

- [Health](#)
- [Media](#)
 - [Encore](#)
- [Mexico](#)
- [Politics](#)
 - [2014 June Primary](#)
 - [Courts, Justice](#)
 - [Faulconer vs Alvarez](#)
 - [Gender](#)
 - [Voter Guide 2012](#)
 - [Voter Guide Special Election](#)
- [Satire](#)

San Diego Goddam! The June 3rd Election And Why You Should Care

by [Doug Porter](#) on May 7, 2014 · [9 comments](#)

in [2014 June Primary](#), [Battle for Barrio Logan](#), [Business](#), [Columns](#), [Editor's Picks](#), [Government](#), [Politics](#), [The Starting Line](#)



By Doug Porter

I borrowed the first part of today's headline from one of my favorite songs by Nina Simone, who sang about a certain southern hellhole of a state of mind as her response to the murder of [Medgar Evers](#) in Mississippi; and the [bombing of a church](#) in [Birmingham, Alabama](#) that killed four black children back in 1964. The song speaks to the level of angst and frustration I'm starting to feel about the upcoming election.

Bad things are more likely to happen and good things probably won't happen if you and your friends pass on your obligation as citizens to vote come June 3rd. Starting today and in the coming weeks we'll be talking about those possibilities, so you need to (please!) pay attention.

Fast forward 50 years from Ms. Simone's lament and there are 8 million eligible but unregistered voters in California. Of the 17.7 million voters that are registered to vote in the Golden State, only about one third

will bother to cast ballots in the upcoming June 3rd elections. That works out to 14% of the total population deciding how things will be for next few years.

In San Diego county, the Registrar of Voters mailed out an all-time record 840,000 ballots on Monday. Voting has already started. And people can [still register to vote](#) (you can do it [right here](#)) in the upcoming election until May 19th.

California's June ballot includes every Congressional and state Assembly seat, and the even-numbered state Senate seats. All the top-level statewide seats are on the ballot, but because the gubernatorial race is not expected to be competitive, that could also affect turnout.

So let's turn that negative into a positive. If you are a liberal or progressive voter, you might want to consider crossing party lines on June 3rd and voting up gubernatorial tea partyish candidate Tim Donnelly, because a second place finish (with our new primary system) by the Twin Peaks Assemblyman would put him at the top of the fall ticket and discourage GOP turnout. And just think how amusing the TV ads will be...

The Really Serious Stuff is all local this time around. Today I'll touch on three of those contests: District Attorney, the race for Superior Court Judge, seat 20 and Propositions B&C in the City of San Diego. I promise there will be more in coming days, so stay turned.

Send Bonnie Dumanis Packing



Our current county district attorney is making the news frequently as of late, in a not good way.

Today's [UT-San Diego](#) has a story about high profile events attended by Bonnie Dumanis that seemingly weren't disclosed in financial reports as required by law.

District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis is the subject of two state ethics complaints alleging she failed to report meals and travel she accepted from interest groups — complaints filed by a supporter of a political challenger on the June 3 ballot.

The allegations raise a particular issue for Dumanis, who has led a high-profile prosecution in the

past three years of more than a dozen officials in South County for accepting meals and other considerations and not reporting them on state forms.

What we're looking at here are fifty or so free meals with a total value of \$4583, according to the story. The on-line version of the *UT* also has a handy-dandy [photo gallery of Dumanis](#) at some of these events, including:

- February, 2012 (\$100)- The Neighborhood Market Association
- May, 2012 (\$125)- Lawyer's Club of San Diego 40th Anniversary
- September, 2012 (Registration + Dinner) Chamber of Commerce DC Lobbying Trip
- January, 2013 (\$50) – San Diego Association of Realtors
- February, 2013 (\$200) Downtown San Diego Partnership Event
- March, 2013 (\$200) National Conflict Resolution Center
- October, 2013 (\$135) San Diego La Raza Lawyers Association

The *UT* says they provided the DA's office with a list of the events in question, "but the office declined to say whether the DA attended for free and what her policies are on accepting and reporting such gifts."

The conclusion of the [UT story](#):

Allegations of failing to report gifts and meals are complicated for Dumanis, who prosecuted South County school officials for accepting gifts and meals in exchange for construction contracts.

Although many of the officials were initially charged with bribery, their final plea deals have seen them admit to lesser offenses — often, failing to report meals on state forms.

