

SEIU 521 QUESTIONNAIRE
SALINAS MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

CAMPAIGN PROFILE

Candidate Name: Ernesto G. Gonzalez
Candidate email: egonzalezsr56@gmail.com
Office sought: Mayor, City of Salinas
Campaign Address: 1526 Verona Court, Salinas, CA 93905
Campaign Phone: 831-346-9602
Tax/FPPC ID #: Incomplete

Occupation: Retired Principal Employer: Salinas City Elementary School District

Proposed Ballot Designation: Retired Principal

Elected offices currently/ previously held:

Former Salinas Union High School District Board Member

Former Council Member, City of Salinas

Other campaigns for elected office: Participated in electing elementary, high school college, monterey county, city, county, state and presidential candidates from 1990 to present day. Last campaign I ran was to elect my daughter in law in Soledad in 2018. She was elected as a council women. Her name is Marisela Lara. There were 3 candidates: Alejandro Chavez, Richard Perez, and Marisela Lara. Mr. Chavez had the endorsement of the Monterey County Democratic Club. He was also endorsed by All of the mayors from South County and other council members. Richard Perez was endorsed by the Republican Party, Simon Salinas and Christopher Lopez. Marisela Lara was endorsed by Simon Salinas and Christopher Lopez. We worked hard on that election and Marisela was the top vote getter.

Appointed offices currently/ previously held: Monterey County Planning Commission

	NAME	PHONE
Labor Consultant*:	In Progress	_____
Campaign Consultant*:	In Progress	_____
Media Consultant*:	In Progress	_____
Mail Consultant*:	In Progress	_____
Fundraising Consultant*:	In Progress	_____
Field Consultant*:	In Progress	_____
Pollster*:	In Progress	_____
Campaign Manager:	In Progress	_____
Scheduler*:	In Progress	_____

Other Campaign Staff: Volunteers: Francisca Salinas Gonzalez, Linda Gonzalez and Luis Amezcua; Ernesto Gonzalez, Marisela Lara, Cristian Santoyo, Adela Gonzalez, Emiliano Gonzalez, Yleana Alcantara, 8 brothers and sisters, 30 plus nieces and nephews, friends
** if applicable*

Anticipated Budget: \$10,000 - \$20,000

Funds Raised to Date: \$ 0 (please attach campaign finance report)

Current/Prior union membership:

 Former CSEA Member

 Former Alisal Teachers' Association

Other organizations you belong to:

 Salinas Valley Democratic Club

 Monterey County Democratic Central Committee

Please attach your biography, a list of current endorsements and any campaign literature you have printed as of yet.

My interest in the position of mayor is based on my belief that my personal characteristics and direct former experiences as a parent, instructional aide, teacher, principal, school board member, and city council member meet the criteria, qualifications, skills and abilities that this city needs for the position of mayor. Additionally, I am bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural.

I come from a family of six brothers and four sisters. I am the second to the eldest sibling. Starting at the age of 6 and into my teenage years, I picked cotton, oranges and potatoes in Texas. My father would migrate to California, Idaho, Florida and other states with some of my brothers and sisters. I stayed at home in Brownsville with my mother, paternal grandmother and 3 brothers and two sisters. As the eldest male in the household, I learned to be responsible. Also, I learned the value of hard work from a very young age.

Growing up in the barrios of Brownsville, we saw and heard the horrific stories of young Latinos being killed by police in the alleys. Most of the times the police claimed that they saw the victims with something in their hands and they thought it was a weapon. So they would shoot and kill them claiming that they were afraid for their lives as a justification. For decades many of these officers were getting away with murder.

I was 7 years 4 months old when John F. Kennedy was assassinated in November of 1963. I was walking home from school and televisions were on broadcasting black and white images where hundreds of thousand of people were crying. I started to cry myself. I was 12 years old when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy were assassinated. Growing up, I observed and experienced a sea of inequalities and racism. My heroes were Cesar Chavez, Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, Dolores Huerta, La Adelita, Rosa Parks, John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King.

Once I was old enough, I got politically involved and walked with the Brown Berets when they went to march in Brownsville Texas. In 1977 my entire family migrated to Salinas, California to pick strawberries. My eldest brother Julian had joined the marines when he was seventeen and was not with us. We lived in the trailers on Corey Rd. off of River Rd. A

few of us slept on the floors in the outskirts of Salinas. I have lived and experienced the life of poverty, migrant students, and of farm workers.

