

# Oakland Post

"Where there is no vision, the people perish..." Proverbs 29:18

postnewsgroup.com

Weekly Edition. September 6 - 12, 2023

60th Year

## Sandré Swanson Runs for State Senate, 'Putting Kids and Families First'

By Ken Epstein

Veteran progressive leader Sandré Swanson, who is running for office to "put kids and families first," spoke at a fundraiser over Labor Day weekend emphasizing his commitment to serving Oakland and the East Bay as his campaign gathers endorsements and supporters for the November 2024 race for the State Senate, 7th District.

The current issues facing local communities are clearly visible all around us, Swanson said: the unhoused who struggle to survive, the piled waste and neglect on city streets, empty storefronts in commercial districts, people who tell him they are "afraid to go out at night," and the frequent news reports of older residents who are knocked down and robbed.

"I'm running to address these issues," he said. "I have the experience, and I am qualified, and I can make a difference – to solve the homeless problem and eliminate this crime wave."

Already, his campaign has been endorsed by the California School Employees Association, the State Treasurer Fiona Ma, and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond.

As a former member of the state Assembly, Swanson has left an impressive legacy. He played a major role in bringing back local control to the Oakland Unified School District after six years under state receivership that had disempowered the Board of Education and disenfranchised voters.

He also led the effort in the State Legislature to jail human traffickers and decriminalize their young victims.

He said, "I went to the police department and said, 'you guys are arresting 12-year-olds and 14-year-olds, and you treat them like criminals.' They said, 'what choice do we have? We need a law.' We wrote a law, so they have a diversion program, and the children are not treated like criminals but victims."



Besides serving in the Assembly, Swanson worked for five years as Chief of Staff for Congresswoman Barbara Lee after serving as legislative aide, district director and senior policy advisor for 25 years for Ron Dellums, a human rights leader and the first African American man in Northern California to be elected to Congress.

Swanson also chaired the Alameda County Retirement Board protecting seniors' pensions and was chair of the Oakland Civil Service Commission, making sure people got a fair break on public jobs. Swanson began his career as a young

activist, meeting and working with Lee during Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm's Democratic presidential campaign in California in 1972, and he chaired Lionel Wilson's successful campaign for Oakland mayor in 1977.

He said he is a strong candidate because he has a considerable base of support in the East Bay district because, while he was in office, he helped retirees receive their Social Security and worked to help homeowners who were in danger of losing their homes because of predatory loans. "My legislative office saved hundreds of homes," he said.

Swanson pointed out that currently there are no African Americans representing Northern California in the State Senate.

Swanson said one of his most exciting memories was coordinating Nelson Mandela's historic visit to Oakland in 1990. Swanson organized the celebration that brought 60,000 people to the Oakland Coliseum to hear Mandela speak following his release from prison South Africa.

Swanson and his wife have four adult children, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

For more information about Swanson and his campaign, go to [www.sandreswanson.net](http://www.sandreswanson.net)