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Katrina Foley, OC Board of Supervisors District 5, 2026 primary election questionnaire

Katrina Foley, OC Board of Supervisors District 5, 2026 primary election candidate. (Courtesy of Katrina Foley.)

By CLAIRE WANG | cwang@ocreg.com
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Ahead of the June primary election, the Southern California News Group compiled a list of questions to pose to the candidates who wish to represent you. You can find the full questionnaire below. Questionnaires may have been edited for spelling, grammar, length and, in some instances, to remove hate speech and offensive language.

Name: Katrina Foley

Current job title: Vice Chair, Orange County Board of Supervisors; Attorney/Owner of Foley Group, PLC

Age: 59

Incumbent: Yes

Other political positions held: Costa Mesa City Council (12 years); Costa Mesa's first directly elected Mayor (2018); served as Mayor (2018-2021; Newport Mesa Unified School District Board of Trustees from November 2010-2014.

City where you reside: Costa Mesa

Campaign website or social media: www.katrinafoley.com

CALIFORNIA PRIMARY ELECTION: SUPERVISOR, 5TH DISTRICT CANDIDATES

- Steve Dixon
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- Katrina Foley

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In your opinion, what is the biggest need your district faces, and how would you address it through the Board of Supervisors? (Please limit your answer to 200 words or less.)

The biggest challenge facing the Fifth District is affordability, especially housing. More older adults want to age with dignity in the communities they know and love, while too many younger people are questioning whether they can afford to stay, buy a home, or raise a family here. That pressure will only grow. Today, adults 65 and older make up about 17% of Orange County's population. By 2060, they are projected to make up 30%. Families are also being squeezed by rising utility bills, insurance costs, and the broader cost of living.

That is why I focus on practical housing solutions on the Board of Supervisors. Moving housing opportunities forward, supporting more homeownership, and cutting red tape so good projects do not get stuck in bureaucracy. We also must strategically site where housing goes, with a focus on locations near jobs, transportation, and services, while strengthening support that helps older adults age in place.

My focus is straightforward: expand housing opportunities, support aging in place, and make it easier for families to build a future and stay in Orange County.

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Where do you think the county is effectively spending to address the needs of unhoused residents, and what would you change about where money spent on homelessness is prioritized? (Please limit your answer to 200 words or less.)

One of the simplest ways we expanded affordable housing was an administrative change my office initiated and the county implemented in 2024. That change increased the county's use of Project Based Vouchers to 20% of Housing Choice Voucher allocations, the maximum HUD allows. Instead of using additional county general fund dollars, we use HUD-funded vouchers to help developers cover housing costs.

Project Based Vouchers also keep each unit affordable for the full affordability covenant, rather than following an individual tenant as tenant-based vouchers do. Every $1 invested by the County of Orange Housing Authority, even through vouchers, leverages $5 in outside financing. Local investment also makes projects more competitive for state funding and helps developers build faster.

We also need to change how care managers and social workers are assigned. Today, they are assigned by Service Planning Area and centralized out of the city of Orange. That creates long travel times and delays. One day, my staff waited 90 minutes for outreach workers to arrive and help someone. We should assign staff based on geographic hot spots, partner with cities and other county facilities, and use mobile vehicles to place social workers closer to the people who need them.

Looking at the county's annual budget, what would you like to change about how funds are allocated? Is there a department or project that has not received the funding it needs? (Please limit your answer to 200 words or less.)

Despite a $10.8 billion budget, after covering mandates, the county has about $150 million in general fund available, so we must do more with less. Economic development must be a core county responsibility and generate revenue from public parcels. Our economy is strong, but unlike surrounding counties, the county does not have an economic development plan. Maintaining our AAA bond rating requires sound budgeting, healthy reserves, and steady investment in infrastructure.

