

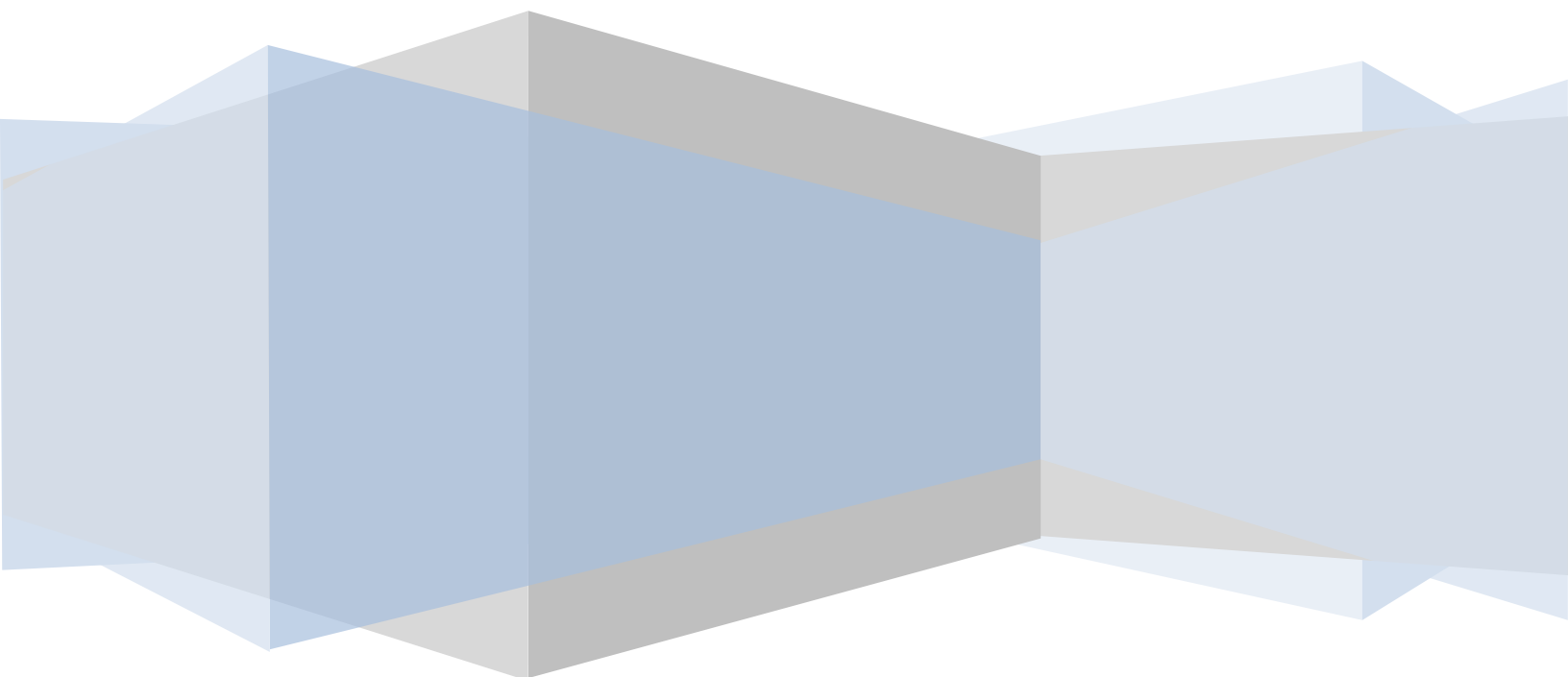
SEIU Local 721

2009 City of Ventura Candidate Questionnaire

LOCAL 721



SEIU



INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking time to fill out this questionnaire. In order to better inform our membership about where the candidates we support stand on the issues, SEIU Local 721 requires all candidates seeking our endorsement to complete this questionnaire.

SEIU Local 721 region-wide has more than 85,000 members. We are the largest union in local government. Unions like SEIU are the economic backbone of California's middle class. Our mission is to empower workers to provide economic security and economic opportunity for themselves and their families. SEIU fights for jobs with decent wages, health care, pensions and good working conditions, with opportunity for advancement. We also work with the consumers of the services our members provide to enhance economic opportunity and the quality of life in our state by advocating for and improving the services our members provide.

