

**Progressive Democrats of Benicia
Endorsement Committee**

April 26, 2018

Research – TONY THURMOND for Superintendent of Public Instruction, June 5, 2018 Primary

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: ENDORSE TONY THURMOND

- A. Candidate name: **Tony Thurmond**, Assemblymember, District 15 (centered on Berkeley, Richmond, and a sizeable portion of Oakland).
- B. Relevance of office/ballot measure to Benicia/Solano County. The superintendent oversees the California Department of Education and, by extension, all of the state of California's public schools. Executes the policies of the California Board of Education, which is the school system's primary governing body. The superintendent also manages the operational side of the school system, including licensing teachers.
- C. Description of candidate's past and present positions and voting record on progressive issues.
- Served on the Richmond City Council from 2005 to 2008 and the West Contra Costa County School Board from 2008 to 2012.
 - Elected to first term in Assembly in 2014. Current committee assignments: Education, Health, Human Services, Labor and Employment (Chair), and Water, Parks and Wildlife.
 - Thurmond is authoring a bill that would tax privately owned prisons in California, raising potentially hundreds of millions of dollars that would be used to fund preschool and after-school programs.
 - While he has sponsored legislation to fund restorative justice programs in 30 districts, he cautions against misusing police officers, including school resource officers, on school campuses. Though, he has not stated an opposition to deploying school resource officers on campus.
 - Supports amending Proposition 13 to raise more revenue from commercial and industrial property owners.
- D. Description of the candidate's sponsors and opponents, sources of financial support, and volunteers' network.
- **Financial support:** Through January 2018, \$1.3 million in contributions.
 - **Major sources of contributions:** Labor (teachers, trades, public sector), Health, and Police/Fire associations.
 - **Endorsements:**
 - California Teachers Association, California Federation of Teachers, California Nurses Association, Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California, Equality California, and
 - 14 members of California's Congressional delegation, including: Sen. Kamala Harris, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, and Congressmen Mike Thompson, Mark DeSaulnier, and Ro Khanna.
 - Numerous state Senators and Assemblymembers (but not Sen. Dodd or Assemblymember Grayson).

- Numerous Mayors, including Tom Butt (Richmond), Jesse Arrequin (Berkeley), and Darrell Steinberg (Sacramento).

E. Description of how candidate or ballot supports PDB Core Principles.

- Supports eliminating for-profit charter schools and would have zero tolerance for fraud by any school, charter or district.
- Supports the goal of the Local Control Funding Formula but believes there must be more transparency to ensure the funds reach the high-needs students they were intended to help.
- Public education. Has continuously been an advocate ensuring that no young person slips through the cracks – from passing legislation to reduce truancy rates in K-3rd grade students, to work ensuring that foster youth receive every opportunity for success, to coaching incarcerated teens in life skills. He has been an unwavering voice for change. (Kamala Harris)
- Will prepare California’s students for 21st century careers, while fighting back against President Trump’s and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos’ efforts to defund and derail public education. He has actually moved funding from the criminal justice system to schools, has brought tech leaders and school boards together, and he has benefited personally from the promise of public education. (Barbara Lee)

F. Recommendation and brief statement.

- Following his reelection in 2016, anecdotal information indicates that in the 2017 Assembly District Election Meetings Thurmond supported a purge of Assembly District 15 delegates who supported Bernie Sanders. (No public source was found that confirms this anecdote.)
- Same source criticized Thurmond for moving too quickly from job to job, demonstrating in this view a lack of commitment to the jobs and more an interest in climbing within the California Democratic Party. (Also unable to confirm this characterization from any additional sources.)
- Bottom line: Some political analysis of this race seems to minimize the charter school v. public education distinctions between Tuck and Thurmond, though Thurmond is clearly the preference of the Party’s establishment and elected officials. Differences between Thurmond and Tuck to some extent seems to be a teachers (Thurmond) v. administrators (Tuck) division of support.
- I recommend endorsement.

Ralph Dennis

April 26, 2018

Signed: _____ Date: _____ –



**Progressive Democrats of Benicia
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April 26, 2018

Research – MARSHALL TUCK for Superintendent of Public Instruction, June 5, 2018 Primary

