the state of California has one amount to a 5%, um, uh, rent limit, uh, plus, uh, the increase in the consumer price index, I think it is. Uh, so there is a statewide rent control mechanism. Uh, at the moment. What we have seen though, when cities have imposed rent control, is that it benefits the individual who is in an apartment and stays there for a long period of time. That individual's rent is controlled and it does not go up that much. Uh, and it can benefit that person. That is true. But for everybody else, rents tend to go up. We have seen that in New York. We've seen it in San Francisco, we've seen it every place. This has been done. Um, and I think what we need to do is try to keep rents stable for everyone, um, including the person who is just coming into the housing market.

Speaker 3 ([01:06:24](#)):

Uh, the person who grew up here, who's looking their first apartment, they need to be able to get the best deal on rent. That they can't, they do not need to come into a market that has been artificially inflated by rent control that has benefited only a few people. Um, I think that the approach that we're taking right now is controlling rents, as I mentioned earlier, uh, because we have increased supply, rents have flattened, uh, there have been stories about this. Uh, instead of the double digit increases that we were seeing in the past, we have now stabilized rents doesn't get any better than that. We need to continue to stabilize rents. We need to continue to increase the supply, and that's how we'll make our, uh, housing more affordable for everybody to live here.

Speaker 2 ([01:07:11](#)):

Thank you. Candidate Cusack, would you support extending, um, rent control in San Haum?

Speaker 4 ([01:07:17](#)):

Yes, and, um, certainly we need to limit rent out of control during a housing and emergency crisis where we have, um, rising costs that aren't connected to any, um, economic metric. The, um, so we're, we're gonna be subsidizing individuals, which I think we should, but subsidizing, um, folks who are being threatened with evictions so that they don't leave lose their, their unit. We can't sustain that. We can't help a lot of people if we are making rising rent in that subsidization. So I think if we're gonna be subsidizing that, we should, um, be providing incentives for landlords to, um, keep their rates low tax incentives so that, um, we don't, we can't sustain a subsidy, the shallow subsidy program. Uh, the, uh, just a 10% increase when you're paying already. Um, \$2,000 a month in rent, um, is, is financially crippling. And 50% of, uh, renters right now are rent burdened, meaning they're paying more than 30% of their income towards rent.

Speaker 4 ([01:08:36](#)):

So, uh, wages aren't approximating that. So if we, another, another way we could control against the, uh, guard against, without having to do rent control was to tie the, um, minimum wage to an economic metrics such as, uh, the median rent so that if rent brought rose so too with the minimum wage, and then if we wanted to keep the wage low, then we'd want to keep the, the rents low too. So there's different ways to to go about it, but, um, I think we're full Marty if we don't look at that, we already have rent control measure here in terms of software. They are controlling rent and there's software programs where landlords conspire together to keep the, um, to put their party property out for rent this month or to hold off until next month or the month after the, this software is being sued by, um, various states, um, because of its, uh, impact on the rent prices driving them up and not down and not stabilizing. And so we should in San Diego be going off through that software program that is operating here in San Diego.

Speaker 3 ([01:09:47](#)):

You want to tie the minimum wage to rent increases. That is a terrible idea. Um, if our goal, my goal, my goal is to stabilize rent increases, my goal is to make it so that people are not seeing double digit increases in rent. That we have more income restricted, affordable housing that people aren't seeing rent increases. So if we create a situation where people aren't seeing rent increases, they don't get a wage increase, that would be perverse, that would hurt the people who are most vulnerable, the most income workers in our city. What we need is to stabilize rents and have people make more money. That's how they get more money in their pocket. And that's what I'm going for.

Speaker 2 ([01:10:37](#)):

Thank you candidate. Ack. If you want to respond, you can otherwise. Okay. Um, so we're out of time, unfortunately. Um, we're gonna have closing remarks by our host, Bella, but can we give a hand to,

Speaker 1 ([01:11:07](#)):

All right. Thank you for joining us. That wraps up this session. We're now breaking for I believe, an hour for lunch. Um, there will be food trucks around for you guys to make your food decisions. Um, if you enjoyed today's sessions, you guys should consider signing up our newsletters if you aren't already on our website. And, um, thank you again to our sponsors, volunteers, and everyone who participating today.