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Endorsement: Katrina Foley for Orange County's 5th District



Supervisor Katrina Foley was elected by her colleagues as vice-chair of the Orange County Board of Supervisors during their meeting in Santa Ana, CA on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2025. (Photo by Paul Barsebach, Orange County Register/SCNG)

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD | opinion@scng.com
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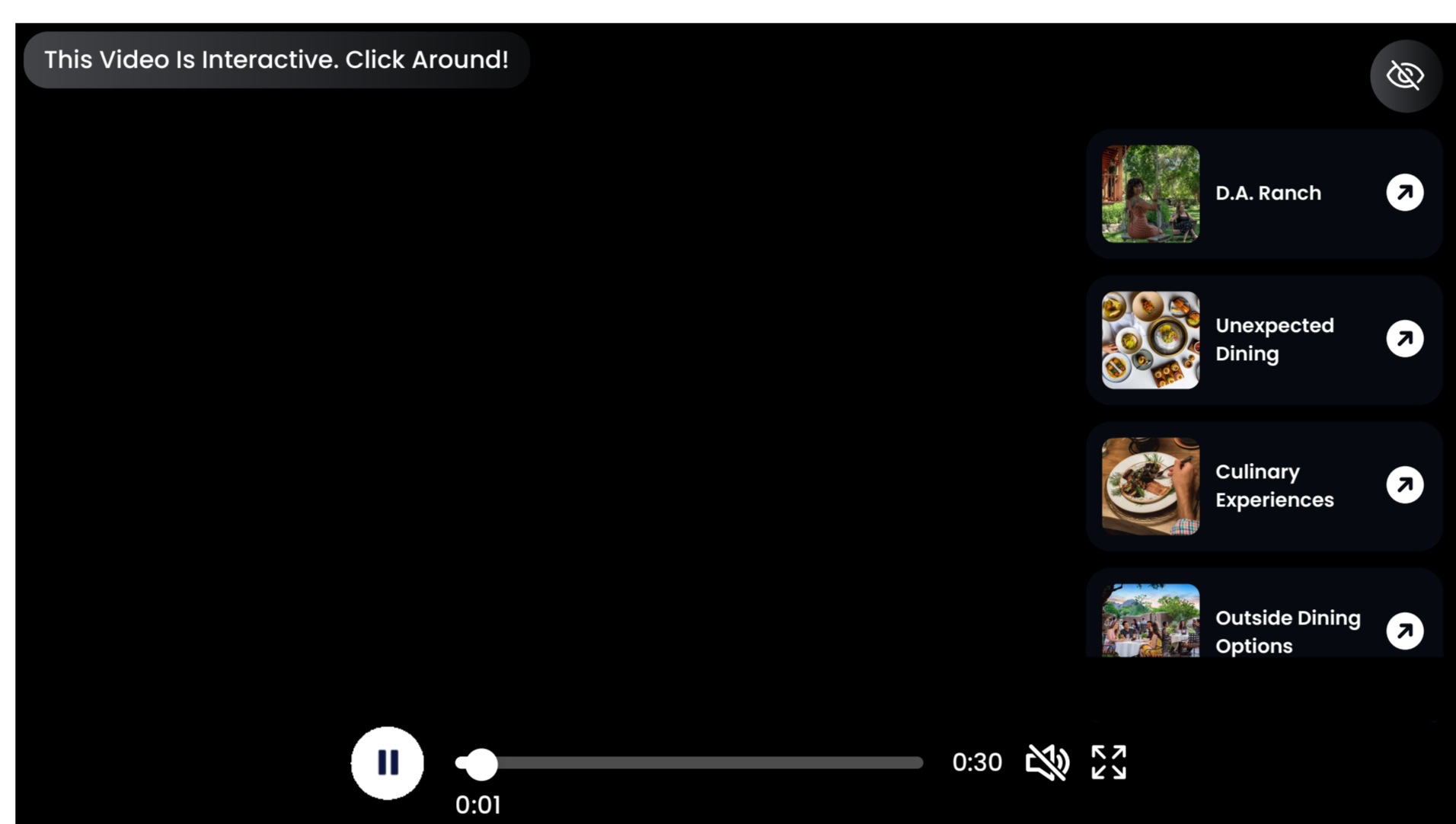
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The Orange County Board of Supervisors race for the 5th district, which represents Aliso Viejo, Costa Mesa and several coastal cities, pits incumbent Democrat Katrina Foley against Republican Assembly member Diane Dixon. (There's also a longshot independent candidate, educator Lucy Vellema.) Supervisor races are officially nonpartisan, but this race pits high-profile candidates from both parties in a district with a [Republican lean](#).

Foley first won a seat in the 2nd District in 2021 after Michelle Steel was elected to Congress. We had endorsed Republican John Moorlach because of his history as a financial watchdog at the county and in the state Capitol and defended him against unfair union [attacks](#).

In 2022, Foley faced off against Republican [Pat Bates](#), a well-respected political veteran, in the general election in the redrawn 5th District. We praised Foley for her "yeoman's work battling board secrecy," but were dismayed by her coziness with the public-employee unions and endorsed Bates.

So here we are again, with both parties vying for a board majority.