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: OPPOSE MARSHALL TUCK

- A. Candidate name: **Marshall Tuck**. Former Wall Street investment banker. Former co-founder of the Green Dot charter schools in Los Angeles, and past chief executive of the Partnership for Los Angeles Schools, which runs a collection of public schools as a collaborative effort with the Mayor's office and local school Superintendent. Ran as a candidate for this position in the 2014 election and lost in the general election (a \$30 million campaign characterized as being fueled largely by unions and supporters of charter schools).
- B. Relevance of office/ballot measure to Benicia/Solano County. The superintendent oversees the California Department of Education and, by extension, all of the state of California's public schools. Executes the policies of the California Board of Education, which is the school system's primary governing body. The superintendent also manages the operational side of the school system, including licensing teachers.
- C. Description of candidate's past and present positions and voting record on progressive issues.
- In Los Angeles, credited with turning around high-poverty, low-performing charter schools. Opponents say these schools were failures.
 - Recruited by then-Mayor Anthony Villaraigosa brought Tuck in to improve schools in the Los Angeles public school system.
 - Worked in the New Teacher Center, a Santa Cruz-based national organization which works in conjunction with school districts, state policymakers, and educators across the country to increase the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders at all levels, with a focus on those working in underserved communities. (NTC has received funding from New Schools Venture Fund, New Profit, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Skoll Foundation, Tipping Point, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative, among others.)
 - Supports amending Proposition 13 to raise more revenue from commercial and industrial property owners.
 - Tuck believes that too often the state superintendent and Department of Education have spent too much time on compliance and regulation, and not enough time on those core focus areas. He wants to shift the culture and practices of California's statewide education leadership so that it is about providing support to districts, sharing best practices, uplifting the voices of practicing educators, and prioritizing the interests of our students.
 - LA Progressives News: Same pro-privatizing platform that voters rejected when he was defeated for the position four years ago: To deregulate public education, outsource school services, make it harder for teachers to gain tenure, and to expand the market of "school choice."

D. Description of the candidate's sponsors and opponents, sources of financial support, and volunteers' network.

- **Financial support:** Through January 2018, \$1.7 million in contributions.
- **Major sources of contributions:**
 - Includes some familiar names in the anti-public education - Eli Broad, whose non-accredited Broad Academy trains privatizing "education leaders," Alice Walton (heir to the anti-labor Walmart fortune), Reed Hastings (Silicon Valley billionaire who supports taking away the right of local voters to elect their own school boards).
 - Howard Fieldstead Ahmanson, Jr., who donated \$1.4 million in 2008 supporting Proposition 8, a measure to ban gay marriage,
 - Thurmond says Tuck is claiming to take clean money while in fact being funded by PACs and pro-privatizing billionaires.
- **Endorsements:**
 - SF Chronicle, which also endorsed Tuck in his 2014 Primary and General elections.
 - Association of California School Administrators.
 - Secretary Arne Duncan (Ret.). Education Secretary, Obama Administration/
 - Former Congressman George Miller.
 - Bill Honig (Ret.) State Superintendent of Public Instruction.
 - State Senators Scott Wiener and Steve Glazer.
 - Numerous local county Superintendents, two county Superintendents (Stanislaus and Kings), and numerous administrators of charter and private schools.

E. Description of how candidate or ballot supports PDB Core Principles.

- Tuck wants all tax revenue from the legalized sale of marijuana should be funneled to education.
- Supports eliminating for-profit charter schools and would have zero tolerance for fraud by any school, charter or district. His 6-year-old son attends a Los Angeles Unified elementary school.
- While he believes high-quality charter schools run by nonprofit organizations, particularly in high poverty neighborhoods, can benefit the public education system, he says the focus should not be on charters or district schools but on building "a collective public school system for all kids."
- Supports the goal of the Local Control Funding Formula but believes there must be more transparency to ensure the funds reach the high-needs students they were intended to help. He says that more money is going to students of greatest need but it's not possible to know which strategies are most effective because districts are not required to show where the money is going and the impact on kids.

F. Recommendation and brief statement.

- Progressives look at Tuck as pro-charter schools at the expense of public education. Differences between the Thurmond and Tuck is to some extent a teachers (Tuck) v. administrators (Thurmond) division of support.

- Though only for two years, Tuck's time at the New Teacher Center suggests support for reform-oriented policies that support public education improvements, rather than a move from public education to charter schools. But, few progressives see Tuck as a public education supporter.
- Endorsements from East Bay Times and SF Chronicle, each characterizing Tuck as a reformer. Endorsements could also be read as supporting anecdotal information mentioned in Thurmond's summary sheet.
- Bottom line: Progressives clearly see Tuck as anti-public education, putting him in the same camp as DeVos and others who champion charter school at the expense of public education. While some political analysis seems to downplay the charter school v. public education, others like the LA Progressive define the race exactly in that manner. Thurmond is clearly the Party establishment's preference. Based on the charter school connections from Tuck's 2014 race, and the same support in this race, I recommend no endorsement.

Ralph Dennis

April 26, 2018

Signed: _____ Date: _____ -