Donna Frye Joins the Fray



Ex-city councilwoman Donna Fry appeared at a downtown press conference yesterday with Dumanis challenger Bob Brewer to call for release of recently discovered documents relating to a (mostly) failed investigation of Chula Vista politicians.

After telling *KPBS* back in February that records pertaining to a phone call ex-Chula Vista Mayor Steve Padilla said he got from Dumanis did not exist, the DA's office is now obviously stalling for time before releasing the documents.

Via [KPBS](#):

But when KPBS sent a Public Records Act request to [Patrick O'Toole](#) – the prosecutor who handled the Chula Vista investigations – he gathered the records in just hours and gave them to officials in the District Attorney's Office.

Dumanis' office said it never asked O'Toole if he had the documents because typically that information is kept in a case file that has long since been closed.

But the information sought by KPBS was not about case pleadings and motions. It was related to Padilla's assertion that Dumanis had asked him to appoint her aide to a vacant City Council seat in that 2005 call. Within weeks of Padilla's refusal, Dumanis initiated an investigation of the entire Chula Vista council.

On Monday, the District Attorney's Office told KPBS that it needed more time because the request was not restricted to records O'Toole handed over. KPBS promptly amended its request to ask for only what O'Toole has delivered. The office still has not released the records.

The Tip of the Iceberg

The real deal with Dumanis isn't really about these allegations. They're minor and she'll probably skate free from any consequences. But they are indicative of a much larger problem, I'm told.

Politics, not the law, is what rules the roost in the County District Attorneys office these days. The rank and file of local law enforcement agencies have come out solidly against the incumbent. The rank and file of the downtown set have come out in favor of Bonnie Dumanis. That's likely because she's been the gatekeeper of their dirty dealings for the past decade plus.

For example, here's a comment [posted here](#) recently by ex-prosecutor Dave Stutz:

Within 3 hours of making a call to Sycuan to ask about a \$25,000 contribution to "Kolender for Sheriff" ', which would be illegal, I was called into her office and told to stop the investigation. No one knew about my call except Sycuan and myself. Either Kolender or Sycuan called her and she stopped an investigation without knowing what it was about nor did she ask. For the next year Dumanis was led by a leash by Kolender endorsing right wing candidates on a "law and Order" ticket. She has been in their bag since day one.

A Heavy Duty Billboard for Carla Keehn

The last time we heard much about a judicial race in San Diego was a few years back when we woke up one day to realize that birther and conspiracy theorist [Gary Kreep](#) had won an election for a seat on the bench.

[Voice of San Diego](#) recently examined what's coming up with the judicial set for the June election and found plenty of reasons why you should care:

Let's face it: [The election of Gary Kreep](#) might've been the zenith of San Diego's judicial races, in terms of pure bewilderment.

That race had everything – everything being two men with unfortunate names (Kreep narrowly beat Garland Peed), one of whom was a prominent “birther.”

This time around, San Diego will have to settle for a candidate who's defended white supremacists pro bono and once wrote that a judge he was facing should be disqualified “by virtue of her permanent disability as a Negro racist;” and an incumbent with a drunk-driving conviction who was also admonished by a state commission for incorrectly putting a woman in custody for five days.

[Carla Keehn](#) is the former prosecutor who has stepped up to challenge San Diego Superior Court Judge Lisa Schall, the second judge mentioned in the *VOSD* snippet.



Challenging a sitting judge is a big no-no in local politics.

The incumbent was endorsed by DA Bonnie Dumanis (an endorsement since removed from her website), and is endorsed by City Attorney Jan Goldsmith, the Alliance of California Judges and all 127 sitting judges in the San Diego Superior Court.

They've been some serious double dealing backroom type deals made and then (sometimes) unmade as local politios have [attempted to enforce](#) the “Thou Shall Not Challenge a Sitting Judge” rule.

Keehn is making sure she can no longer be ignored, having posted four billboards at prominent locations alerting the public to the past conduct of Superior Court Judge Lisa Schall.

Corporate Rule Trumps Local Control? (You Pick)



The expected TV advertising campaign underwritten by multinational corporations opposed to the Barrio Logan Community plan has begun and it's only marginally more truthful than the pack of lies they peddled during their drive to get the measure on the ballot.

Over at [Voice of San Diego](#), Andrew Keatts pointed out the obvious implications that this measure has for other neighborhoods.

But city leaders feared what happened in Barrio Logan would set a precedent for citywide involvement in local planning decisions.