In Home Supportive Services is one example of a larger problem. These 48,000 caregivers save Sacramento millions by helping disabled residents at home, where care costs far less than institutionalization. Yet Sacramento does not provide counties adequate funding to support a living wage. Many of these workers live in poverty and qualify for benefits themselves. Orange County receives just 5 cents of every property tax dollar, the lowest share in California, making it even harder to provide raises that would bring these essential workers equal to fast-food wages. Sacramento should stop shifting these costs onto local government.

The same principle applies to our veterans. More than 100,000 veterans call Orange County home. Many return from service with physical and mental wounds. They deserve a dedicated veterans service director.

The public expects transparency from public leaders in spending and governance. How can this be achieved? How can the county do better in this area? (Please limit your answer to 200 words or less.)

Transparency remains a top priority. I understand the anger and frustration caused by past scandals, and I am angry too. We are working hard to make sure this never happens again and to restore trust in government. More reforms are needed. Our website remains too difficult to navigate for basic transparency documents such as conflict of interest forms, discretionary spending, contracts, and large-project expense tracking. I also want clear, measurable deliverables for vendors throughout the life of a contract, especially before funding is released. That means performance benchmarks and public reporting timelines so residents can verify work is completed effectively.

In the Fifth District, we prioritize community engagement when developing budgets and major initiatives. I hosted numerous public meetings over two years as our team developed the first Climate Action Plan. We listened to residents and built a comprehensive plan that reflects community concerns and helped secure critical state grant funding. The board approved the plan unanimously on Feb. 25, 2026.

I used the same approach with the Dana Point Harbor Oversight Committee and the John Wayne Airport Advisory Committee, bringing together diverse stakeholders and county staff to develop plans shaped by community input, addressing issues the county had neglected for years.

Social services providers say they expect to see a continued rise in food and housing insecurity this year. In addition, many low-income residents may lose health care as new eligibility requirements for Medi-Cal are implemented. What role do you think the county can play in supporting people who are falling through the cracks? (Please limit your answer to 200 words or less.)

This year will be especially challenging for the safety net programs many families rely on. As federal and state support begins to pull back, the county's job is to help hold the floor and fill the gaps where we can. In anticipation of that need, our Fifth District office recently awarded a $200,000 grant to Second Harvest Food Bank to expand food assistance for more than 70,000 households, including vulnerable families, seniors, and working residents. Direct investments like this are essential to helping working families weather difficult times.

My office has also offered to help social service agencies by creating a volunteer program that would allow Medi-Cal recipients who are required to complete 80 volunteer hours by assisting with outreach, engagement, and community events hosted by our office.

The board oversees a $10.8 billion budget, but about 89% is tied to state and federal services the county is legally required to provide. That leaves very little general fund flexibility to backfill unmet needs. To build more economic independence, we need an economic development plan that generates revenue from county parcels. That remains one of my top priorities for the next four years.

Why would you make a good leader, and how would you represent the diverse communities of your district? (Please limit your answer to 200 words or less.)

My family relied on the social safety net when I was growing up, so I understand poverty and what it takes to overcome it. My experience at UCLA, working on the student newsmagazine, is where I began building investigative skills. As a lawyer, I honed those skills and now use them to dig into county problems and root out inefficiency, waste and corruption. I do not accept the status quo. As a business owner, I know the value of a dollar (now is stretch). A and firm with tax efficient, good-faith services and permitting, because time is money. As a wife, mom, and daughter, I am living the intersection of caring for both children and parents. I understand the struggles of families with aging relatives who need caregiving, face isolation and food insecurity. As the sister of a veteran who severe PTSD, I also understand the needs of veterans who struggle to transition to civilian life.

All of these lived experiences inform my policy work. My work ethic is unmatched. I work every day to respond to constituents by phone, email, and in person. I am solution-oriented, value transparency, and feel a deep commitment to public service.

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Sourcing & Methodology

The Orange County Register sent questionnaires, based on current events and questions from readers, to candidates on the ballot in Orange County via email, phone and/or mail in August. Answers have been lightly edited only to correct spelling or grammar or to remove offensive language and hate speech.

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