

# CADEM

## VETERANS CAUCUS

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### Meet Your Veterans Caucus Executive Board

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### Their Messages and Goals

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**Ron Cohen**  
**Chair**

I am excited and energized by the Veterans Caucus Executive Board for 2021-2023. This board is quite diverse with every service represented including spouses of veterans and is made up of elected officials as well as appointed committee chairs. Our theme is collaboration, transparency, and inclusion.

You will see this in every meeting we hold and the internal workings of each committee and the way we deal with our membership. In our first two executive board meetings, we encouraged participation and comments from our membership. We intend to continue with that approach.

The Veterans Caucus of the California Democratic Party is the voice of the veterans to the party and the voice of the people to the people of the state. As such, we assume a unique role in the promotion of Veteran issues. To wit:

- We identify and represent the specific interests of Veterans in terms of public policies and programs.

- We give Democratic Veterans a forum in the operations of the state party.
- We maintain open lines of communication with elected officials throughout the state on behalf of Veterans.
- We monitor, sponsor, coauthor, and promote legislation at all levels of government that impact Veterans.
- We identify critical veteran needs and develop action plans for their resolution through the legal process of the State.
- We add the unique voice of Veterans to promote the principles to which we subscribe as Democrats.

The Veterans Caucus has been ineffective in these roles for too long, spending too much time and exerting too much effort on matters relating to internal operations and virtually none on programs that impact the lives of veterans. Our intent is to return the Caucus to its original role in the party and enhance its influence in party operations. This newsletter is about that role.

***Committees: As Ex Officio – Communications and Policy & Legislation***

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As a formerly homeless Veteran who suffers from PTSD and ADHD, I've turned my trials into a daily testimony dedicated to saving fellow Veterans and homeless folks. Life experience has taught me that all change is possible through resources and support. Oftentimes, support comes by way of trust-building through conversations, providing food, donating clothing, and offering employment. No one's journey is alike and as they say, "most people are one paycheck away from being homeless" – especially now during a worldwide pandemic.



**Chef Basil Kimbrew  
Vice Chair**

My appointment as Veteran State Delegate by Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis has enabled me to feed homeless communities. Yes, despite my challenges, I have made several accomplishments, including becoming an *American Culinary Federation Political Chef*, *2018 American Culinary Federation Presidential Gold Medal Winner*, and *Molina Healthcare Community Champion Award Veteran of the Year 2019 & 2020*.

In my role as Vice-Chair of the Veterans Caucus, I'm looking to create generational change by means of a 2-Year Work Plan:

- Establish a Veterans Homelessness Task Force
- Provide resources to Female Veterans who've experienced Military Sexual Trauma (MST)
- Interact with Veteran Clubs throughout California in an effort to increase our Veterans Caucus membership to 350 (our current membership is nearly 200)
- Advocate for the end of deporting Veterans – return these servicemembers home.

***Committees: As Ex Officio - Communications and Programs***

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**Antonio Chapa  
Recording Secretary**

I served on active duty for eight years and had the pleasure of serving our country at numerous duty stations. During my service, I was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal by General Kurlak, Commandant of the Marine Corps. My highest rank achieved was Sergeant.

To further my professional career and personal growth, I attended Pasadena City Community College, California State University, Los Angeles, and the University of Southern California. I was able to house about 150 homeless Veterans during my time working as a HUD-VASH outreach worker.

I currently hold the office of Commandant for MCL Detachment 1347 and the Legislative Liaison for MCL Department of CA. Also, I served as a Veterans Advisory Commissioner for LA County, First District.

In my role as Recording Secretary, I'm looking to create impactful change by means of a 2-Year Work Plan:

- Advocate for our Unhoused Veterans
- Promote resources for our Wounded Warriors and their Dependents.
- Maintain Caucus files and record minutes for all Veterans Caucus meetings

### ***Committees: Programs***

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In this time of national reckoning, we must be unapologetic in our advocacy to complete our military mission: Leave no one behind! During wartime, this mission means ensuring the safety of your fellow service members. Today, we are facing a national reckoning, where our Veteran community is also learning to navigate within a pandemic, racial reckoning, and the many nuances of military-civilian-life-balance. I proudly served in the Navy for eight years and am well aware of the difficulty many military folks face when transitioning to civilian life.



**Angela Scott**  
**Corresponding Secretary**

As both a woman of color and a Veteran, I agree that we must do a better job of taking care of our military family. Part of my job within the California Democratic Party Veterans Caucus and as Corresponding Secretary is to ensure communication is distributed to our Veteran community.

Impactful change can only happen when it's intentional. Progressive political action requires passion and tenacity to fuel sustainable change on micro- and macro-levels. I'm here to serve, bringing my passion and drive in hopes of collaborating with you. Along with serving as a California Democratic Party Assembly District 50 Delegate, I'm also a member of the California Democratic Party Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Standing Committee, which allows me to

voice the concerns of our constituents as well as create and follow policy. On a local level, I serve as Commissioner on the Santa Monica Public Safety Reform & Oversight Commission (PSROC). As a Steering Committee member on the Committee for Racial Justice and Santa Monica Black Agenda, I work in solidarity to create an equal playing field by addressing rent control and affordable housing shortages, police reform, decent living wages, seeking healthcare for all, and environmental justice.

Most importantly, I'm honored to represent you as we boldly envision a California that truly takes care of its Veteran community, ensuring high-quality resources and support. Through concerted efforts with you, I'm looking to accomplish a robust 2-Year Work Plan:

- Acknowledge and create opportunities for healing that includes communication, transparency, and accountability because we need to reach a place of trust.
- Discuss values with the Caucus and ideate how those values can be developed into concrete political action items.
- Invite membership to participate in collective work to achieve these goals.