CAMPAIGN PROFILE

***Please provide pictures of the candidate for our use. By giving us the photos, you authorize us to use them. Also, attach your biography, a list of current endorsements and any campaign literature you have printed as of yet.**

Candidate Name: **Brian Lee Rencher.**

Campaign Address: **652 Lemon Grove Avenue, Ventura, CA 93003.**

Campaign Phone: **None.**

Fax: **None.**

Email: **voterencher2009@yahoo.com**

FPPC #: **Not yet assigned by the California Secretary of State.**

Party Affiliation: **City Council elections are non-partisan by law**

Occupation: **Advisor.**

Employer: **Self (Business Owner: Priced Advice).**

Proposed Ballot Designation: **Financial Advisor.**

Elected offices currently/ previously held: **President, Associated Students of California State University – Ventura Campus; Ventura County University Representative to the California State Legislature.**

Other campaigns for elected office: **Ventura City Council (1991,1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, and 2007).**

Appointed offices currently/ previously held: **None.**

	NAME	PHONE / FAX
Campaign Consultant:	Brian Lee Rencher.	None
Media Consultant*:	Brian Lee Rencher.	None
Mail Consultant*:	Brian Lee Rencher.	None
Fundraising Consultant*:	Brian Lee Rencher.	None
Field Consultant*:	Brian Lee Rencher.	None
Pollster:	Brian Lee Rencher.	None
Campaign Manager:	Brian Lee Rencher.	None
Anticipated Budget:	\$2,000 (twothousand dollars) [Most candidates must raise and spend at least \$15,000 to win and the top spenders will exceed \$25,000.]	
Funds Raised to Date:	\$850.00 (please attach campaign finance report)	
Current/Prior union membership:	Teamsters	
Other organizations you belong to:	None	



SEIU Local 721 2009 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Why are you seeking the endorsement of SEIU Local 721? List your qualifications and reasons for seeking this endorsement.

I know that if I were to be elected to the Ventura City Council that I could do more good for the community more quickly than I have for the past eighteen years as an unelected representative of the public's interests at City Hall. As mentioned, I have eighteen years of actual hands-on experience in conducting the public's business at City Hall and have been effective in that regard. Additionally, I have an above average intelligence complimented by an excellent education as follows: Master of Business degree in Executive Management; two Bachelor of Science degrees in Business Administration (one in Marketing and the other in Finance); two Associate of Science degrees (one in Real Estate Sales and the other in Management); and an Associate In Arts degree (Liberal Arts and Sciences). I am seeking your organization's endorsement not only to support union interests at City Hall, but also to represent all citizens that desire a transparent fiscally responsible city government that is accountable to the public for all its actions.

2. What is your attitude toward unions? What experience have you had with unions?

Unions are on the decline in our country and have historically been the direct reason over the decades for our country's increased wealth and associated standard of living. Unless we protect our remaining unions and begin to reverse this unfortunate trend, eventually all Americans will suffer economically in the long run. Working Americans must renew their support for unions now or we will not fair well in the future as a people.

3. Wright Library serves 2/3rds of Ventura's population and is in danger of shutting down because of budget shortfalls. Is closing the busiest library in town appropriate when there may be other solutions to the budget deficit?

Absolutely not! Even considering it is a misplaced priority. In the short-run, the City's General Fund must be used to maintain current service levels at our libraries, even if this means cutting lesser services elsewhere in the budget. In the long-run, I support pulling our property taxes out of the county system and creating a City system which augments these property taxes with general funds and a capital construction bond issuance backed by the General Fund. The bond money would be used to build a facility at the Ventura Sports Park or on the City's 87.7 acres at Telegraph Road and Petit Avenue. Some of the capital money would also be used to create a satellite library – like the Ventura Avenue Library – in the Wells/Saticoy communities. This City-run system would have two main libraries (Foster and "Sports Park") and two satellite libraries (Ventura Avenue and "Saticoy"). This has been my position since 1995.

4. City employees this year took a 6% cut to their salaries and had to implement furloughs to help the city meet its budget needs. What will you do to help make those city employees whole again?

I intend to return all employee lost hours and pay them back for the “loan” (i.e. pay cut) with interest. Some people (the incumbents and their City Manager) might call this approach fiscally irresponsible. I call it being fair and honoring obligations and contracts. This is the position that I took in public at the City Council meetings during these actions by the council. Please remember that action speaks louder than words.

5. There's a lot of talk about pension reform in the public retirement system. Do you support it and what does that process mean to you?

First off, I would like to point out that the people pushing for “pension reform” are the very same people that granted the pension contracts in the first place! Secondly, these people knew about these future costs (liabilities) and failed to adequately fund them – they spent every dollar they got their hands on and saved none of it!! Additionally, their own adopted policies were to make City compensation competitive with other governmental agencies and these other agencies have similar retirement packages – so what’s their point? Lastly, City management has even better retirement packages than labor – so isn’t this a case of “calling the kettle black”?? I thought what was good for the goose is also good for the gander. Yes, management did take a ten percent paycut (no furloughs – they’re salaried), but they are overpaid and can better afford these cuts.

