

From: James Gula jlgula@papugh.com
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To:



What's at stake in this race

[Jill Replogle](#)

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The five supervisors are some of the most powerful people in Orange County, deciding nearly \$11 billion in spending each year on key government services, including law enforcement, infrastructure, public health and mental health. They also oversee much of the county's social safety net, including operating county shelters and funding permanent supportive housing.

If you live in an [unincorporated part of Orange County](#), such as North Tustin or El Modena, the Board of Supervisors works essentially as your city council. That means the supervisors control local laws and oversee services like roads, police services, trash pickup and development.

You can find a map of all the unincorporated communities [here](#).

Follow the vote after polls close

Our limited-run newsletter Make It Make Sense unpacks the ballot count and results, then checks in regularly on officials voted into office and the measures voters pass.

What does the Orange County Board of Supervisors do?

- It serves as the de-facto city council of unincorporated areas of the county.
- It adopts an annual county budget.
- It creates local laws, known as ordinances.
- It supervises county departments.
- It determines policy for jails, juvenile halls, foster care and the Sheriff's Department.
- Supervisors sit on the board of the Orange County Transportation Authority.
- Two supervisors sit on the board of [CalOptima](#), the county's Medi-Cal insurer.

You might know them from

The O.C. Board of Supervisors came under intense scrutiny after LAist uncovered that former Supervisor Andrew Do was [funneling millions in taxpayer dollars](#) to family members and close associates. While Do serves time in federal prison, the county is pursuing a civil lawsuit against Do and his associates.

Meanwhile, the Board of Supervisors has [ordered audits](#) to find out if the abuse went further and implemented reforms to try to prevent abuse of taxpayer funds in the future. Some have also questioned whether those reforms [go far enough](#).

The county is also in the middle of a [tense legal battle with Mind OC](#), once its main mental health partner. The county [wants to break its lease](#) with Mind OC to operate the Be Well Orange mental health campus, accusing the organization of [squandering \\$60 million in public funds](#). Meanwhile, Mind OC has launched a [public relations offensive](#) that paints the county as standing in the way of residents' access to top-quality mental health care.

The county has had to pay out millions in damages to victims of the 2024 Airport Fire, which was [started by county Public Works employees](#). There still are outstanding claims. Last year, the county added approximately \$400 million to its insurance fund to cover potential new payouts to fire victims.

The county is [facing a \\$32 million lawsuit](#) from the state wildlands firefighting agency, CalFire, which seeks to recover its costs for fighting the Airport Fire.

The county also is in the midst of settling claims of [sexual harassment and retaliation in the District Attorney's Office](#) filed by former prosecutors and investigators.

Here are some things the Board of Supervisors doesn't do

The supervisors have limited power in the 34 incorporated cities in Orange County, where city councils run the show. The Board of Supervisors has little say over housing and development decisions within city limits.

Fast facts about the Board of Supervisors

- Supervisors are elected to four-year terms and can serve for up to two terms consecutively. They can run for a third term if they have a gap in time on the board.
- Technically, the Board of Supervisors is a nonpartisan body. It is currently made up of three registered Democrats and two registered Republicans. Sometimes board members align themselves by party, but that's [not always the case](#).
- The current district boundaries went into effect in early 2022.

What's on the agenda for next term

Mental health care: Be Well Irvine, which is supposed to be the county's signature mental health campus, is essentially ready, but its future is uncertain because of the legal battle between the county and Mind OC. Some supervisors want the county Health Care Agency, which the board oversees, to take over all campus operations.

Budget: The county's budget has been weakened by payouts to victims of the Airport Fire and sexual harassment and retaliation claims in the District Attorney's Office. Plus, the county has to contend with major cuts by the Trump administration to healthcare, social services and housing support. Nearly 40% of Orange County's most recent budget [came from state and federal funds](#).

What it takes to win

A candidate could win outright June 2 with more than 50% of votes cast. If no candidate crosses that threshold, the top two finishers will compete in a runoff in the November general election.

The candidates for Board of Supervisors, District 5

Three candidates are in the running to be the Orange County supervisor for District 5, including incumbent Katrina Foley.

District 5 stretches from Costa Mesa to San Clemente. It also includes parts of Irvine, Laguna Woods, Laguna Hills, Laguna Niguel, Aliso Viejo, San Juan Capistrano and unincorporated parts of the county, including Coto de Caza and Ladera Ranch.

