Ardy Kassakhian is running for Assemblyman in the 43rd District as a Democrat

Thank you for sending me this questionnaire and reaching out.  I would love to fill out your questionnaire in detail but there are two challenges to me doing so.  First of all, I'm not an expert in mental health or mental health services.  My degrees are in History (UCLA) and a masters in public policy and public administration (Northwestern U).  Also, we're less than two weeks out from the Election Day and I'm focused on mostly knocking on doors, making calls and talking to as many voters as possible.  When and if I'm elected, I would rely on organizations like yours to educate me on these policy matters and issues affecting our communities that I am not well informed about.  BUT I want to state and it is on the record that I am the ONLY candidate who has continuously raised the issue that the city must invest in mental health resources in our community for a few reasons that I have observed.  One is that there are a lot of challenges facing our youth and unless we help our children, these issues are compounded and become more serious over time. I support placing school resource officers (plain clothed police officers) in all our middle and high schools to interact with, help and support our youth just as we had 20 years ago when I was a student in Glendale's public schools.  An officer who knows our kids and who has their trust is a vital tool to identifying issues and finding the appropriate resources to address them.  But this needs to be complimented with mental health services which our city has never made a priority.  I am on the record stating this during the televised League of Women Voters forum and at all other forums.  No one else has even mentioned this and I believe it is because it is not a priority or they do not believe it to be an issue.

Homelessness cannot be addressed without mental health services.  We need to use whatever tools are at our disposal to alleviate this humanitarian crisis but mental health is an inseparable part of this issue either because it ends up causing the state of being homeless or arises after someone has been on the streets so long that they end up suffering from mental health issues.

I'm a democrat and have been endorsed by the Democratic Party of Los Angeles County (the endorsing entity for the Dem Party in local races) and have the support of the East Area Progressive Democrats and every Democratic org that has endorsed in this race.  I have the endorsement of Senator Anthony Portantino who wrote and passed a bill requiring all high school IDs to have the suicide hotline on the back, and I've been endorsed by Lt. Gov. Eleni Kounalakis, Treasurer Fiona Ma and Congressman Adam Schiff and Congresswoman Jackie Speier.

I'm happy to hop on a 15 minute phone call with you to answer any questions you may have but I hope this email was sufficient to explain to you where I stand on mental health services and assure you that if elected I will work to do everything within my authority to ensure we are caring for our most vulnerable and under served populations.

Thanks for reaching out.

Ardy Kassakhian