

**Deputy Sheriffs' Association of San Diego County**  
13881 Danielson Street, Poway, CA 92064 | (858) 486-9009



**Political Action Committee Endorsement Questionnaire**  
**San Diego County Sheriff**

**Candidate Name: Kelly A. Martinez**

**Experience & Qualifications**

Education: Associate of Science Administration of Justice Contemporary Police Technologies, San Diego Miramar College

Basic POST Certificate, Advanced POST Certificate, Supervisory POST Certificate  
POST Management Certificate, Graduate of POST Command College

**How does your background qualify you to be San Diego County Sheriff?**

I have served the Sheriff's Department for 36 years. I have served at every rank from Deputy, Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain, Commander, Assistant Sheriff and Undersheriff. I currently run the day to day operations of the Sheriff's Department which has 4,600 employees, and a \$1 billion \$74 million budget. We are responsible for 4,200 square miles of unincorporated San Diego County, nine contract cities, management of the jails and security at the courthouses. I worked for 22-years as a deputy, working for 17-years as a detective in a variety of assignments. As a sergeant I was responsible for a patrol team and was the sergeant over the Criminal Intelligence Detail for 2-years, I also worked as an Internal Affairs sergeant for one year before promoting to lieutenant. As a lieutenant, I was assigned to the Communications Center, North Coastal Command, the

Station Commander for the Valley Center Sub-Station and then the Narcotic Task Force. After my promotion to Captain, I was assigned to the Alpine Station, Rural Enforcement Division. I was assigned after that to be the Special Assistant to Sheriff Gore/Tribal Liaison. I was promoted to the position of Commander over Investigations after one year working directly for the Sheriff. After 6-months, I promoted to Assistant Sheriff and was responsible for the Law Enforcement Services Bureau for 3 ½ years. I was appointed to Undersheriff at the end of February 2021 and I have served in that role since. This broad experience has uniquely prepared me to lead our department. I understand the work at every level and in every bureau.

**Highlight any of your accomplishments, or elements of your record, that demonstrate a relationship with law enforcement and/or a commitment to public safety.**

During my tenure on the Sheriff's Department public safety has always been my highest priority. I have a long track record of leadership and an ability to accomplish what needs to be done. One of my proudest accomplishments is the Sheriff's Department response to the legalization of marijuana. In 2016, I recognized that California was likely to legalize marijuana in November and that it would become legal at midnight on election day. I led the state effort to educate and prepare law enforcement for this inevitability. I worked with Colorado law enforcement leaders who hosted 28 California law enforcement leaders for 3-days of educating us on what was coming. We brought that information back and I led several training sessions with local community, city and county leaders, as well as law enforcement. As a result of those efforts, we were able to educate our department and we had a seamless response to the legalization when it happened.

There are too many examples of my commitment to public safety during my career to list them all, but I think the above example highlights my interest in forecasting events and the potential impacts to our organization. I have the ability to prepare our department in a way that ensures we are ready for whatever is coming. I have a long history of collaboration and working with regional state, local and federal partners which increases public safety. I continue that work with our county partners and government leaders to position the Sheriff's Department for continuing growth and opportunities.

**Platform**

**These responses will be shared with our members.**

**1. Why do you want to be San Diego County Sheriff?**

I believe that it is more important than ever that the next Sheriff is capable, prepared, experienced, trusted, knowledgeable, responsive, approachable and respected. I believe that I am all these things. I have never sought to run for Sheriff but, recognize how necessary it is to have the right person leading our organization. This job is not

about one individual. It is about all of us and about our communities and providing high-quality public safety services.

**2. What are your top priorities?**

My top priorities are our employees and the communities we serve. Public safety which provides the ability for the residents who live and visit our jurisdictions to be safe. I want our employees to work in the safest and most empowering environment possible. That starts at the top and a commitment to training, career opportunities and trust in our department leadership.

**3. What is the single greatest issue facing the Sheriff's Department?**

Recruiting, hiring and retaining quality personnel.

**4. What is the greatest issue facing public safety in San Diego County? How would you solve the issue?**

Fentanyl and gun-violence. I don't know if we (in law enforcement) can solve fentanyl and substance abuse in our communities. But we need to remain engaged with county partners and NGO's on solutions. Crisis Stabilization Units and other community centers are a better "drop-off" point for 11550's than our jails. We are working with our county partners to develop these sites. We are increasing our MAT program in the jails. Addiction is the driver that has created this crisis; we need to solve that.

Gun-violence happens for several reasons. There is a lot of divisiveness and fear in our communities and that has resulted in more guns. The reasons that people use guns spans the gamut from gangs, domestic violence, disputes of every type, criminal enterprise, etc. As we continue to conduct high-quality investigations, we will get to the core reasons for gun violence and we will make an impact, one case at a time.

