



PREMIUM PODCASTS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

THE ANDERSON FILES

Tim Gaspar - Candidate for Los Angeles City Council District 3



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Hello everyone. And my guest today is Tim Gaspar, Los Angeles businessman and a candidate for the Los Angeles City Council Third District. And Tim has been in insurance and other businesses here in southern California for several decades, and he is now a candidate for City Council. Tim, welcome.

Thank you, thank you so much for having me, Mike.

To get started, what inspired you to run for Los Angeles City Council, and why now?

Yeah, it's funny. I think the most common question I get when I tell folks I'm running is, are you crazy? Or some, like, variation of that, just with everything going on in L.A. But there were a couple of things that inspired me to run when I was 19 years old or so, so this is, you know, 20-some odd years ago, I was at an event where Dennis Zine spoke, so Dennis was the Councilperson for this same district, District 3 back 15 years ago or so. And he served three terms. And I saw him speak at an event and was just very impressed with just the idea that there was somebody whose sole job it was to focus on the West San Fernando Valley and make the West San Fernando Valley better. So just definitely thought that was interesting and just planted a seed for something that I might want to do one day in the future.

And the reason I decided to do it now is, you know, certainly, I'm thankfully in a position to be able to do it because I sold my insurance company. And you know, I'm blessed to be able to focus on this from a time standpoint, but really, it's just, I raised my family here, I built my business here, I live here. And I'm just so frustrated with the way things have been going within our city's leadership that I can't not run, I can't sit as a spectator and continue to watch what's been going on. So the time is, the time is now.

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And it seems I can tell in your voice that there's this sense of urgency, that is an energy that's being brought to the table. Granted, there's been, you know, different periods over the last many decades here where urgent issues have faced L.A. And we've got a lot of them currently, and I can certainly understand why that level of urgency is, is really peaking right now. As far as public safety, I understand it's a big part of your campaign. And, and how would it, how would you improve safety in communities like Woodland Hills, Canoga Park, Reseda within District 3?

Sure, so there's a couple of different pieces to it in regards to things I can do as a Councilperson to improve the area. And one of them is enforcing the laws that we have, which, you know, shouldn't be a novel approach. But in L.A. it kind of is so. You take, for example, there's a law in the books called 4118, and so 4118 is the law that allows LAPD in the city of Los Angeles to move encampments. So if there's encampments that are within a certain distance to a highway, a certain distance to a school, we're able to move those. And you would think, with that being the law, that it would be enforced everywhere. But it's interesting I was looking at the numbers for the number of times the law was enforced in L.A. by district, and in District 12, which is next door to District 3, which is John Lee, and the areas of Porter Ranch and Chatsworth and some of those areas, the law was enforced something like fifteen or sixteen hundred times over the course of the year. If you go to District 1 or some of the districts that are closer to downtown L.A., there's districts with a lot more homeless people where the law was enforced like twice or like three times, so basically not at all. And so the Councilperson has a lot of has the ability to go to LAPD and say, Look, I want this law to be enforced, or the opposite. There's districts where the Councilperson says, don't touch the homeless, I don't care what they do, leave them alone. And so for me, you know, from a quality-of-life standpoint, from a safety standpoint, I don't want to see any encampments and so the encampments are not acceptable. They send a message that we don't care about our neighborhood, it makes the community look as if nobody cares about it, and that leads to other issues.

And so cleaning up encampments is one, certainly enforcing other laws, when it comes to, you know, thankfully now we can actually arrest people for shoplifting. Thank you to the voters in California recently. Instead of people, you know, coming into, like CVS, and filling a trash bag full of whatever they want and walking out. And so thankfully, you know, we don't have that issue

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anymore. And so being able to actually arrest folks that shoplift and commit other, what you would call like, you know, petty crimes is important because it creates a sense of lawlessness. And then lastly, supporting our LAPD and our LAFD, which again seems like something that everybody would do. And people are actually more supportive, I think, within the West Valley than some other places of the city.