The family had to work in order to help make ends meet! Growing up in Brownsville, I shined shoes, sold and inserted specials in newspapers, sold fruit door to door, cut yards, distributed fliers, and washed dishes at a restaurant! In my early 20's I picked strawberries and worked in the agricultural fields by River Rd. and Pine Canyon Rd. I began my educational career as an instructional aide and noon-duty supervisor. I served as an elementary bilingual classroom teacher and bilingual resource teacher for thirteen years. I served as a vice-principal for two years, principal for twelve years and 3 years at the district level as principal on special assignment for state and federal programs. I am bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural.

Education

Homer Hanna High School Diploma, 1975	Brownsville, Texas
Associate of Arts Degree, 1982	Hartnell Community College, Salinas, Ca.
Bachelor of Arts, 1984	Liberal Studies, San Jose State University
Preliminary Admin. Services Cred., 1999	SJSU
Professional Clear Admin. Credential, 2003	Education (Admin. & Supervision) SJSU

Prior Public Service

Salinas Union High School District 1991-2000
City of Salinas, Council Member, December – 2000 to April 2002
WEED AND SEED EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE, City of Salinas, 2001
Sunrise House Committee, Joint Powers Agency

Membership with labor unions:

California School Employees Association, Chapter 577, 1981-1982
California Teachers Association, Chapter 577, 1984-1997
Association of California School Administrators, ACSA, 1997-2014

Work with labor unions:

Alisal Teachers Association, 1984-1997, Building Representative, 1989-91
Salinas Area Bilingual Education/Co-Founder
Public Affairs, Board Member, 1988-1989
Scholarship Committee, 1987-1988, Member 1985
Secretary, Board Member, 1986-1988, Member 1985

Experience with labor unions:

I have marched with the UFW founded by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, and Have participated in boycotts and picket lines. Once, a car almost ran me over while in a picket line supporting the UFW as I was holding a large poster of la Virgen de Guadalupe at K-mart.

Met with Ron Cheshire and Jose Mendez with the Building and Construction Trades Council to help push for Project Labor Agreements with the Alisal School District when my wife Francisca and my sister Maria were trustees in late 1990's. As board member for the Salinas Union High School District, I worked with SVFT and CSEA. As a Council member I dealt with various unions including SEIU Local 521, Firefighters, Police officers, etc.

Current organizations I belong to

Salinas Valley Democratic Club
Monterey County Democratic Central Committee
Monterey County Planning Commissioner

Former organizations

LULAC 2055, League of United Latin American Citizens.
MAPA, Mexican American Political Association
La Raza Democrats of Monterey County, Co-Founder, Disbanded
ABC, Alisal Better Committee, Southwest Voter Education Project, voter registration
CBS, Citizens for Better Schools

Previous Endorsements

UFCW Local 5? Year 2000 Pete Maturino
Teamsters Local 890, Franklin Gallegos
United Farm Workers
Firefighters of Salinas
Operating Engineers local 3

Additionally, I have established and implemented many after school programs. I have served in many professional educational committees, both at the district and school levels. I have a proven record of understanding and applying California and federal finance to the budget process. As an administrator, I worked hard to increase staff morale being honest, building trust, demonstrating confidence, taking risks, and solving problems. I treat staff with respect and professionalism. I value their ideas and utilize a shared decision making process. Due to this inclusionary strategy, I have made a positive difference in every position I have held and find many people come to me for advice and solutions. I have a proven record of being an effective communicator, active listener and community minded individual who will be accessible to and work in collaboration with everyone.

In summary, I am confident that my educational, professional and community experiences have prepared me to provide effective leadership and direction as mayor of Salinas. Together, we can create a positive city climate and continue to be sensitive and responsive to our multicultural community needs.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Briefly describe your top priorities and the policy areas that will be of most interest to you as Supervisor. Mayor

Union discussions and meetings so that we work together as a team in the process of decision making

Covid -19 and its effects on an entire system related to

Budgets

Personnel wages, salaries and benefits

Homeless Issues

Office of Civil Rights Issues,

Hiring and promotion process of qualified individual from within the city of Salinas

Affordable Housing and bedroom communities

Traffic Issues

Water Issues related to salt water intrusion

2. What public administration or leadership experience do you have? Please explain the programs you have developed and implemented for the benefit of the public.

Former SUHSD Board member for 9 years

Former City of Salinas Council member

2 years vice-principal, 12 years principal of elementary schools, 3 years at district office level as principal on special assignment for state and federal programs

Was on the SUHSD school board when we opened Harden Middle School, Everett

Alvarez High School, Reconstruction of Salinas High School. Left the board prior to completion of La Paz Middle School. 3 board members wanted to name this school Dolores Huerta. The vote failed on a 4 3 vote. As soon as it failed I walked out of the board meeting in protest. Trustee Sandra Ocampo and one more Latino trustee followed me outside and we joined the UFW marchers who were outside pushing for school to be named Dolores Huerta! The media spoke up against us for walking out! Apparently to them we were like little children with our baby blankets walking outside because we did not get what we wanted!

