

San Jose Mercury News

Chavez Wins Runoff Election for Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors

Cindy Chavez tops Teresa Alvarado in special election

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Former San Jose Vice Mayor Cindy Chavez won a special runoff election for the seat on the Santa Clara Supervisors vacated in March by disgraced former Supervisor George Shirakawa.

With all 58 precincts reporting, unofficial results from the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters show Chavez garnered 55 percent of the vote to defeat Teresa Alvarado and represent District 2.

Chavez called herself a "non-profit director/mother" in her county ballot statement. Alvarado described herself as an "engineer/communications manager."

Both candidates won the most votes among seven candidates in a special election on June 4 in which no one garnered the minimum 50 percent of voters to win outright.

Chavez in that election led the pack with 7,927 votes or 41.04 percent and Alvarado got 6,036 votes or 31.25 percent, forcing the two into Tuesday's runoff special election. In their candidate statements on county voter pamphlets, both contenders mentioned their dedication to issues concerning families, children and health care.

Alvarado, 48, asked voters to choose her "so that we can make our streets safe for our children, secure quality healthcare for all, provide for our elderly and those most in need, and support the thousands of people who work every day to make a decent life for themselves and their loved ones."

Chavez, 49, mentioned that the community needed "safe, vibrant schools so our children can thrive, good paying jobs and affordable health care so families can succeed, and more police and sheriff deputies on the streets to stop the escalation of violence."

Alvarado won the endorsement of the San Jose Mercury News while teachers and other public sector labor organizations have backed Chavez.

District 2 includes the County Government Center where the Board of Supervisors meet, all of downtown San Jose and much of East San Jose, according to the county's website.

Election officers, who must be U.S. citizens, are being paid "volunteer stipends" of \$95 to \$180 to work at polling places during the special election, according to the website. The Board of Supervisors approved the election to replace Shirakawa after he resigned March 1 in light of a 12-count criminal complaint filed that day by the district attorney's office.

The office charged that Shirakawa obtained more than \$130,000 in public and campaign funds for personal use and to gamble at casinos. He later pleaded guilty to four felony counts of perjury, one felony count of misuse of public funds and seven misdemeanors for filing inaccurate campaign and government finance reports. Shirakawa still has not been sentenced for the criminal convictions.