

Email interview with Lori Saldaña:

Times of San Diego: How, when and where did you learn that Will Rodriguez-Kennedy plans to run for county Democratic Party chair?

Saldaña: I was told by another San Diego delegate to the state convention that this change of Chair had been discussed during conversations on Friday (I arrived Saturday)

How, when and where did you learn Kyle Krahel-Frolander plans to run for county supervisor in District 5?

Initially, from a fellow delegate a few days before the the convention, who asked for secrecy. Then, from Will R-K at the convention

Who specifically informed you of these plans?

Will RK

Why do you think you were informed of these plans?

Will is seeking support from me and others to become the next Chair, once Kyle formally announces he is running for Supervisor

Why are you willing to identify yourself publicly as the source of information on these plans?

I'm one of the most experienced members of the San Diego County Democratic Party Central Committee: I've been serving on the Central Committee since 1998, first as an Executive Board member and State Party delegate, then as an Assembly member (2004-2010), and finally as a "Public Ballot Member" who has been elected three times — in 2010, 2020 and 2024.

The party has changed over those nearly 30 years — and there are many new committee members who don't know the history and background of the party, or the potential chair candidates. So I want them to have an opportunity for the same level of review for this position as we have for other elected offices.

I encourage the San Diego County Democratic Party's Executive Board to schedule a special Zoom meeting of the Central Committee to give all voting members the time needed to research, interview and fully vet potential candidates for chair.

I'm also concerned about the lack of continuity with leadership: We have had three chairs in the last two years: Will left midyear in his second term while facing allegations of sexual assault. Becca was killed in a motorcycle accident the following year, in her first term, and now Kyle is leaving after serving less than a year. The new chair needs to be ready to lead ASAP

What is your response to the on-the-record statement by Rodriguez-Kennedy that he would only consider running if Kyle steps down as party chair?

That is consistent with what was being discussed at the state convention: If Kyle doesn't run for supervisor, there is no opening and no need for an election.

How did Will come to be on the Central Committee?

I don't know originally. That predates my election in 2020. But most recently, he was allowed to serve as the "Immediate Past Chair" on the Executive Board, after Becca Taylor's death.

Why should Will resuming party chairmanship be a concern for local Democrats?

We have had two high-profile Democrats resign their elected offices over allegations of workplace sexual

harassment. In my opinion, it would be better to have a chair who has not faced similar allegations.

What are your concerns for how the local Democratic Party might choose a new chair if Kyle resigns?

I'm concerned we won't have the opportunity for a formal interview process, which includes a questionnaire with responses from each candidate to address basic skills, competency, financial accountability, ethics and other questions including:

Why do you want to be county party chair? What do you plan to accomplish in the next 18 months before the next chair election? What skills and experience do you bring to this job that will help you be successful in achieving those goals?

Have you managed an operational budget comparable to what the Party raises/spends for their activities? Have you ever failed to provide a full financial accounting of a budget as required by your organization?

Do you have experience with human resources, and hiring and managing staff? If so: How many employees did you supervise, and were you required to complete any managerial training, including workplace sexual harassment prevention training?

Have you ever been subjected to, or accused of, sexual harassment? If so: What was the outcome of the complaint, and what have you learned to prevent a similar situation from harming others?

Finally: Is there anything we need to know about you that might put the Party in a negative light if it became widely known?

Who would YOU like to run for Democratic Party chair? Would you run?

Since the chair's responsibilities include public speaking, presentations and media interviews, I would like to see a candidate who has excellent communication skills, and no "baggage" in their personal or professional life that may be used to detract from their message, and interfere with their ability to effectively represent the Democratic Party and communicate our values and principles.

I'd like to be able to vote for someone who has demonstrated a commitment to personal integrity, as well as professional and financial oversight, transparency and accountability.

And I'd prefer a chair who will allow Central Committee members to review the results of the financial audit that was commissioned over a year ago. This audit was done when the party was sued for over \$200,000 in unpaid and allegedly unauthorized campaign expenses. (The funds were apparently owed to a consultant working with a person later convicted of financial fraud and other crimes.)

All members of the Central Committee take an oath to uphold the law and Constitution, but we have never been presented with the audit results, or a report on those expenses, or told who authorized them to be paid.

Why should general readers care about the Democratic Party chairmanship?

The party's chair will be the face of the local Democratic Party, responsible for recruiting new candidates, supporting incumbents and raising and spending millions of dollars to support them as they run for office throughout San Diego County.

If elected, these people will then vote on new ordinances, regulations and laws that shape policies and impact the lives of every San Diegan.

As the spokesperson for the San Diego County Democratic party, the chair will discuss policies and programs at every level — from local to national — at a time when we are facing a crisis of confidence in the party's ability to provide alternatives to the draconian and harmful policies of the current presidential

administration. We need someone who inspires trust and confidence in Democrats.

Anything else readers should know about Will or your opposition to him becoming party chair?

Since the committee has had three chairs in the last two years: I want members to have the opportunity for a full vetting process of all the people who are interested in serving as the next chair, so we should find someone who is willing and able to stay for the remainder of the term and will honorably represent the party.

And to clarify: I neither support nor oppose Will, or any other person interested in running. I need more information about all of them.