Parent involvement programs where parents are involved in all aspects of the school including governance, Budgets, safety, curriculum, instruction, assessment, Positive Behavior Intervention Programs, Restorative Justice to name a few!

At the school and district level I applied for many different type of grants. I read, highlighted, tagged, and reviewed the certificated and classified contracts to ensure that I was abiding by them.

PUBLIC SECTOR/GOVERNMENT SERVICES

SEIU Local 521 is an overtly anti-racist organization. As such, we believe that to win economic justice for working people, we must win racial justice. This belief is grounded in our understanding that the fundamental challenges to our vision are structural racism and corporate power; until Black communities and other communities of color can thrive, none of our communities can truly thrive. SEIU Local 521 supports policies and candidates that will reverse systemic racism and invest in the working class and communities of color.

3. How would you handle a budget deficit without balancing the budget on the back of workers or by cutting services to low-income communities of color? Please address the issue of the City's reserve funds in your response.

I would see what the city manager, city attorney, and council have to say. I would try to have the council have a sub committee to meet with the various union members to see what possible solutions we might come up with. With the consensus of the council, I would direct the city manager and staff to have meetings with all the stakeholders so that we might be able to reach some type of agreement that we all can live with. The city's reserve funds would be part of the solution that the team can include as we develop recommendations. The city manager may not like it because they are used to controlling the dialogue, but I operate differently.

4. What steps will you take to fight economic and racial inequality?

I have been fighting economic and racial inequality since I was a teenager and to my death bed will do so. For those who believe in this cause, you just do not stop when you retire.

As a teenager I walked with the Brown Berets in Brownsville Texas. I have marched with the UFW alongside Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta. Other unions like the Teamsters, UFCW, SEIU and others came together in unity in many of these

marches. I was heavily involved and continue to be involved in the redistricting process. We worked closely with voting rights attorney Joaquin Avila to change from at large voting to district elections. I have been involved and continue to be involved in the redistricting of school districts, county office of education, Hartnell College, Salinas city council and county supervisors. We met together at Jesse G. Sanchez's law office to determine who was going to put his or her name on lawsuits. I was one of the plaintiffs in one of the original lawsuits against the Memorial hospital board and was deposed by a judge in San Jose. Later attorney Joaquin Avila recommended we end that lawsuit. Years later David Serena and others sued the hospital board again and were victorious in changing to district based elections.

Dr. Juan Oliverrez, a few others and I would run candidates not necessarily to win. We wanted to see how people were voting so that when redistricting would come around we would be able to use voting data to cut precincts. We wanted to know where Latinos were actually winning and where they were losing. We would spend endless days working to the wee hours of the night looking at data. We would identify and cut out the voting precincts so that the minority community would have an opportunity of electing a candidate of choice, as per the voting rights act of 1965. Some of us have worked on this for over 35 years and will continue to do this work!

As you can see from the aforementioned information, I have been fighting economic and racial inequality for years. If I am elected mayor, one of my platforms will be to hire local individuals as firefighter or police officers. I truly believe that we have qualified individuals in Salinas that can do this work! We need to look at the current systems in place as it relates to hiring practices and look at the racial inequalities at the top tiers of administration. It is only by assessing practices, policies, regulations and changing them that we will be able to change the system. We need to hire more local individuals to help the fight against economic and racial inequality!

You can have individuals that your think are fighting for the same causes that we are, but at the end come up with excuses of why they did not vote with our values and ideals!

5. Will you commit to publicly supporting and campaign for The California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act of 2020/Prop 15, also known as Schools and Communities First, or Property Tax Split Roll? What specific actions will you take to publicly support the campaign?

Yes!

Ask friends and family members to vote for it in person or through electronic media.

Ask the Democratic clubs to place that information on flyers.

Help unions call individuals if needed! Place yard sign.

6. Under what circumstances do you favor contracting out services that are currently done or could be done by SEIU members? If the city did look to contract out work, would you allow SEIU members sufficient time to provide alternative plans to contracting out before outsourcing is approved?

First I would have discussion with unions being affected to get their perspective and to be part of the decision making process. Hopefully we would be able to work it out before making any decision. Unions, community, parents, family have always been

part of my decision making process. At the end of the day, I have always been fair and more likely than not would abide by union recommendations, ideas, solutions.

7. Public Employee Pensions have come under attack by various anti-government and anti-worker groups like the Freedom Foundation and California Policy Center. What is your opinion of the City's pension system?

We need to protect the Public Employee Pensions at all costs. If at any time there was discussion to change this, as mayor I am opposed to this. As mayor I would meet with the various unions individually and as a group to talk about any possible solutions to hopefully enter into agreements.

