

Mendocino Women's Political Coalition
2024 ELECTION YEAR ENDORSEMENTS

California Assembly District 2 Version | Updated 1/29/2024

Thank you for expressing interest in seeking an endorsement from the Mendocino Women's Political Coalition. MWPC is committed to uniting women in Mendocino County, promoting diversity, fostering economic opportunities, and encouraging women's active political participation. Our goals include advocating for women's issues, supporting sustainable environmental practices, and endorsing qualified candidates who share our values. MWPC seeks out qualified candidates who share our vision for a more inclusive, equitable, and environmentally conscious community. Endorsed candidates will receive our official support, and in some cases may receive a campaign donation. To request endorsement, please complete this candidate questionnaire.

We appreciate your dedication to public service and look forward to learning more about how your positions on key issues align with MWPC's mission. Thank you for working with us to create positive change and improve our communities.

Assembly District 2 candidates who wish to be considered for MWPC endorsement in the March 2024 primary election must return completed questionnaires by February 5, 2024.

MWPC nominations for endorsement will be collected after candidate forum events on February 1 and February 15.

Email to: kristana.arp@gmail.com and CC: mayers4ky@gmail.com

Or mail to: MWPC, BOX 1140, Ukiah, CA 95482

Response Format

This questionnaire has been provided in both Microsoft Word and as a fillable PDF. Candidates may submit their written responses in any format they choose, as long as the responses are complete and legible.

Office-Specific Questions

There are no office-specific questions for California Assembly District 2 candidates, so you may leave Part III blank.

Mendocino Women's Political Coalition Updated 9/9/2022
CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

You may provide longer answers on a separate page, and attach any relevant campaign materials.

Name: Rusty Hicks
Phone: 213-399-8872
Email: rustyhicks@gmail.com
Election Date: 3/5/24
Office Sought: State Assembly District 2
Campaign Name: Rusty Hicks for Assembly 2024
Campaign Email: rusty@rustyhicks.org | heidi@rustyhicks.org
Website: RustyHicks.org
Campaign Number: 760-505-8067
Campaign Treasurer: Richard Rios, Olson Remcho

ELEVATOR PITCH: Why you are the best candidate for this office? Please provide a concise introduction that can be communicated in 30 seconds or less. (One short paragraph)

I am a dedicated labor leader, organizer, classroom educator, and military veteran. My upbringing, shaped by a single mother's struggles, taught me the core values of hard work, service, and sacrifice—values that guide my work today. As a labor leader, I led successful campaigns to improve wages for nearly a million workers, promote affordable housing, and create quality jobs for local communities. As a believer in second chances, I initiated programs to help formerly incarcerated individuals secure union jobs. As an Associate Professor at the College of the Redwoods, I share my 20 years of firsthand experience, teaching American Government to incarcerated students at Pelican Bay State Prison. With over a decade of service as a U.S. Navy Reserve Intelligence Officer, including a deployment in Afghanistan, I understand the needs of veterans and their families. I live in Arcata, Humboldt with my wife Sandra and our chocolate Labrador, Charlie. My life experiences underscore my commitment to improving the lives of working people, fostering education, and supporting our veterans and their families.

PART ONE - MWPC Core Principles

Reproductive Choice: In recent years there has been an orchestrated effort to chip away at women's right to reproductive choice by dividing the issue into sub-issues including parental consent and public funding of family planning and abortion.

Do you unequivocally support a woman's right to reproductive self-determination?.

Do you support public funding of abortion?

Absolutely to all of the above. As Chair of the California Democratic Party I worked alongside reproductive freedom leaders and advocates to pass Prop 1. We mobilized voters up and down the state through direct mail, door-to-door voter outreach, phonebanking young voters. And we helped organize a college campus bus tour and supported rallies statewide in partnership with Planned Parenthood Action Fund educating voters and communities about the importance of protecting reproductive freedom and access to affordable and quality healthcare for all.

In 2022, during my tenure as Chair of the California Democratic Party we passed a party platform that now includes “an individual's right to an abortion.”

I will continue to be a champion for reproductive rights in the California State Legislature and will work closely with you to continue to support legislation that provides comprehensive sexual reproductive health care access and services at every level of government. Furthermore, I will use whatever platform the Office brings to further this important cause.

Please state any reservations:

Child Care and Dependent Care: Do you support increased access to childcare and other dependent care programs funded from all available sources?

Absolutely.

Comparable Worth: Comparable Worth is the effort to bring wages in female-dominated occupations to a level of pay equal to other jobs (often male dominated) that require comparable skills, responsibilities and education. Do you support the concept of Comparable Worth?

