

Das Williams Questionnaire 2015

Describe your activities or involvement in mentoring women to participate in the political process. (Examples: appointments to boards or commissions, encouragement to run for office)

Providing mentorship to women is something I have taken seriously and done most of my political career since I was mentored by one of the most inspirational women I've ever known, current State Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson. Coming to political maturity under her wing internalized the importance of incorporating more women into leadership positions within the political process. I am currently working closely with your endorsed candidate, Monique Limón, who is running for my current State Assembly seat when I term out at the end of 2016. And I have an extensive history of working to get women elected to office including former 3rd District Supervisor Gail Marshall, Hannah-Beth Jackson, Cathy Murillo, Jacqui Irwin, and Julia Brownley. I have spent a considerable amount of time myself talking to voters and raising money for these candidates but also have moved my staff member, Darcel Elliott, over to campaigns from our Assembly office to assist these candidates and most recently, to help re-elect Supervisor Janet Wolf.

Also, since I have been in the Assembly, the vast majority of people that have worked for me have been women and all leadership positions in my office have been filled by women, including three different chiefs of staff, two district directors, and my legislative director. I have always encouraged the women in my office to develop their own political position in the world. In fact, my former District Director, Jeannette Sanchez-Palacios, will be running for city council in Ventura next year and I could not be more excited to support and mentor her through the process.

- What efforts have you made toward addressing gender equity and other inequities or imbalances with reference to women and minorities?

I have been a strong voice and champion for women's rights and equality my entire life. Prior to my service in the Assembly, I served on the board of the California chapter of the National Organization for Women, where we worked very hard on issues concerning women's equality in the workplace.

In the legislature, I have consistently supported legislation that pushes for fair pay and equal treatment for women. For example, I supported AJR 47 in 2012, which urged Congress to reintroduce and adopt the Paycheck Fairness Act and was a strong supporter of the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights, which ensures the same level of protections to domestic care workers, which are largely women of color, as other professions.

This year, I also supported SB 358, which strengthened the California Equal Pay Act to further address the gender wage gap, and I supported legislation to expand paid family leave. Furthermore, as chair of the API caucus, I strongly championed a bill by one of my members, Senator Pan, SB 600 which expanded state civil rights protections to make it unlawful for a business to discriminate against a person based on their immigration status, citizenship, or language.

- How many people serve on your staff, and how many are women, and what are their roles? In what ways is diversity reflected in your staff?

I have a total of 14 staff members, 7 in the Capitol and 7 in the District. Of the 14, 11 are women, including my chief of staff, district director, and legislative director. We also have 3 Latinas on staff, one staff member who is Middle Eastern, and an API staff member. I am also the chair of the API caucus and, as such, one of my most important jobs is encouraging more API candidates to run for office.

- What else would you like to share with the SBWPC? (Examples: philosophy with reference to SBWPC positions, contributions you have made or foresee making in the future)

I want the SBWPC board to know that I have been one of the biggest champions in the entire legislature on many of your platform issues.

This year, I introduced a Campus Sexual Assault legislative package, which featured some of the most groundbreaking legislation on increasing accountability in the handling of sexual assault cases in the country, even being covered by Time Magazine. My bills will require a consistent and minimum standard of punishment for campus sexual assault cases, require campuses to publicly report and disclose campus adjudication outcomes for sexual assault offenses, and require a notation on a student's transcript if they have been found guilty of sexual assault through the school's adjudication process. Another bill I authored would have expanded a community college district's authority to deny enrollment of an applicant who has been expelled from another community college. The bill passed the legislature, however, I pulled it from consideration by the Governor because I felt that it had been weakened too much by amendments we had to take to get it through the process and I would rather work to get something stronger in place in the future.

During my time in the legislature, I have also become known as one of the fiercest advocates for the environment. This year, I have served as chair of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee and worked on the most important climate change legislation in the world. The legislation we've passed this year will create the

strictest standards for renewable energy in the world. Thanks to this legislation, California will be doing more to fight climate change than any single country. I'm looking forward to serving on the Board of Supervisors to continue this work and make Santa Barbara County the state's leader on renewable energy and the green economy.