"I think it would be a huge mistake," City Councilman David Alvarez said when Barrio Logan's plan passed. "It would send the wrong message to all of San Diego, and all the community plans that are being updated. One special interest group could just derail community plan updates. That's very dangerous."

While we at SDFP have covered this issue [in depth](#), I'd like to give a shout out to the [City Beat](#) editorial from a month ago:

The Barrio Logan Community Plan is good for the residents of Barrio Logan because it gives them what most other San Diegans take for granted: protection from polluting industry. It creates the kind of buffer zone that you would insist upon in your neighborhood. It will be confusing to voters whether to vote yes or no. Just remember, a yes vote preserves the community plan. Commit this to memory: Vote yes on Props. B and C.

Then there was this post from Environmental Health Coalition advocate Georgette Gomez on [Facebook](#) last night:

I don't like to speak about the No on B and C campaign but I just received a copy of one of their flyers, and this what they said..."Over 2,000 new housing units to be built in an industrial area" ..Now what's important to understand, is the fact that in the new plan, future housing is plan to be built north

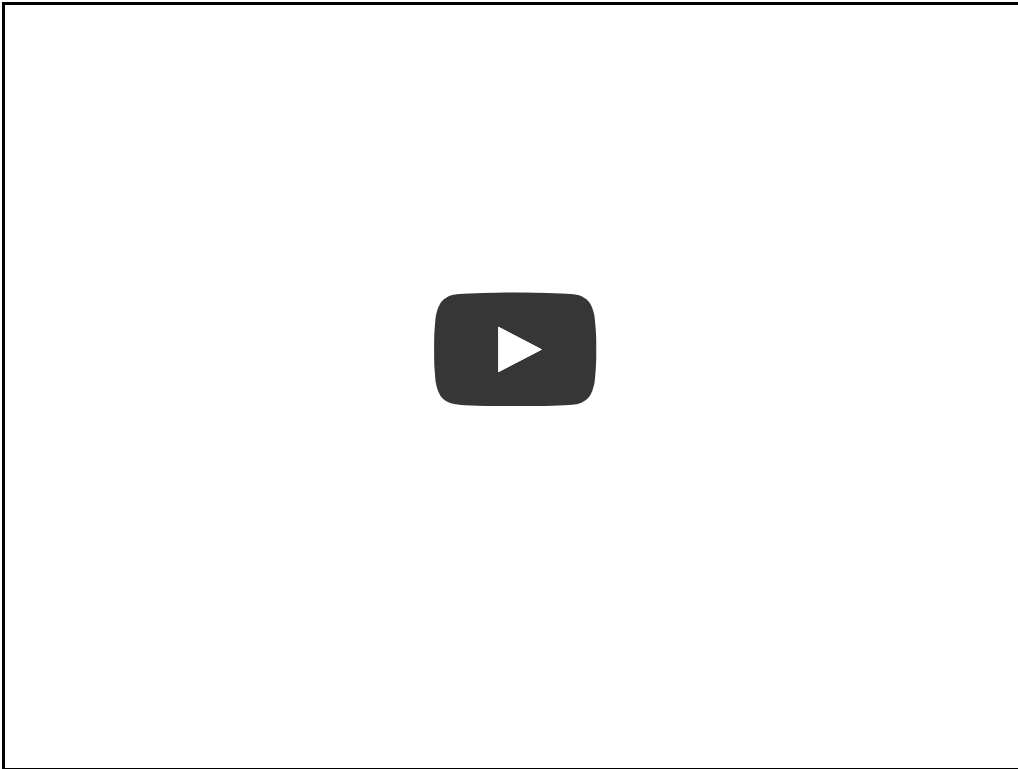
of Chicano Park or North of Cesar Chavez Street. Last time I checked that is NOT and Industrial Area...Point being is that this is how the CEO of the Shipyards and the head of the Chamber see Barrio Logan.

It turns out that bit about the 2000 new housing units also appears in the ballot argument against the Barrio Logan Plan.

Asked about whether or not the City Planning staff could be prevailed upon to make a correction on this assertion, Ms. Gomez replied:

Good question, the planner is Not allowed to speak on the issue, new boss orders. The new boss I mean the new Mayor.

So I'll end today with a video of Nina Simone singing Mississippi Goddam, the song that inspired today's column.



For more of our June 2014 primary coverage, go [here](#).

On This Day:1824 – Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was performed for the first time. **1915** – The Lusitania, a civilian ship, was sunk by a German submarine. 1,201 people were killed. **1975** - U.S. President Ford declared an end to the Vietnam War.

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