We must end wage discrimination in all forms. As a labor leader I co-lead the campaign to increase the minimum wage for a million workers because I understand that the basis to a good life is a good living wage and no one should earn less for doing the same job because of their gender. I will be a champion for pay equity and support the concept of comparable worth.

Support of Ending Discrimination: Will you make a commitment to ending discrimination based on race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, marital status, socioeconomic status and disability?

Absolutely.

Do you support Marriage Equality?

Absolutely, I am proud to be the ONLY candidate in this race endorsed by Equality California who is the nation's largest statewide LGBTQ+ civil rights organization and California's only

LGBTQ+ civil rights organization working at the local, state and national levels. I have been proud to lead and support the advance of civil rights at the ballot box, through mobilization and advocacy.

Elimination of Sexual Harassment: Will you work to ensure that laws and educational programs are in place to eliminate sexual harassment?

Absolutely. As a labor leader, I led the calls for the end of sexual harassment and assault alongside the brave janitors of SEIU United Service Workers West and the hotel housekeepers of UNITE HERE. As a party leader, I helped put in place the strongest Code of Conduct in the Nation for a state political Party. No one should live in fear of sexual harassment and/or sexual assault ever. Anywhere. Full Stop.

PART TWO – Campaign Information

A. What are your qualifications for this office?

I am a labor leader and organizer, classroom educator and military veteran with a proven track record of delivering real results for real people.

I was raised by a single mother who struggled to put food on the table and keep a roof overhead. When I was 11 years old, I met my father for the first time as he sat in a Texas prison serving time for addiction related crimes. Growing up, I learned firsthand the values of hard work, service and sacrifice - working class values that inform my work today.

For more than a decade, I served as both President and Political Director of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor - one of the Nation's most vibrant and diverse Labor Movements representing 300 local unions and 800,000 hardworking women and men. I helped lead a successful campaign to raise the wages of nearly one million workers and pass a progressive ballot measure to build more affordable housing and create good jobs for local workers.

As a believer in the power of a second chance, I built a program to help formerly incarcerated workers rejoin the workforce and secure a good union job. I have a proven track record of standing up for working people on the job, in the community, and at the ballot box to improve the lives and uplift the voices of all workers.

At 14-years old, I attended my father's graduation when he earned a high school diploma while incarcerated. This moment had a profound impact on us both.

Nearly 30 years later, I serve as an Associate Professor at College of the Redwoods and teach American Government to incarcerated students at Pelican Bay State Prison. Each week, I bring more than 20 years of firsthand experience to the classroom to share the story of our Nation's

founding, and the many challenges and opportunities we face. This work informs my belief in the power of a second chance and a quality education for all.

B. What campaign experience and training have you had?

As President of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, I advocated on behalf workers at the bargaining table with federal, state, and local governments fighting FOR higher wages, quality healthcare, and secure retirement options and AGAINST severe budget cuts and the outsourcing of jobs by lobbying elected officials, leading letter-writing campaigns, and joining countless strike actions.

Additionally, I spearheaded a successful campaign to increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour for over 1 million workers. This effort also led to the establishment of a robust wage enforcement agency, prevention of wage theft in various industries, and the securing of three paid sick days for local workers. Additionally, I played a key role in creating over \$400 million in new affordable housing with local union jobs, passing the first-ever \$330 million film tax credit in California, and co-creating a pre-apprenticeship boot camp for formerly incarcerated workers. I implemented programs to train union members for public office, increased diversity on the CLC Executive Board, and advocated for both public and private sector workers in various organizing campaigns.

As the Political Director of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, I coordinated political activities, led successful campaigns to elect labor allies, and supported the qualification and passage of ballot measures benefiting workers and local unions, including a \$140 billion infrastructure work for the Building & Construction Trades.

As an AFT/CFT union member, I have worked closely with AFT/CFT local union leaders, organizers and members to uplift the voices of educators in the workplace, in their communities and at the ballot box. This has included walking picket lines and precincts, directly lobbying elected officials and policy makers, and assisting in the coordination of political activities in support of public education candidates and causes.

C. List your major endorsements.

Individually, I am proud to be endorsed by Civil Rights icon and labor leader Dolores Huerta, Former Senator and Assemblymember Wes Chesbro, Former Assemblymember Patty Berg. I'm also endorsed by Governor Gavin Newsom and Assemblymember Jim Wood.

Organizationally, I am proud to be endorsed by the California Labor Federation, California Teachers Association, SEIU California, California Federation of Teachers, California Professional Firefighters, the United Nurses Association, Equality California and many others.

