

November 8, 2011 SF District Attorney Recommendations

San Francisco District Attorney (BALIF Has Endorsed Two Candidates)

Sharmin Bock

Sharmin Bock, a resident of San Francisco since her family moved here from Iran, graduated *cum laude* from Georgetown Law in 1988 and has been admitted to practice in California since 1989. After graduating from Georgetown, Ms. Bock returned to San Francisco, where she clerked for the Honorable D. Lowell Jensen of the Northern District of California. Since 1989, Ms. Bock has served as an Assistant District Attorney for the County of Alameda. She currently serves as the Assistant District Attorney in charge of Special Operations and Policy Development.

A career prosecutor, Ms. Bock has prosecuted almost every kind of crime, appearing in the courtroom over 1000 times and having a 95% conviction rate in felony jury trials. Ms. Bock's experience includes serving as an expert in solving cold cases with DNA, forming and leading such high profiled units as the Human Exploitation and Trafficking ("HEAT") Unit and the DNA Cold Hits Unit, and heading the Sexually Violent Predator, Public Corruption, and the Special Operations Units of the Alameda District Attorney's Office.

Ms. Bock has shown a strong and heartfelt commitment to serving the underrepresented and underserved, prosecuting crimes against women and children and devising restorative and collaborative justice programs such as the AB 499 Pilot Program, which diverts child sex trafficking victims away from criminalization, and the HEAT Watch Program. Indeed, Ms. Bock is a recognized leader in combating child sex trafficking. For her work and commitment to the underrepresented, Ms. Bock was honored in 2009 with the Fay Stender Award from the California Woman Lawyers Association, as one of the only prosecutors ever bestowed with this prestigious award. Ms. Bock also received the 16th Assembly District's Woman of the Year Award in 2010 from the California Legislature.

Ms. Bock possesses the ability, experience, and leadership required for leading the San Francisco District Attorney's Office. Ms. Bock's references describe her as courageous and tough, and also refreshing, outgoing, and passionate. The Judiciary Committee was uniformly impressed by Ms. Bock's involvement, her devotion to public service, and her demonstrated commitment and sensitivity to the underrepresented and underserved.

District Attorney George Gascón

District Attorney Gascón received his law degree from Western State University College of Law in 1986. He has been a member of the California Bar since 1996. His soft spoken nature belies a rather remarkable history of achievement and overcoming obstacles. Born in Cuba in 1954, District Attorney Gascón's family fled to the United States and settled in a suburb of Los Angeles in 1967. After dropping out of high school, he enlisted in the United States Army and served from 1972-1975 and earned his high school diploma, before being honorably discharged with the rank of Sergeant. District Attorney Gascón was appointed to the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in 1978. He served as an officer until 1981, when he left to pursue a career in business management while volunteering his time as a reserve officer. In 1987, District Attorney Gascón rejoined the LAPD and began his steady rise through the ranks until he became Assistant Chief and Director of the Office of Operations in 2003. In 2006, District Attorney Gascón became the Chief of Police in Mesa, Arizona, where he served for three years before Mayor Gavin Newsom invited him to become Chief of Police of San Francisco in 2009. In January 2011, Mayor Newsom appointed District Attorney Gascón to fill the vacancy left by Kamala Harris's election to Attorney General.

During the course of this year, District Attorney Gascón has proven himself as an able and respected administrator. While continuing many of his predecessor's well-liked initiatives, District Attorney Gascón has shown innovation in his expansion of diversionary programs and community courts, which area all based on progressive and effective collaborative justice models.

In addition to District Attorney Gascón's credentials in law enforcement and management, the LGBT community can be assured that we are a visible and valued part of his agenda. He has promoted LGBT prosecutors to management and leadership positions in the office and has prosecuted LGBT hate crimes vigorously. While he was San Francisco Police Chief, he created an LGBT advisory board to link our community with the police department and helped promote openly LGBT officers to influential positions within the department. Despite Mesa, Arizona's very conservative leanings, including widespread support for California's Proposition 8, then Chief of Police Gascón ensured that LGBT demonstrators could safely exercise their First Amendment rights to protest.

The Judiciary Committee believes that during this past year, District Attorney Gascón has proven himself to be a respected leader who reflects the values of our community.

Important Note: BALIF has not endorsed any other candidates running for local offices for the November 8, 2011 election, nor have we taken a position on any of the ballot propositions. We urge our members to learn about the various other races and issues through various sources, including those with a LGBT focus such as in San Francisco the Alice B. Toklas LGBT Democratic Club and the Harvey Milk LGBT Democratic Club, in the East Bay the East Bay

Stonewall Democratic Club, and in the South Bay, the Bay Area Municipal Elections Committee (BAYMEC). Also, be sure to check with your local Department of Elections to find out the cut-off for absentee ballots and your polling location.