But that's, you know, one of the things that inspired me to run was when George Gascon got elected, which was really such a pivotal moment in a negative way for L.A. And he just caused so much damage. And I do think at this point, I do think we need to call out the politicians that endorsed him, and I think they need to be held accountable. And I say that because the politicians that endorsed him and created this really unsafe environment. They didn't do it for any reasons related to, like it, being good for the city. They didn't have any rationale for doing it. It was just well, this seems to kind of be in fashion right now. The whole defund, the police thing was like, you know, something that resonated with certain voters, and so they did it. And then they threw Jackie Lacy under the bus. And she was fantastic, she was a great district attorney, and, and so, you know, it was the, it was a decision that was made by a lot of folks for political reasons. And I think that we need to call that out at this point and say, Hey, you know, you need to be held accountable for making a decision that really hurt our city pretty badly.

Tim has the number of call-ins for homeless camps within District 3, has that number been fairly low? You just referenced, well, you know. One district had two, another one had, you know, over a thousand, so how does District 3 pan out?

It's funny, so District 3. I think we had three or four hundred during that time, but it's interesting. So District 3, actually at one point, just a couple of years ago, had actually the smallest number of homeless people compared to any other district. But the most calls. So the people in District 3 were very quick to, you know, call the council office or call the police or different areas to complain about it, even though we had the fewest number. And that just tells me that the folks in District 3 just don't want to tolerate it. It's just something that, and I don't mean that to say, like, we're not empathetic to the homeless, that's not the case at all. We're specifically talking about these encampments and the motorhome situations that a lot of times are being used for illegal activity. Not necessarily like a family that's down on their luck. And

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that's where I say, like, when I won't tolerate the encampments and the homeless, I am referring to, you know, the criminal element, and also the folks with mental illness and addiction issues that need help. You're not getting help on the street, you're living in a tent, there's no help there. That situation is going to continue forever.

With homelessness. How would you approach it differently, and in light of what, what L.A. is getting wrong on, on this?

Yeah, so a couple of pieces. One is the wraparound services, and so the services like mental health and addiction service or help is just as important, if not more important, than putting a roof over that person's head. So a lot of what L.A. has done over the past few years is spent a lot of money putting a roof over folks heads, but no wraparound services to go with it. And when I say a lot of money, you've read about like the eight hundred thousand dollar per door apartment buildings. That is just mind boggling, right? That we've put the homeless in. And a lot of times, those folks are out within two or three weeks because they're still addicted to drugs, or they're still having mental health issues. And so, you know, their, their issues continue, so I would, I would discontinue that. I think if we're going to put a roof over somebody's head, there's got to be the services to go with it.

And then the other item I would change is right now. We, you know, we can't force somebody into treatment, and we can't force somebody to get, you know, whether it's addiction treatment or mental health treatment. We can suggest it. We can strongly, you know, try to encourage someone to go get help or to go get shelter, but we can't require it. Then that needs to change, and so when I say that needs to change, the law now enables us to do the Grants Pass Court case enables us to actually be able to arrest somebody for being on the street. Which I know, sounds really like, you know, when you're criminalizing homelessness, but that's not what I mean. What I mean is when somebody's on the street and they're refusing to get help, it just allows you to have the carrot and the stick and say, look, you can go get help, or you can go to jail. And making that the two choices that the person has to make, and the hope is that, the hope is that the person is going to pick help every time. We're not looking to warehouse homeless people in jail, that's not good for anybody. It doesn't help the problem either, it's just a stick to push the person to the carrot to getting help. That's all it is. So that, and I always think

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of, like, the Iron Man actor, you know? Blanking on his name, You know who I'm talking about, though? I want to say Robert De Niro. It's not Robert De Niro, so, but,

Robert Downey Jr.

