

Letter to the Editor

An Interview with John Noquez – Running for Los Angeles County Assessor

John Noquez

Why do you want to be the next Los Angeles County Assessor?

John: To ensure that all property assessments in Los Angeles County are accurate and fair, especially during the economic downturn we are experiencing. I will continue the excellent working relationship developed with other department heads engaged in the taxation and valuation process and encourage them to help me make sure assessments are done as quickly as possible and refunds due to decline-in-value are expedited. I also believe assessment appeal cases can be resolved in a more timely manner.

What type of qualifications do you have for the position?

John: I am an experienced, professional real estate appraiser certified by the California State Board of Equalization. I've appraised many types of property, including downtown retail and office buildings and historic structures. I've worked in the Assessor's Department nearly 25 years, rising from student worker to my present position of Special Assistant to retiring Assessor Rick Auerbach, who has assigned me to community and intergovernmental relations and working with realty boards. My experience with public service includes several terms on the Huntington Park City Council and as Mayor and City Clerk. I've also served in executive leadership positions for the League of California Cities and California Contract Cities Association.

What does it mean to you to become the first Hispanic/American Los Angeles County Assessor?

John: There's a certain pride in knowing that I could be the first Assessor of Hispanic heritage elected in Los Angeles County in more than 100 years, since Refugio Bilderrain in 1883. That could be an inspiration to the next generation of young leaders and its humbling to think of myself as a role model, as long as it's understood that effective service for all property owners is my top priority.

How can you relate to the difficulties many apartment landlords are experiencing?

John: I have owned and managed rental units myself in Los Angeles County, and seen first-hand some of the problems this entails. Fortunately, Proposition 13 protects landlords as well as homeowners and businesses. I would continue my strong support for it.

As Assessor, what changes would you make?

John: First, I would review all our department's current policies and procedures, as this is one of the best-run agencies in county government. Improvements can always be made and I would seek advice from our citizen advisory committees and other department heads to consider their suggestions, particularly coordinating this effort with the Tax Collector, Auditor-Controller and Assessment Appeals Boards.

What can a property owner do to seek relief on their property taxes?

John: Initiate an informal assessment valuation review with our Department after looking over the instructions on our website at: <http://assessor.lacounty.gov>. It may also be advisable, depending on the calendar, to consider filing a formal appeal with the Assessment Appeals Board at: <http://bos.co.la.ca.us/categories/propertytaxappeals.htm>

The Assessor's Office makes it seem as if obtaining property tax relief is a simple process. Are there any benefits to having a professional represent the property owner?

John: That's an individual decision each property owner has to make. You certainly don't need to hire a private firm or agent to get property tax relief, as any one who owns income rental or other property is allowed to present their own case in an appeal. Still, there is always the option to seek outside representation.

What does it mean to have retiring Assessor Rick Auerbach's endorsement?

John: I am proud and grateful that Assessor Auerbach has shown this confidence in my ability to manage the department and that he supports my plans to continue and enhance a tradition of efficiency, public service and an impartial process.

How can apartment owners help your campaign?

John: I am very grateful for the enthusiasm my campaign has been generating, and my website at www.johnnoguez.com will be fully operational soon, including campaign updates, how to make a donation, or how to contact me.

The election is June 8th. My campaign is receiving donations at Noguez for Assessor, 512 N. Larchmont, Los Angeles, CA 90004-1306.

If you have any questions or would like to host a fundraiser, please call Pat Bradford at 323-460-2380. Thanks for interviewing me, and I hope to hear from some readers!

Mr. Noguez is the recommended candidate for L.A. County Assessor by the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association. Interview provided by Ramin Salari.