D. Where do you expect to get your main political, financial and volunteer support?

I have the support of grassroots community leaders, local leaders, and labor unions representing the workers of the North Coast.

E. Describe your campaign organization (staff, consultants, volunteers)

*Heidi Martinez, Campaign Manager
Jill Morton, Field Manager
Steve Barkan, Barkan Strategies, Consultant
Sandra Sanchez, Senior Advisor
Robin Swanson, Communications
Tracy Zeluff, Field
David Pruitt, Fundraiser
Richard Rios, Treasurer*

F. Describe your campaign strategy (mailers, forums, walking, phone banks, etc.)

My story of service to working people is one that connects with the working class communities of the 2nd Assembly District. I have secured a number of key endorsements that validate my work. And I have raised the necessary resources to fully communicate with 300,000 voters.

I have begun and will continue to complete the targeted, strategic voter communication required to share my message in each specific community in the 2nd Assembly District including but not limited to field (including canvassing and phonebanking), mail, radio, television, social and digital media.

G. List your opposition:

*Micheal Greer
Frankie Myers
Ted Williams
Ariel Kelley
Chris Rogers*

H. What are the demographics and political affiliation of your district?

Assembly District 2 encompasses California's North Coast and includes all of Del Norte, Trinity, Humboldt and Mendocino counties, and Northern and Western parts of Sonoma County. The population of District 2 is just over 500,000 people. The largest ethnic group is White at 63% followed by Hispanic or Latino at 22%. The district is primarily Democratic (50.8%), Republican (21.2%) closely followed by Independents (19.6%) and a handful or other registered voters that don't fit any of those categories(8.3%).

We will ensure our message is heard from voters across the 2nd Assembly District by meeting people where they are with a particular emphasis in rural communities. We have a robust campaign plan that includes targeted grassroots organizing to ensure we are connecting with communities often overlooked.

PART THREE – Office-Specific Questions

Please answer the specific questions for each election office and year (see attached) in the box below. List the question number next to each response, and attach additional pages as needed.

PART FOUR – Personal Information

I. Office-specific responses:

J. Please tell us something about yourself, (occupation, education, family, community involvement, etc.) You may attach your resume if you wish.

I am a labor leader and organizer, classroom educator and military veteran with a proven track record of delivering real results for real people.

I was raised by a single mother who struggled to put food on the table and keep a roof overhead. When I was 11 years old, I met my father for the first time as he sat in a Texas prison serving time for addiction related crimes. Growing up, I learned firsthand the values of hard work, service and sacrifice - working class values that inform my work today.

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I helped lead a successful campaign to raise the wages of nearly one million workers and pass a progressive ballot measure to build more affordable housing and create good jobs for local workers.

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At 14-years old, I attended my father's graduation when he earned a high school diploma while incarcerated. This moment had a profound impact on us both.

Nearly 30 years later, I serve as an Associate Professor at College of the Redwoods and teach American Government to incarcerated students at Pelican Bay State Prison. Each week, I bring more than 20 years of firsthand experience to the classroom to share the story of our Nation's founding, and the many challenges and opportunities we face. This work informs my belief in the power of a second chance and a quality education for all.

For more than 10 years, I served as an Intelligence Officer in the United States Navy Reserve. In 2013, I completed a one-year deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom where I supported joint Village Stability Operations across the country. For my service, I was awarded the Defense Meritorious Service Medal. This experience reaffirmed my dedication to service and a deep understanding of the needs of Veterans, Servicemembers and their families both at home and abroad.

I also serve as Chair of the California Democratic Party and live in Arcata, California with my wife, Sandra, and our chocolate Labrador, Charlie.

PART FIVE – Financial Information (Confidential)

K. What is your projected budget? How much have you raised at present? How do you intend to raise the balance? (This is for our information only, and will not be posted on the MWPC website.)

Given the short timeline of this campaign - just under 30 days to Election Day - the candidate who can quickly build a robust campaign will have a significant advantage. I intend to raise and spend the maximum allowed of \$725,000 for the Primary Election. I have raised to date roughly \$600,000 for the Primary Election.

SUBMIT

By submitting this questionnaire, you give us permission to post your responses to Parts One through Four on the MWPC website at <https://mendocinowomen.org/endorsements/>.



Candidate's Signature: _____ Date: _____ 1/5/24 _____

An electronic copy of this questionnaire is at <https://mendocinowomen.org/endorsements/> if you prefer to download a fillable PDF version.

Return this completed questionnaire by the deadline to be considered for endorsement.
Mail to: MWPC ~ or ~ Email to: kristana.arp@gmail.com.

BOX 1140
Ukiah, CA 95482