

Deputy Sheriffs' Association of San Diego County

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Political Action Committee Endorsement Questionnaire - San Diego County Sheriff

2022 Contact Information

Candidate Name: [John C Hemmerling](#)

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Experience & Qualifications

Education: [Bachelor Science - University of Central Missouri](#); [Juris Doctor - University of San Diego](#); [Advanced POST - California](#)

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

I have held leadership positions in my career as a military officer, a police officer, and as a civilian. I patrolled the Eastern and Mid-City Divisions of the San Diego Police Department (SDPD) for 9 years, my last assignment being a Field Training Officer. I served close to 30 years in the Marine Corps (7 active and 22+ reserve) rising to the rank of Colonel, holding a command at nearly every level, including being assigned as the Senior Marine Liaison to FEMA Region IX for coordinating military support to local and state agencies in the time of disasters. I provided 7 years of legal advice to the San Diego Police Department and became Legal Counsel to the Chief of Police. I am currently the head prosecutor in the City of San Diego running the 200 plus staff of the Criminal Division of the San Diego City Attorney's Office.

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

My relationship with law enforcement began growing up as a son of a Kansas City Police Officer. My commitment to law enforcement and public safety spans almost 30 years of experience: from times spent as a patrol officer at SDPD; to administering three military jails and supporting security and stabilization missions in the Al Anbar Province in Iraq; to my role as legal counsel to the SDPD command staff and the Chief of Police; and in my current capacity as the head prosecutor for the Criminal Division of the San Diego City Attorney's office.

Platform

These responses will be shared with our members.

1. Why do you want to be San Diego County Sheriff? I want to use this unique opportunity to bring fair and compassionate leadership to the Department and to restore confidence and pride in the public by highlighting the exceptional work done by the Deputies and Staff as we work together to usher in innovative techniques in detentions and policing.
2. What are your top priorities? 1. Address the practices and public image surrounding the operations of the Jails/Detentions Services Bureau. 2. Reduce violent crime while focusing on victims. 3. Stem gun violence. 4 Promote transparency and public trust.
3. What is the single greatest issue facing the Sheriff's Department? The public image of the safety and security of Jail Operations.
4. What is the greatest issue facing public safety in San Diego County? How would you solve the issue? Public Trust. I want to realign resources to focus on the Department's priorities. Once the public sees my commitment on the priorities that matter most, trust and collaboration will follow.
5. What is the greatest adversity you must overcome in your attempt to be elected as Sheriff in 2022? I am new to political campaigning, so my challenge is getting everyone to know me and getting my message out.
6. What is your position on staffing for the Department over the next four years for full service and detentions/courts deputies? I will work with the DSA to understand best

practices and best outcomes for the Deputies while improving morale and status. I would like to see the Department eventually merge into one multi-skilled Deputy; however, I will work with DSA and the rank in file to adopt a unified classification or a system that we can all agree and benefit from.

7. Do you envision any staffing changes or restructuring? If so, what are they? I would need to assess that upon taking office. It will be a priority in the first 60 days.
8. What is your position on increasing diversity in law enforcement? Do you support quotas or preferences? I do not support quotas, but I intend to be a positive voice for supporting diversity at every level. It is of utmost importance to reflect the community we police, and getting the best staff in the recruiting and hiring division can make progress in that regard.
9. As Sheriff, how do you envision your role with regard to salary and benefits for employees? Policing is difficult. I will work with the DSA and the County Board of Supervisors to ensure our Department is getting the best pay, benefits, and equipment. My role as Sheriff will be to promote and support the budget so it enhances the Deputies' abilities to do their job to the best of their ability.
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? I have zero tolerance for a hostile work environment. No option is off the table to deal with this type of behavior.
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 will work with the DSA, command staff, and the rank and file to understand best practices and best outcomes for the Deputies while improving morale and status. I believe there is a solution that is going to best benefit the Deputies, the Department, and the Public.
12. How do you see your role with respect to advocating for deputies publicly? Public condemnation is never good for morale, and rarely proper. We must also be fair and critical when it's called for. Highlighting the great work done by the Deputies, at every level, is critical to restoring the public trust. As Sheriff, I will set the example and never pass blame because the ultimate responsibility belongs to me. As Sheriff, I will show support, gratitude, and professionalism at every turn to not only maintain order and support in the ranks, but to also gain and keep public trust and support.

13. Morale in law enforcement is at an all-time low. How do you plan to address this issue? Leadership plays an integral part in restoring morale. Additionally, so does professionalism, fairness, empathy, transparency, and a commitment to change when appropriate. My confidence in the actions and abilities of the Department in the face of fair or unfair criticism is a cornerstone to keeping the trust and the morale high.
14. How much have you raised for your campaign to date, and how much do you plan on raising? I'm opening my campaign this week, and my goal is raising what it takes to make this candidacy successful.
15. Please explain your philosophy in regards to the importance of the relationship between the DSA and the Sheriff's Department. The DSA is critical and necessary to the very core of the operations of the Department. The DSA will be an integral partner in the administration going forward.

Endorsements

Provide a list of endorsements, including public safety endorsements. I am building a strong coalition of support to launch my campaign. I have worked successfully with many officials, politicians and law enforcement throughout my career. I expect support from Police Chiefs, current and retired, as well as current and retired politicians.

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