Robert Downey Jr. Yeah, thank you, thank you. So he got arrested, I remember, so many times, and he kept spending longer and longer periods in jail. And finally, the judge said to him, Look, if you don't clean up your act next time you go to jail, you're going to be in there for a couple of years. And that was it, and I think at a certain point it was scary enough to him. Where he said, Well, I guess, I guess I'll get help then. And look, you know, he's been a massive success story. So that's obviously like a famous actor, but I say that because it's one that's very visible. That people, I see, somebody who had real issues is now sober and living what seems to be a pretty, a pretty darn good life.

You are listening to the Anderson Files with Mike Anderson and guest Tim Gaspar. Tim to, to continue. You've said investing in our youth, our young people, is really essential. What specific programs or partnerships would you push for to give young people more opportunities?

Yeah, so it's interesting. There's the programs for young people already exist, so there's some amazing programs and organizations within the Valley right now. Which includes the YMCA, the Boys and Girls Club, the LAPD Pals program. I mean, there's, there's probably like another two dozen beyond that, and I think the challenge in those, so those programs work, but in order for a kid to get involved in that type of program, they kind of have to get lucky. So when I say that, when I say they have to get lucky, what I mean is, they have to, like, know another kid at school that's in the program that tells them about it, or maybe they happen to, like, see a flyer for it, or a teacher tells them to go. But a lot of kids, they just never encounter the programs.

And so, as a result, they never end up in the program, and they end up maybe getting interested or falling into things that are a lot less productive. So what I'd like to do, whether it be city employees or whether it be volunteers, so that there's not a cost to it, is actually go and recruit these kids into these programs. So literally go knock on doors in every neighborhood, at least in my district, just to knock on the door and say, hey, here's some information about some

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programs that are in the neighborhood. It doesn't mean that the kid has to go, but at least now the kid and the families are aware of this program that exists and these opportunities. And, you know, we'll certainly get a lot more participation and that'll bear fruit.

Now, in regards to there being less kids, you know, running around between the hours of like, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., which is when kids get in trouble. But in addition to that, you know, we do it now to kids that are between, you know, 7 and 12, but then 10 years from now, those kids are 17 to 22. And you know, it's going to bear fruit as we have more kids that turn into adults that are ready to be leaders and ready to lead a productive society. And we'll just have a lot more people that are sort of, you know, ready to give back to the community. More people, hopefully, in the future than what we have now.

Yeah, as you've been talking here, how I got involved with the Boys Club, how I got involved with Cub Scouts. Junior achievement. I had friends that were engaged, which was a catalyst for me to get engaged.

Yeah, that's right.

Yeah, that's how it happened, that's how it happened.

Yeah, yeah.

On the subject of small business and local business in District 3, how would you like to give support to this part of business? And, you know, knowing that things have been pretty rough for small business over the last several years, what would be your approach to assist?

Yeah, so a couple of things, one would be to stop picking on them. So, you know. L.A. looks at businesses as if they just have this unlimited amount of money to be able to spend. And I think a lot of times businesses almost get looked at as the enemy in LA. So I think of an example, like there's this restaurant in Chatsworth that I won't say the name because I don't want to like, get them in trouble or anything. But they built a patio during Covid, that's a really beautiful patio, and it's a big patio. It's got room for like 20 tables or so, and the patio is doing well. The

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restaurant is, you know, I think, a little bit slower than they would like it to be, and restaurants don't have great margins. So, you know, the place needs all the help that it can get. And so somebody from the city comes out to take a look at this patio, that's really helping the restaurant immensely says, Oh, this is a beautiful patio, and the owner says, Well, thank you. And the city says, yeah, you just have to get it permitted. Which is going to cost in fees 30 or 40 thousand dollars, in fees, which is crazy. Why would you charge this restaurant? That? Also, like, as their sales increase, that's more revenue for the city. And they're just hanging on and you want to charge them 30 or 40 thousand dollars to be able to get a permit? But at the same time, like, you're telling, you know, tenants in apartment buildings that they don't have to pay. Right, and thankfully, like that, that's over, but and that's a whole separate issue. But why are you picking on one particular group of people and telling another group of people that, you know, like, those types of rules don't apply? It just doesn't seem fair to me. We need to support our business community because also from a budget standpoint again, it means more revenue for the city, which we desperately need.