During my first year in the Assembly, I served on the Health Committee and was one of the key players in the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, which is implemented statewide as Covered California and has become the national standard for how successful the Affordable Care Act can be in increasing access to affordable health care.

I have also been a champion for expanding rights for immigrants in the state, including supporting the California Dream Act, which allowed undocumented students to apply for financial aid, and legislation that allowed undocumented citizens to get drivers licenses. This year, as chair of the API Caucus, I partnered with the Latino caucus to advocate for a budget allocation of \$15 million to go to non-profits that work with naturalized citizens and undocumented residents that qualify for federal programs.

I have a 100% Pro-Choice voting record from Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California. I co-sponsored legislation that would allow nurse practitioners to perform certain abortion procedures without supervision of a doctor to increase the availability of medical professionals who can perform these services to increase access. I have also fought for an increase in Medi-Cal reimbursement rates so Planned Parenthood and other women's health providers can afford to provide these services to low-income women.

Additionally, I have supported many pieces of legislation to expand the state's protection of LGBT rights, including: the FAIR Education Act, which requires the inclusion of LGBT identities in the teaching of history; landmark legislation that protects transgender students who use bathrooms consistent with their gender identity; and legislation banning "conversion therapy" techniques.

In addition to being a champion for your platform during my years in the legislature, I plan on continuing to fight for the issues the WPC holds as the most important when I'm serving on the Board of Supervisors. One of the issues I'm most excited about is getting back to work on land use policy issues, particularly promoting housing policies that limit the amount of workers who have to commute and improve our transportation infrastructure to better benefit alternative methods.

The committee deeply appreciates the support we've received over the years, and has also raised a couple of specific questions for Assemblymember Williams:

- SBWPC wrote a letter of support for SB 277, and we're curious about Assemblymember Williams' failure to vote on this issue.

The two bills you are asking about here are the two bills I have spent the most time working on outside of my own legislation and SB 350, the climate change legislation I referenced above. As a legislator, I have to do more than just support an issue, I have to figure out how to implement it so it will work in the real world.

The legislature passed a bill, AB 2109, in 2012 authored by the author of SB 277, then-Assemblymember Pan, which required doctors to inform parents of the risks involved should they chose to not vaccinate their children. I was pleased to support this bill and we saw an increase in vaccination rates throughout the state.

I agree that it is critical that we get our vaccination rates up to 95% throughout the state, however, I was not sure that SB 277 is the way to do that. After the information required in AB 2109 is given, the parents who still chose to not vaccinate are the most evangelical on the issue. These parents spent a lot of time talking to me on this issue and I can tell you, that even will the requirement that they vaccinate before enrolling their child in a school, they will still not vaccinate. They would rather home school than vaccinate their children. And most of them are not looking to avoid all vaccinations. Some just want alternative schedules or for it to be easier to get a health exemption if their child had a bad response to a previous vaccine.

I worked with the author on amendments that would try to address their concerns and maybe increase the chance that some of them would vaccinate but the author did not accept my amendments so I chose to not vote for the bill. In its current form, if these parents still refuse to vaccinate, they may end up home schooling with other unvaccinated children, increasing the chances they will get sick, and then go out into the public because the bill does nothing to prevent unvaccinated children from going out in public, such as grocery stores or Disneyland.

*****Note from meeting: requested amendments, specifically related to alternative schedules.*****

- The committee was surprised to hear about his vote against SB 128, and would appreciate a bit more information about his choice.

This is another bill I struggled with and worked hard to get to a yes. I took this bill very seriously to struggle with what the right line is between life and death. I was willing to support this for people that were experiencing symptoms or that a doctor determined were going to imminently experience symptoms but could not bring myself to support it for people who were not experiencing symptoms. Basing this decision only on a 6-month diagnosis, which are often wrong, could lead to people making this critical decision out of fear or depression. I tried

working with the author but they were not willing to address that concern. I vote on thousands of measures every year and it is inevitable that we will disagree on an issue every now and then. I take my job very seriously and am extremely thoughtful about every piece of legislation I vote on to ensure I do the right thing for our local people. I can't get it right 100% of the time, but I work hard to, even in the ones I ultimately cannot support.

****Note from meeting: requested amendments, specifically related to symptoms rather than a 6-month prognosis.****