**5. What is the greatest adversity you must overcome in your attempt to be elected as Sheriff in 2022?**

The divisiveness of the political climate. I hope that I can be who I am, which is a collaborator and it won't be viewed negatively. The Sheriff is non-partisan. I am responsible for providing high-quality public safety services to everyone we serve. Politics have no part in that. As a career law enforcement professional running for political office is not a comfortable place to be, but I believe in our department. For that reason, I will run.

**6. What is your position on staffing for the department over the next four years for full service and detentions/courts deputies?**

I'm not sure what this question means. I know that there are questions about whether we go to one classification of deputy or continue with the Detentions and Law Enforcement Classification. I am open to the discussion but, don't currently have a hard

position. I know that a couple of years ago staff work was done to understand if mandatory rotation of detentions deputies assigned to courts was a good idea. This created concerns for deputies who spent years on waiting lists to be assigned to courts. The staff study concluded that mandatory rotations were a bad idea and as a result the conversation was put to bed. There is no intent to revisit that idea.

**7. Do you envision any staffing changes or restructuring? If so, what are they?**

I am still evaluating. We have been restructuring for a few years. We split SID into SID/NGD while I was Assistant Sheriff, because it made sense. We created a Juvenile Services Unit, because it made sense. We converted the SADLE team to the HART Team. We created a Special Events Unit; we added a Community Inclusion Director position. We restructured the supervision in the Criminal Analysis Unit. We reworked the CID to the Major Crimes Division. We recently added a fourth Commander to DSB. There is other restructuring that we've done. I think that if something makes sense, we should look at it.

**8. What is your position on increasing diversity in law enforcement? Do you support quotas or preferences?**

I don't support quotas or preferences because I think that minimizes the good work and value of those who are "preferred." I am always open to providing opportunities to everyone and ensuring that we don't have policies or practices that are treating employees inequitably. In my 36-years, I know that we have at times had ingrained practices that have unfairly provided opportunities to one group or another. I want EVERYONE to have equal opportunity for advancement and jobs based on skill, experience, talent and abilities.

**9. As Sheriff, how do you envision your role with regard to salary and benefits for employees?**

I support providing our employees with the best benefits and pay in the industry. We are in a better position to recruit and retain high-quality professionals when we offer good wages and benefits.

**10. How would you deal with it if you become aware a member of your command staff displays caustic management practices that are toxic to the Department?**

They would be, and have been under my leadership, held to the same standards, investigation and discipline as any employee on the department. I do not tolerate anyone treating any employee on the department in a toxic manner.

**11. What are your thoughts about the two existing deputy sheriff classifications? As Sheriff, would the dual classifications remain, consider one deputy classification, or is there an alternative option?**

I would like more time to examine this issue.

**12. How do you see your role with respect to advocating for deputies publicly?**

I don't think anyone can follow a leader who does not support them publicly.

**13. Morale in law enforcement is at an all-time low. How do you plan to address this issue?**

I believe that we are an exemplary department. I hope that deputies understand that they are supported by their leaders. I visit one of our stations/facilities every two weeks or so. I plan to continue that practice to answer questions, instill trust and confidence and understand what those of you who are doing the work every day need. I advocate with our county leaders and political leaders every day. We are in a good place; I will ensure deputies and staff understand that. EVERYONE wants to be safe. EVERYONE believes in public safety. We are important and the work we do is appreciated. I will emphasize that every day.

**14. How much have you raised for your campaign to date, and how much do you plan on raising?**

I just opened my campaign and don't have a number today – I will be happy to update when I meet with you. My fundraising goal is around \$700k. I won't know how much money is needed to win this race until we are further along in the campaign.

**15. Please explain your philosophy regarding the importance of the relationship between the DSA and the Sheriff's Department.**

I have valued the relationship between the DSA and the Sheriff's Department. I have been a member for 36 years. I really treasure the fact that I have directly worked with most of the Board members and that I can call any of the Directors or the DSA President and discuss concerns (and visa versa) before they become bigger issues. I think our sworn staff need advocates and having a DSA that will bring concerns forward enhances our ability to keep our employees happy. We consider ourselves a family and we need to know when things are going well and when we need to work on something.

**Endorsements**

**Provide a list of endorsements, including public safety endorsements.**

Congressman Juan Vargas

President pro tempore Toni Atkins

Assembly member Lorena Gonzalez

Chairman Nathan Fletcher

Vice Chairwoman Nora Vargas

Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer

Sheriff Bill Gore

Mayor Todd Gloria

Mayor Mary Salas

Senator Christine Kehoe (Retired)

Bishop Dr. William A. Benson

Pastor Dr. Gerald Brown

San Diego County Chiefs and Sheriff Association

### **Additional Information**

**Please include any additional information that you believe might be helpful to the members of the DSA Political Action Committee or Board of Directors.**

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this process.

*Thank you for your interest in the DSA's endorsement and for your participation in our process.*