About LAist's voter guides

When information is missing

Some candidates did not reply to our requests for images. Some did not have a campaign website and/or list of endorsements available online at the time of publication. We will update this guide as more candidate information becomes available.

Katrina Foley, incumbent

Katrina Foley is the current vice chair of the O.C. Board of Supervisors. She first won the office in a special election in 2021 after her predecessor, Michelle Steel, won a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Foley won reelection the following year in the November general election.

Foley was the first woman Democrat elected to the board, and she flipped a seat that had traditionally been held by a Republican.

Foley was on the Costa Mesa City Council from 2004 to 2010 and was mayor of Costa Mesa from 2018 to 2021.

Foley helped unearth former Supervisor Andrew Do's corruption scheme and has pushed for reforms. She was also the only supervisor to [vote against a self-granted pay raise](#). In her district, Foley has helped oversee the [redevelopment of Dana Point Harbor](#) and spearheaded the reinstatement of [strict anti-camping rules](#) on county-owned property.

In her own words

Foley told LAist her main goal if reelected would be to develop an economic plan for the county to relieve its dependence on state and federal funding. That plan would include generating revenue, jobs and housing from county-owned properties through development agreements, she said.

Foley said she would also work to bring in more sand to replenish her district's [eroding beaches](#).

Regarding affordability, Foley's campaign told LAist via a candidate survey: "My focus is simple: cut red tape, expand housing, support aging in place and help families build a future in Orange County."

Foley said she would do this by streamlining regulations to speed up housing development, expanding homeownership for the middle class, investing in communities for independent seniors and prioritizing housing near jobs, transit and essential services.

Foley said via the candidate questionnaire that the most pressing priority for District 5 is "protecting our quality of life as our communities face growing pressures from wildfire risk, coastal erosion, infrastructure demands and economic change." She promised to strengthen emergency preparedness, protect environmental resources, preserve local control and support small businesses.

"We must move Dana Point Harbor revitalization forward as a tourism and jobs engine ahead of the 2028 Olympics, while continuing strong oversight of John Wayne Airport to support our economy and protect nearby neighborhoods and taxpayers," she wrote.

More voter resources:

- **Website:** [KatrinaFoley.com](https://www.katrinafoley.com)
- **Endorsements:** Democratic Party of Orange County; [Orange County Register](#)

Diane Dixon, California state Assembly member

Diane Dixon currently represents District 72 in the state Assembly, which overlaps significantly with the Board of Supervisors' District 5. Dixon won election to the Assembly in 2022 and again in 2024. She was on the Newport Beach City Council from 2014 to 2022, including two terms as mayor.

In the Assembly, Dixon has pushed for harsher punishments for fentanyl dealers and more resources to prevent and treat addiction. She also helped secure funding for a trash interceptor to keep waste from washing down the San Diego Creek into Upper Newport Bay.

In her own words

Dixon did not respond to LAist's multiple requests to respond to a candidate survey.

More voter resources:

- **Website:** DixonforOC.com
- **Endorsements:** Orange County Supervisors Doug Chaffee, Donald Wagner and Janet Nguyen, Republican Party of Orange County
- Full endorsements list [here](#).

Lucy Vellema, special education instructor

Lucy Vellema is running primarily to reform family court, probate court and the county's Child Protective Services. The court system is independent from county government, but the Board of Supervisors does allocate funding for child welfare and Child Protective Services.

Vellema says she wants more oversight of family court proceedings and more transparency in decision-making regarding family and child welfare.

In her own words

Vellema told LAist that if elected, she would make sure police officers and firefighters are funded in her district. She also said it was important to continue funding nonprofits that provide social services to unhoused people and to turn motels into housing for very low-income residents.

Vellema said she would do this with "transparency first, accountability next."

Regarding affordability, Vellema told LAist via a candidate survey that she would push to streamline permits, cut fees that drive up costs and delay construction and "support zoning reform near transit and job centers to increase [housing] supply responsibly."

Vellema also said she would work to establish a task force to investigate alleged abuses in family court.

More voter resources:

- **Website:** VoteLucyVforOC.com

Campaign finance**Go deeper**

To see the full list of donors to each campaign, visit the [Orange County registrar's campaign finance public portal](#). From there, search any candidate's name and see all their campaign finance disclosure documents, including contributors to campaigns and independent expenditure committees.

How to get involved**OC Board of Supervisors meetings**

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