That'd be one thing is to not again to not pick on them every chance we get, but also to be better about getting information to businesses about the help that's out there. In regards to SBA programs, worker training programs within the city. There are different programs that exist within the city that can be very helpful to businesses that have been around for a long time, and some of them are federally funded. So because right now, you know, the help that can come from the city is going to be pretty limited right now, just because the city's broke. But there is help available from the state and federal sources. And but a lot of business owners when you ask them if they know where to go for that stuff, they don't know where to go. And business owners are the busiest people there are, right? They don't have time to do anything. And so I think it'd be good to have, like, not only a newsletter but the same sort of thing where, as I mentioned, with kids, where we have people that go knock on the doors of businesses and say, look, just want to let you know that these programs are available, that could be a benefit to you. And then doing that same thing every couple of months, where we keep businesses informed on what things are available, what programs are available that might be able to help them out. But we got to, we got to come to them with the info. We can't expect business owners to seek it out while they're running a business, while they're trying to stay in business.

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I'm talking with Tim Gaspar, candidate for the Los Angeles City Council District Three, and this is the Anderson Files. Tim, turning to another subject. Knowing that you've worked in the private sector for many years, how has that shaped your approach to solving problems in City Government? How will it affect that?

Well, I think a few different ways, one is I look at, I look at the role of the City Councilperson as very much a customer service role. So you have your, your taxpayers, who are all the residents and the businesses that are in the district, in the city. And so when folks pay taxes, whether it be sales tax or property tax, or a business tax, you're paying those taxes. And you're supposed to get something in return for those tax dollars. And the things you're supposed to get in return include public safety, street services, you know, tree services, having clean streets, not having potholes everywhere. I mean, there's certain, you know, clean parks. So that's what you're paying taxes for. You're supposed to have those services delivered to you. And the company that I built over the past 20-some-odd years within the insurance business was also a customer service business. You know, people paid a certain amount of money for their insurance and they had the expectation that the policies would work as intended, there'd be somebody to answer the phone, there'd be somebody to return emails and whatever service requests there might be. So the delivery of service to people has always been really important to me, and being able to scale that is something that I've learned how to do. And that's definitely relevant in regards to this particular job with the city.

And then, you know, the other thing about running a private enterprise is you've got to figure it out. You can't, just you can't like, give a speech at a company that you run and then not do anything. Too much platitudes about we're going to do amazing and then just go like, you know, take a nap. So you run a business, you better be action-oriented and you better make these things happen, otherwise you go out of business. Nobody's going to. You know, that's the way the world works, you know, fortunately or unfortunately. And so for me, if I say that, I want to, you know, if I see a solution to something, or I say I want to do something, I'm going to do it. Like otherwise, like, it'll bug me on a visceral level until that situation is, you know, resolved, or that thing is done.

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And then the last thing I would mention is, you know, in business you have good times and hard times, and I certainly went through hard times in my business where I had to learn. You know how to get out of a cash flow situation, or you know how to go through, you know situations like Covid, or you know, the 2008 recession, or whatever it is. And right now, that sort of experience is going to be really valuable to the city. Who, you know, we're a billion dollars in the hole from a budget standpoint. And a lot of the folks in the City Council, certainly not all by any extent, but a pretty good number of the folks on the City Council, have never actually had a job in the real world, they've never had a job in private enterprise, they've never signed a paycheck. Some of the folks that are on the City Council are either lifetime politicians or they're activists. And so they know about a lot of things in theory, but not actually. You know how things work in the real world, especially when it comes to finance, I think.