This being said, it begs the question: Since the Ventura City Council failed to set aside money to cover the long-term costs of the pensions they granted, where will these funds ultimately come from, and can these contractual arrangements be continued as they are?

Given the City’s ongoing fiscal concerns under the current and projected economic conditions, some new pension arrangement must be devised and implemented. However, before any action is taken, a fact-finding process must be undertaken. All concerned – employees and their union representatives, management, elected officials, and knowledgeable citizens – must be involved in any process from the very outset. After the facts are determined from as many perspectives as is reasonable, discussions can take place with all concerned invited in a publicly open format – the general public must be invited and included for my support. After all fact-based positions are on the table, a give and take negotiation can ensue. All parties present must agree upon all decisions made.

6. What is your opinion on in-sourcing of work?

I support in-sourcing when the job can be done better by City employees than by a contractor’s employees and when continuity is important. If the work products are equal, then I will pursue the lower cost option.

7. In election races, candidates and office holders always say they value public employees. What will you do to show the employees you do value them? What will you do to demonstrate that to the public?

I expect that I will continue to serve our City employees as I have served

them and all of the city's citizens for the past eighteen years. I don't need to be elected to do such; nor does any other citizen for that matter. I guess what makes me more different than most is that I actually do serve our employees and the rest of the community at City Hall. It is a matter of the public record that I have done so and this can be verified by reviewing these records in the City Clerk's office. I am unlikely to change in this regard. I enjoy doing good deeds.

8. If elected, what relationship do you expect to have with SEIU? Would you consider including SEIU and its members in future planning? Would you consider appointing qualified SEIU members to appointed Boards or other positions in your office or in City governance?

As previously stated, I don't need to be elected to serve employees represented by the S.E.I.U. Actually, it has been this organization that has avoided and excluded me from its efforts. However, I would have to be a sitting councilmember to vote to appoint S.E.I.U. members to City boards and commissions. Whether elected or not, you may approach me for any assistance I could offer.

9. Describe your priorities if elected or re-elected?

Whether elected or not my priorities are as follows:

- **Promote fiscal responsibility and governmental accountability;**
- **Repave city streets and repair sidewalks;**
- **Complete the city's water delivery system and repair/upgrade old lines;**
- **Complete the city's wastewater system and repair/upgrade old lines and the treatment plant;**
- **Build more parks – particularly service area parks – and do a better job of maintaining those we already have;**
- **Refurbish the promenade on the beach;**
- **Build more fire stations and properly staff and equip them;**
- **Replant and maintain the city's urban forest;**
- **Clean up public areas and repaint curbs and fight pollution;**
- **Enforce or repeal city codes;**
- **Lower crime levels through more intelligent policing;**
- **Promote better economic planning and development;**
- **Develop a better housing mix;**
- **Prioritize and streamline City services;**
- **Implement and oversee better City investment policies and practices;**
- **Streamline management and "reform" their compensation levels;**
- **Transfer non-essential City services to non-profit organizations (e.g. recreation);**
- **Fully fund essential capital programs and projects; and eliminate non-essential capital programs and projects from the Capital Improvement Program;**
- **Fund essential and/or state mandated drainage projects;**
- **Improve traffic flows through better planning and by use of technology;**
- **Conserve energy through use of green technologies and building practices;**
- **Eliminate graft.**

10. Do you support Measure A, the City's Tax initiative a sales tax increase to protect

government services and jobs against further cutbacks and some restoration?
What impact do you see its passage having on the city workers?"

If you do believe in fiscal responsibility and governmental accountability, you should vote every incumbent out of office and vote yes on Measure A. If you do not believe in fiscal responsibility and governmental accountability, you should vote every incumbent back into office and vote yes on Measure A.

11. If further salary cuts were necessary in a worsening economy, do you support a furlough option?

No.

12. Are there any other comments you would like to make to explain why SEIU should endorse you for office over your competition?

Every special interest group that has provided candidate questionnaires and interviews for endorsements over the years have tended to ask mostly about their specific interests. I have been disappointed, shocked and amazed over the years that these groups put their own narrow interests ahead of the needs of the greater community's. If you look at my partial list of priorities under your question number 9, you will all see how diverse these other important issues are.

I don't anticipate your organization's endorsement since like these other interest groups, your organization tends to focus more on who is electable based upon spending, organization and endorsements; as opposed to who will actually best serve the community in an intelligent and honest way.

You all seem to be upset by the outcomes of your previous selections for City Council office holders, but it is your own doing. Why not try something different this year. Albert Einstein's definition of a crazy person was one who did the same thing the same way each time always expecting a different outcome. Do you want a different outcome?

13. List all other endorsements you have received:

None.