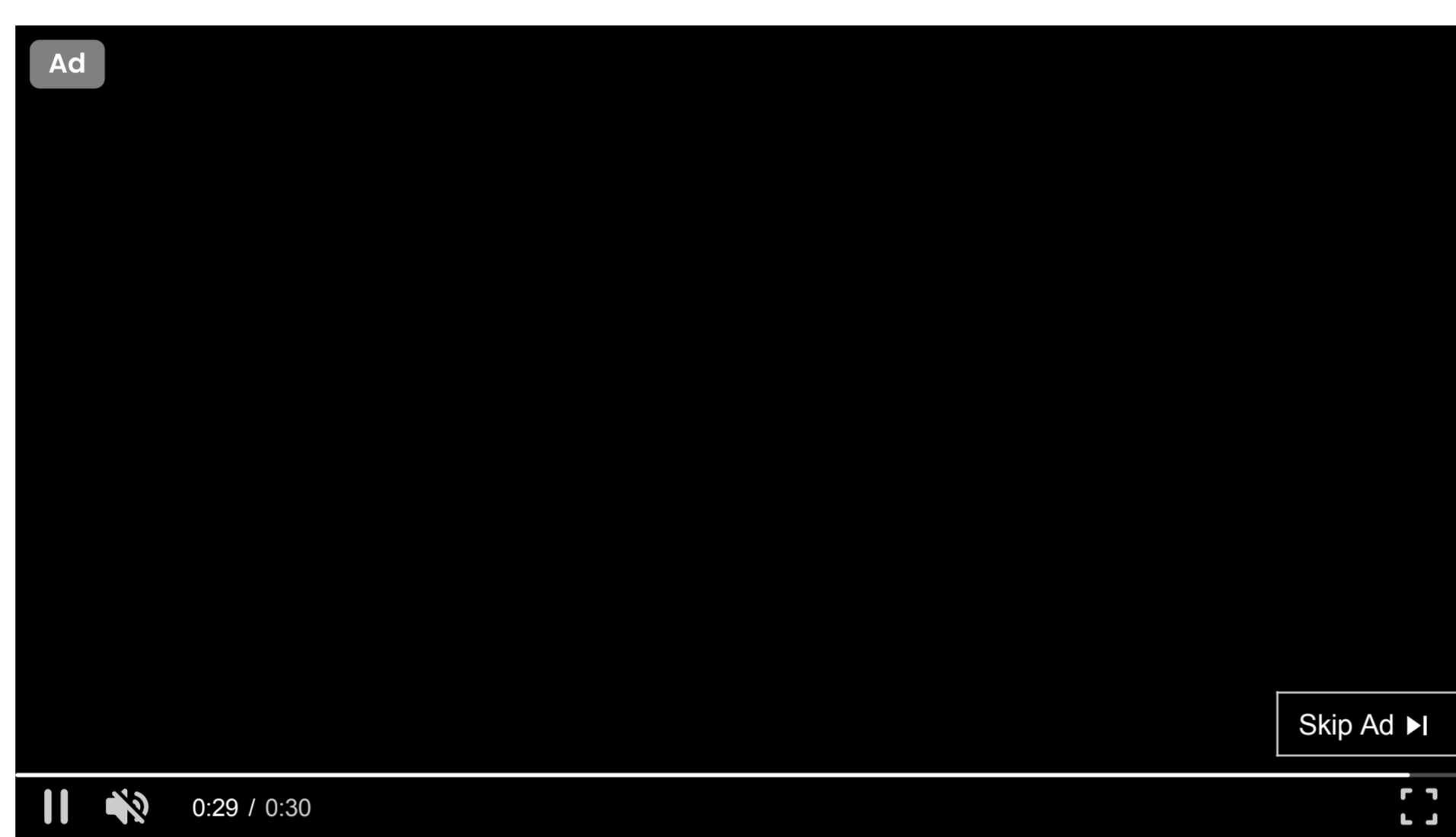


[Dixon](#) won her Assembly seat in 2022 and was re-elected in 2024. She isn't termed out and had an easy path to another term, but decided to run for supervisor. She has been a capable and sensible conservative legislator. We [endorsed](#) her in both of her races.

In this race, however, we offer our hearty endorsement to Foley. We've had a chance to watch her for five years and she has acted exactly as she's described herself: an anti-tax-increase Democrat with a mastery of the details and a penchant for [transparency](#). Unlike in the Legislature, county boards tend to operate in a bipartisan manner handling the nuts-and-bolts of managing a large budget.

One of the core underappreciated aspects of board governance is transparency, especially after a COVID [bribery scandal](#) last year sent former board member Andrew Do to prison. The transparency issue also became important after the board embarrassed itself by quietly boosting board members' pay by 25% — with Foley being the only member opposed. Foley has been the one board member who has forthrightly stood up for oversight and accountability on every key issue. She almost always is the board's designated adult—a thankless but critical role.

We believe Dixon would be a capable supervisor and would get up to speed, but we know exactly how Foley has operated. She always defends the public's right to know, and knows the [details](#) of county governance. That matters.



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We much prefer Foley's approach to housing than Dixon's. Foley is committed to permitting more housing, by reducing the bureaucratic hurdles and, most important, to jumpstart the construction of market-rate housing. Dixon focuses on "local control" and is committed to fighting Sacramento mandates. However, most of the recent "[mandates](#)" are deregulatory in nature, so we fear her approach would mirror those of anti-housing activists.

Our main disagreement with Foley has been her reflexive support for public-employee unions. However, Dixon praised Jerry Brown for his pension-reform law, but recently voted in favor of a [bill](#) that would gut those reforms. She, too, touted herself as an advocate for public-safety unions, and offered this unusually poor answer

when asked about her vote for Assembly Bill 1383: "I could take a stand for the right thing, but they are really powerful."

With that issue a wash, we find that Foley rises to the top on almost everything else. We urge a vote for [Katrina Foley](#) in the 5th District.



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