I definitely agree that, yes, having the private sector experience and knowing that you started, built, and built a successful insurance practice, a successful financial services practice. Not easy. Not an easy thing by any means, but being able to then look at city government and governing within the City Council. I personally, I think it's a, it's a great advantage from the perspective that you'll be coming from.

Yeah, I agree.

As far as citizens in the district, a lot of residents feel disconnected from City Hall. You know, it's out there hopefully it's doing what it's supposed to be doing. How would you make sure the community feels heard and involved, engaged in decisions that impact their neighborhoods?

Well, one, one area is having communication with the Neighborhood Councils, and so the Neighborhood Councils were put in place to give folks that exact opportunity where they're able to organize and able to get things done and give ideas to the city. And so, being a City Councilperson, I think it's important to work with your Neighborhood Councils and, and listen to exactly what they have to say. And then making sure that the City Council office is an environment that is an open environment where people are encouraged to come into to give ideas. And that also, we're making sure folks know that we want to hear from them. Because I do hear stories about different Council offices within L.A. that don't return phone calls or don't

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return emails, or are very difficult to get a hold of. And going back to that customer service piece, you know, when I was building my business, if somebody didn't get a call back, you know? The same day they left a message for somebody and I heard about it. Of course, those things would happen. It was something that I jumped on immediately. It was unacceptable and the same thing was true of, like, somebody sent an email and didn't get a response. And I would run the City Council office the same way, being very responsive to residents.

And then, you know, lastly, also giving opportunities where you know. It's funny. I've seen a couple of people in public office do this thing where they like, set up a card table, like on the sidewalk or in a parking spot, and have like, hours for the community. Which I think is actually, it's actually a good idea where you go around to different parts of the city. Then just set up a desk and just listen to people. Because otherwise, I'll tell you if I, if I, if I don't do things like that, as a City Councilperson, I'll never actually hear about the issues that are happening. Because, then, once I think, you know whether you're a CEO or an elected official. The people that are around you, even if you make really good choices in hiring, are not necessarily going to tell you what's really going on, on the ground, even if they just don't think of it or don't know about it. So getting onto the ground and actually listening to the people that live and work in the community is something that's crucial, to know what's going on and know what the issues actually are.

Tim as we wrap up, if you could accomplish just one big thing in your first term, what would it be and why?

Yeah, it would be a very vibrant youth community, and I say, that's when I say, vibrant, I mean, kids that are engaged, kids that, you know, with the magic wand every kid in the district would be doing something productive, learning leadership or a trade of some kind, or whatever it is. And the reason I picked that one is, it's the one that is the it's planting a seed. And so some of the other issues, like crime and homelessness, are issues right now, so even if I solve those right now, it doesn't mean that it's going to, it doesn't mean that things are going to be better forever. Or if I focus on youth and have our youth be successful, that's going to pay dividends 10 and 20 years from now for our society at large and also for business. If you say like, well, you know, you got to focus on the business piece. Businesses need employees, and you know you

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need to have employees in the community that are good employees to allow your business to grow. So that's why the youth would be number one that'll pay the most dividends in the future.

Tim And for listeners to contact you, what's the best way for listeners to contact you?

Sure, sure, there's a couple of ways. So my website is I was very creative with the name. It's Timgaspar.com, just my name, OK, Tim, and then G .a, .s, .p, .a, .r dot com. My email is Tim@timgaspar.com, and my direct number is (818)312-1536. It's (818)312-1536. And folks can call me any time to, you know, give ideas for the campaign, ask questions, and if anybody's interested in learning how to support the campaign. You know, it'll be a competitive race and I'll definitely need all the support that I can, I can get. So I encourage those conversations also.

Great, great Tim, thanks so much for guesting today and we wish you all the best in your pursuit for the seat for District Three.

Appreciate that very much, Michael. Thank you for having me on The Anderson Files.

Thank you, thank you, Darrell Wayne, recording engineer, Mark Alyn, producer, I'm Mike Anderson and this is The Anderson Files on podclips.io. Keep calm and keep listening.

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