



At-Large Representative Candidate

Ken Blaker

What is your name, the seat you are running for, and one or two lines about you personally?

I'm Ken Blaker. I am SORO's At-Large Representative 1, my term is expiring and I am running for an At-Large Representative seat. I am married and a father of 3, living in Southern California for over 24 years. I have an eclectic background and currently work in cutting-edge software and hardware development.

What is your stake in SORO?

I live and work in Pico Robertson.

What is your favorite thing about this community?

As an observant Jew my favorite thing about SORO is the Pico Robertson Jewish community. Our Jewish community has an incredibly diverse and extensive concentration of people, organizations, businesses and services – it is unique. With that said I feel like we are a city within a city, comprised of distinctive sections (of which the Jewish community is just one) – with a surprising variety of things to explore and experience.

Five years from now, how might SORO look different, and how would you make that happen?

I would like to see a movement toward business gentrification on several of our major streets (I am specifically thinking of Robertson, Pico and La Cienega). I believe this can happen through a 2 prong outreach to the local community and to the various departments of city departments which affect urban planning through permits and zoning.

I would also like to reach out to city planners to figure out how to make our streets more bicycle friendly.

I want to begin a rethink of how parking works on our streets. Parking is a mess, and the current systems of meters and permits is not working well.

Because of our location on the map, I believe our neighborhood is well situated for growth in retail and services, and to serve as more than a pass-by, drive-through area for people getting around LA. In 5 years I would like to see tangible improvements in our becoming less industrial on our big streets, and greener, cleaner and safer.

What are your strongest skills and leadership qualities, and how will they be an asset to your work as a board member?

According to my co-workers over the years, the thing that most differentiates me is my ability to gain deep understanding of issues and to communicate deep understanding in simple clear ways. My strongest leadership ability is best demonstrated by the fact that so many of my subordinates over the years have gone on to become leaders themselves.

What is one thing most people don't know about you?

Since I put everything there is to know about me on my campaign website – www.kenblaker.com – there is hardly a thing to mention here. My parents, however, are another story. What most people don't know is that shortly after they got married they headed a campaign in Philadelphia to get the city library system incorporated into city government, which was accomplished when Philadelphia's Home Rule Charter was adopted. (By the way, Philadelphia was the first city in the US to do that). When I went to Philadelphia libraries as a kid, they usually had a photo of that library's groundbreaking ceremony, many of which featured my dad shoveling the first shovelful.

Register to vote online (until May 31) at soronc.org/vote

Vote in person at the SoRo Festival, Sunday June 5, 11:30-3pm.