8. As the nation grapples with COVID-19, child care is a major issue for workers. Will you work to provide child care or funding for child care for city workers? Please explain your position.

I would work with the unions to find out potential solutions. We need to see what the city has in place and how this impacts the budget. We would need to look at potential grants at the county, state, and federal levels and apply for them. If they do not exist, we could pursue legislation or propositions that would help with this. We also need to look at child care solutions for when epidemics or pandemics are not around. The main point is to work with unions and not necessarily follow city manager, attorney or city administration advise and recommendations! More important is to give direction prior to us getting advise and recommendations. Unions must be part of the decision making process!

9. What policies will you propose to address the high cost of housing (rent stabilization, inclusionary housing, general plan amendments, etc.)?

I would ask for these issues to be brought fourth so that the city council can be better informed and be able to review current policies and how they are aligned to county, state and the federal government. Any policy proposed would have to be in conjunction with union and community input. I support rent stabilization propositions and laws that will help the poor and middle class individuals. I support inclusionary housing, but we have to take a closer look at what this means. Cities are becoming bedroom communities. I believe that we have to include the unions in every decision so they become partners in the decision making process!

SUPPORTING UNIONS/NEW ORGANIZING

10. Which of the following actions would you take to support workers engaged in union activity such as bargaining and organizing?

YES	NO	
X	<input type="checkbox"/>	Walk picket lines
X	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mediate with employers
X	<input type="checkbox"/>	Write letters of support
X	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fight for proper enforcement of current labor law
X	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hold a press conference
X	<input type="checkbox"/>	Speak at rallies

Additional actions or comments:

11. Would you cross a picket line?

YES NO
____ X

12. If elected, which of the following will you commit to in order to build a strong working relationship with SEIU?

YES	NO	
X	____	Call for and welcome SEIU input on relevant policy matters
X	____	Attend SEIU leadership and worksite meetings
X	____	Work with SEIU to develop legislative proposals
X	____	Ensure direct access to you and your staff
X	____	Work to appoint qualified union members to appropriate Boards and Commissions

13. Is there anything else you believe is important for the members of SEIU to know about you and your campaign?

I believe I provided a lot of information in the previous answers!

“It would be an honor to receive the endorsement SEIU Local 521!”

Signature: Ernesto G. Gonzalez Date: 7-24-20

Print Name: Ernesto G. Gonzalez

- In addition please sign our organizing pledge on the attached page

CANDIDATE PLEDGE – SUPPORTING THE RIGHT OF WORKERS TO CHOOSE A UNION

Section 923 of California's Labor Code states it is the public policy of this state: "It is necessary that the individual workman have full freedom of association, self-organization, and designation of representatives of his own choosing, to negotiate the terms and conditions of his employment, and that he shall be free from the interference, restraint, or coercion of employers of labor, or their agents, in the designation of such representatives...."

Employers have the power to fire, promote, change work assignments and other wise reward and punish their workers. There are many responsible employers who respect the rights of their workers and obey the law. Unfortunately, many employers abuse their power in the workplace to deny their workers the right to freely choose a voice on the job by joining a union and bargaining contracts determining the terms and conditions of their employment.

Each year workers seeking to organize a union in their workplace are fired although the law says this is illegal. After years of litigation, employers are required to rehire these workers and pay back wages minus any income the worker earned after being fired. Employers pay no other penalty. Workers receive no compensation for the harm done to their lives and careers. And unions receive no compensation for the impact of such illegal activities on their organizing drives.

Even after workers overcome employer interference and vote for a union many employers then refuse to bargain a contract in good faith.

SEIU asks you as a candidate and elected official to exert moral leadership and to actively support public policies that protect the right of workers to freely choose a voice on the job by participating in a union and to bargaining with their employers.

As a candidate and elected official, I hereby pledge:

1. To publicly support and actively encourage workers who are organizing a union with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).
2. To publicly support and actively encourage the position that workers should be able to freely choose for themselves whether they want to gain a voice on the job by unionizing without the intimidating effects of any employer interference. This includes publicly supporting and encouraging employers to remain neutral on the question of unionization.
3. To publicly support and actively encourage the position that no taxpayer money should be spent interfering with the right of workers to freely chooses a union.
4. To publicly support and actively encourage a fair and fast process for determining worker support for unionization including secret ballot election or card check recognition.
5. To publicly support and actively encourage employers to negotiate an agreement with the union within 90 days after the majority of workers express their choice in favor of forming a union.
6. To publicly support and actively encourage employers to negotiate good faith collective bargaining agreements with their workers and to abide by the terms of those agreements.

Signature: _____

Date: 7-27-20

Print Name: _____

Ernesto G. Gonzalez