**Clinton Brown is running for CA State Assembly in District 54 as a Democrat**

**Questions for elected officials**

**Peer Action 4 Change is an organization with more than 1,000 members in Los Angeles County dedicated to making life better for mental health consumers, clients, survivors and others in recovery. Our membership requests that you answer the following questions to help them make decisions on who to vote for in the March 3, 2020 election.**

1. What is more important for improving mental health currently, more locked facilities or more peer services? Please explain.

More funding for facilities for long-term homeless that are suffering from extreme mental illness and substance abuse issues. Peer services need to be better coordinated together along with proper funding and target those individuals who have been on the streets for 6 weeks or less.

1. What is your opinion on making it easier to conserve homeless people?

5150 holds, mental health facilities and state suspension of zoning laws where a shelter can be built or a building can be converted. We need beds and not opposition from NIMBY’s that pretend to care and yet refuse to be economically integrated.

1. Should people be forced to take psych medications against their will?

Yes!

1. Do you think that the number of people incarcerated with mental health issues is an issue? If so, how would you address it?

Yes! Prisons are basically mental health facilities where they do not perform mental health operations that allow people to get better. We need to get people the help they need and they aren’t going to get it (most of the time) without some kind of epiphany and need to be forced into treatment if a professional medical opinion renders them unable to take care of themselves which is most drug users and severely mentally ill .

1. Currently it is possible to conserve someone in California on a limited conservatorship for life with the signature of one doctor. Should limited conservatorships be changed to require a doctor of the person’s choice or more than one doctor? Should limited conservatorships be reviewed on a regular basis, as LPS conservatorships are?

I think, by looking around our community that there aren’t enough conservatorships by the look of the people roaming around like zombies; so I’d like to know how this is being abused and why Britney Spears is still in a conservatorship? I think there are problems and I’d like to see data and possible policy proposals that would solve this issue.

1. Adult Protective Services is not allowed to take a complaint from a conserved person as technically that person has to be represented by their conservator in all affairs. Should the law be changed to allow people on conservatorships or others to report abuse perpetrated by conservators?

I would like to see specific cases and/or data that supports this assertion.

1. What is your opinion on Peer Certification in California that would set standards for mental health and substance abuse peer workers allowing the workers to bill Medi-Cal?

I think that could be a possibility but we need a set standard for the billing of Med-Cal and ultimately funding for mental health institutions should be supplemented by Med-Cal.

1. Self-help support groups are an essential tool to recovery in mental health and substance abuse as they reduce hospitalizations, medication needed, relapses, incarcerations and increase personal responsibility, healthy behaviors and employment. Would you require that each peer worker have knowledge of the dozens of free self-help support group programs in your district in order to be certified?

I think that this makes the issue a little more complicated than it really is… Get off drugs…get a job…get a home… We need support services that help people apply for subsidized housing, including Section 8. If addiction is a disease, which I think it is, isn’t there a formula of things that are semi-proven to work? I suspect the first step is to get off drugs.

1. Do you agree that hospitals and other facilities should be required to video tape with sound all incidents of use of seclusion and restraint for psychiatric reasons, and provide the person who was secluded or restrained with a copy of the tape, upon request, in order to reduce the over use and abuse of these techniques?

No, we need to trust our professionals and there are internal processes for alleged abuse that must be followed and strengthen. Additionally, is it really mentally healthy for someone who experienced a mental health breakdown to watch it?

1. How will you improve the employment services for people with mental health issues so that they are based on people’s skills and strengths rather than assuming the only jobs they can do are in food, janitorial, back office and landscaping?

I don’t believe that one bit! I’m (formerly) mentally ill and I’m running for State Assembly! I take my medications and go to therapy and I under the fight and I also understand that you can get better and there’s something very strong about a person who has battled themselves in such a way (man vs. self).

1. There is an epidemic of depression at the moment. Loneliness is a major cause of depression and early death. Self-help support groups reduce loneliness. What steps will you take to reduce the number of people depressed?

I think the government can encourage people to say hi to one another.. we need public campaigns that restore trust among us. I see the signs – if you see something say something – well what about – look up from your phone and smile at the person next to you – If we can stop a larger societal breakdown by using government resources for positive reinforcement then let’s do it.

1. Are you open to sober living and shared recovery housing as a way of increasing affordable housing in your district?

Absolutely.

1. What are you doing to end homelessness?

We need to enforce the law and local municipalities are not doing that. This is a real crisis and there should be a right to housing in California; we have a right to sunlight!?! Why can’t we request abandoned property or underutilized property from the federal government (there is a law for that) and put beds from one end to the other? Then if you don’t choose a bed then you go to either jail or you go to a mental health facility. The choice would be on the individual to choose. However, you do not have a right to choose to continue living on public property at the expense of the rest of the public.

1. How do you plan to reduce the stigma and discrimination against mental health consumers in your district?

I believe everyone has some kind of cognitive distortion and/or can develop a mental health related issue based on a life event or genetics, etc. I am a proud (formerly) mentally ill person and the best thing in my life is waking up knowing I won’t be at war against myself. That’s priceless.

1. Do you have any other positions that will make life better for mental health consumers, clients, survivors and others in recovery?

My dad committed suicide and so I am a suicide survivor. My dad died without life insurance and that was really hard. People with mental illness or who have formally had mental health issues find it difficult or impossible to get life insurance. We need to ensure that life insurance is a right and discrimination against past mental health issues is wrong.

1. Do you or anyone you know suffer from depression, anxiety, mood disorders, schizophrenia, addiction or other mental health diagnoses?

Yes, who doesn’t! ☺

1. What is your party affiliation?

Democrat

1. Who have your received endorsements from?

I’m curious about this question and how this impacts the process? I’m not the incumbent and so the endorsement process is a little more challenging (I’m up for it!) We have a jungle primary and so I think organizations should be more concerned about the quality of the candidate rather than how many popular endorsements one has received.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my views on the way forward and I would love to see additional data supporting your positions. Ultimately, a solution has to come from compromise and I feel that data can help get the best results.