We are here to re-affirm the mission – “Leave no one behind”!

***Committees: Chair, Communications***

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**Lizet Angulo, MBA**

I have a heart for Veterans as the daughter, wife, mother, and cousin of military service members. My life has always been rooted in love, compassion, and understanding of our real-life heroes. Strong military figures in my life inspired me to fearlessly seek methods to create change. After receiving a Master of Business degree, I set out to assist those most in need of resources – women, children, and Veterans with my nonprofit organizations: Ladies Taking Key Opportunities (aka Ladies TKO).

## **Treasurer**

Our efforts are micro-and macro-level with strategic socio-economic endeavors such as Empowering Women with Influence, CA Latino Media Publication, and Veterans' Voices Newsletter. Our efforts are micro-and macro-level with strategic socio-economic endeavors such as Empowering Women with Influence, CA Latino Media Publication, Ladies TKO, and Veterans' Voices Newsletter.

As an established businesswoman, managing finances isn't new to me. My role is extensive and dynamic as Management Business Services, President (9 E-publications), Southern California Administrative Coordinator, CDP Chicano/Latino Caucus, Victor Valley Democratic Club, Chair; Member of : High Desert Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Greater High Desert Chamber of Commerce, High Desert NAACP, Third Vice-Chair and VFW Post #8620 Life Member.

In my role as your Veterans Caucus Treasurer, I have created the following 2-Year Work Plan designed to increase accountability, transparency, and communication:

- a. Communicate with members regarding expiration dates – 30 to 45 days ahead of the expiration date for membership dues.
- b. Provide accurate and timely financial reports.

### ***Committees: Communications***

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**Tim Prince**  
**Parliamentarian**

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# Standing Committees

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It has been my pleasure serving you and your families for the past several years. I previously served as your Parliamentarian. In addition to serving as Chair for the Veterans Caucus Policy and Legislative Committee, I am also California Democratic Party Regional Director for Region 9 County/State Delegate and Governor Gavin Newsom appointee Board Member, CSLB. I'm also a member of SEIU 2015 and several CDP Caucuses. I have a degree in Gerontology and am dedicated to serving our Veterans, underrepresented families, and our senior communities.



**Diana Love**  
**Policy and Legislative**  
**Committee**  
**Chair**

In my role as Chair of the Policy and Legislative Committee, I'm looking to complete the following goals within a 2-Year Work Plan:

- Follow and track bills that are Veteran-related in legislation.
- Support resolutions that have been approved by the CDP Resolutions Committee aimed to benefit Veterans

**ATTENTION VETERANS---ARE YOU INTERESTED TO LEARN ABOUT HOW TO BECOME A STATE LICENSED CONTRACTOR. The Contractors State License Board (CSLB) offers licensure application assistance programs for past and present military personnel and their spouses/domestic partners. PLEASE GIVE CHRIS BELLINGHAM A CALL AT 661-429-8634 OR SEND AN EMAIL TO: [christophembellingham@gmail.com](mailto:christophembellingham@gmail.com)**

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**Polly Counts**  
**Programs Committee Chair**

Hi fellow Veterans and Caucus members, I'm excited about our journey ahead as we look to execute empowering programming. As a native Californian, born and raised in Oceanside, I'm thrilled with the opportunity to represent fellow Veterans and Caucus members in my home state. In 1999, I earned a communications degree from Chico State University. After graduation, I reported to Officer Candidate School in Pensacola Florida and received a commission in the United States Navy.

I was designated a Cryptologic Officer and served from 2000-2006. In 2017, I used my GI Bill benefits and earned a Master of Science Degree in School Psychology. I am currently working as a School Psychologist at a local school district.

Along with serving in my role as an Assembly District 76 Delegate, I'm the former officer and current member of the Veterans Democrat Club of San Diego County, North Chapter.

I look forward to an ambitious 2-Year Work Plan:

- Unifying, Networking, and promoting the growth of the California State Veterans clubs/organizations in order to establish a Strong United Voice advocating for ALL veterans and promoting democratic values. WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER AND WE KNOW THIS.... Because we've been a part of an organization (Military) that functions in this manner.
- Assist in establishing the CDP Veterans Caucus as be the centralized hub for Veteran/Democrat affairs taking place in the state of California.
- Create Regional Representation (Northern, Central, and Southern California)
- Shift the perception that Military Affiliation = Conservative - by promoting progressive change

- Be the VOICE for Veterans and dependents - establish power behind that voice to drive legislation and policy benefitting Veterans.
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As Founder and CEO of the Strategic Insights Group, my goal is to drive effective and sustainable change as a master executive coach to Fortune 500 CEOs, nonprofit leaders, and elected officials. I've spent 25 years running and growing companies, cultivating innovation, and developing brand strategy. And, I'm also a Flight Commander in the USAF. In both my civilian and military careers, organizational success comes to one key factor: our people.



**Tai Esteban Sunnanon**  
**Organizational Development**

In my role as Chair, Organizational Development, I'm here to collaborate and move the needle of change. What does the Organizational Development Committee want to accomplish in the next year?

- We want to increase our membership by 50% (from 171 current members to 257 members) and increase our Veteran community partnerships to 6.
- We believe in providing manageable and tangible results (after all, you are what you measure!).
- In addition, we have an incredible, collaborative committee and E-board members who want to elevate our status across the State.

So, if you want to be part of the Org Development Committee or want to help our growth efforts (e.g., invite us to speak at your Vet/Dem Club anywhere in CA), email me at: [sunnanon@gmail.com](mailto:sunnanon@gmail.com).

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**Veterans Caucus Website**