

**Progressive Democrats of Benicia
Endorsement Committee**
April 26, 2018

**Research – TWO CANDIDATES FOR CALIFORNIA ATTORNEY GENERAL, June 5, 2018 Primary
COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: NO ENDORSEMENT**

- A. Candidate name/Office Sought or Ballot measure.
California Attorney General: incumbent Xavier Becerra & challenger Dave Jones
- B. Relevance of office/ballot measure to Benicia/Solano County.
The office of Attorney General takes a leading role on legal issues of importance to Benicia on almost every front. The AG prosecutes and defends us with regard to State and Federal regulations including healthcare, the environment, immigration, labor, and criminal justice reform, to name a few.
During the Trump administration, it is especially important the California AG takes pre-emptive action to uphold our progressive values, laws, regulations, agencies and institutions.
****Benicia is home to Valero Refinery.** A recent report by the Solano County Health Department shows that air quality is a serious health issue in Benicia and throughout the County. During the 3+ years when our community successfully organized to stop Valero Crude By Rail, the support of the office of California Attorney General played a significant and perhaps crucial role. **It is highly important that Benicia maintain close ties to the office of Attorney General and show support for both candidates.**
- C. Description of candidate's past and present positions and voting record on progressive issues, or the impact of the ballot measure, if passed, on progressive policies and programs.
- Becerra and Jones both have strong positions as progressive Democrats. See [Becerra's website](#). And see [Jones' website](#). Both have demonstrated strong progressive records.
 - BallotPedia shows a lengthy profile on each: [Becerra](#) (see esp. Key Votes, [click on show]) and [Jones](#) (see esp. Political Career).
- D. Description of the candidate's or ballot measure's sponsors and opponents, sources of financial support, and volunteers' network.

E.

Support

Jones outpolled Becerra at the CA Dem convention, but both candidates' endorsements are extensive - see [Becerra's endorsements](#) and [Jones' endorsements](#).

Polling results are hard to document. The [Sacramento Bee](#) calls it a close race, but without giving any stats.

Becerra's finances ([over \\$4 million according to Secty of State](#)) outpace Jones' ([\\$1.1 million, Secty of State](#)) but Jones also has \$2.7 million available left over from his 2014 Insurance Commissioner race.

Opposition/criticism

In a close race, both candidates have begun to sharply criticize each other. As with most negative campaigning, flaws are exaggerated and occasionally misrepresented. Here are a few excerpts from the Associated Press story of March 3, [California Attorney General Foes Spar in AP Interviews](#).

In separate interviews with The Associated Press, Jones and Becerra sharply criticized each other and parted ways on everything from their qualifications and priorities to whether Becerra has been a leader or a follower as he fights Trump's agenda.

Jones accused Becerra of "enabling opioid deaths" because his office has not yet fully implemented a statewide drug database, and of failing to seize guns from thousands of felons, those deemed mentally ill and others who are no longer allowed to own firearms.

Becerra repeatedly accused Jones of being deceptive and questioned if Jones would shirk his constitutional duties when it comes to carrying out the death penalty.

Criticism has arisen from some environmentalists regarding Becerra's fossil fuel campaign contributions and position on fossil fuels. I downloaded Becerra contributions from the Secty of State website. Searching it for "oil" and "gas" brings up only 3 individual contributions from individuals who work for fossil fuel companies – 2 for \$50 and one for \$1000. This out of nearly \$4 million. Critics have also criticized Becerra for not joining the New York and Massachusetts attorneys general who are investigating ExxonMobil's concealment of its foreknowledge of global warming. But it is common practice among states' attorneys general to divide up responsibilities. Again, I believe this is merely negative campaigning against Becerra who is a strong progressive on fossil fuels and the environment.

Both candidates have strong progressive records and values. Given the weak Republican field, the two will undoubtedly meet in the top-two runoff.

F. Description of how candidate or ballot measure supports PDB Core Principles.
Both candidates are excellent progressives on issues of importance to PDB. See C above.

G. Recommendation and brief statement.
RECOMMEND NO ENDORSEMENT. A strong case can be made for both Becerra and Jones. Whichever candidate succeeds, Benicia will want to have supported the AG winner. It will be important for Benicia Progressive Dems to remain neutral in the June 5 primary.

Roger Straw

April 26, 2018

Signed: _____ Date: _____