

TV Channel 35 3-Minute Statement of: Hanna Hajjar, LACCD, Board of Trustee, Seat #5
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Greetings,

My name is Hanna Hajjar, and I am running for the LA Community College District, Board of Trustees, Seat #5. I am an engineer, an inventor, and the president of the American University Alumni.

You might wonder why an engineer is running for this post when all others are educators.

As tax payers we are concerned about how our tax money is being spent, and financially speaking the board is involved in overseeing the allocation of LA College budgets, which mainly cover bids for construction projects. This is why the board needs a person who is familiar with technical issues to control overspending. Let me give you an example:

Reading through the specs of the LA Valley College, we find the following:

And I Quote ...**The system shall be SimplexGrinnell Model 4100U Network Control Fire Control System.** Unquote

To the untrained eye, the above sentence looks normal; hence it will slip by unnoticed. But to an engineer, the statement is in violation of the California Public Contract Code Section 3400, because it lacks the “**Or-Equal**” clause, which is a must in any public bidding.

The “Or-Equal” clause gives different manufacturers the opportunity to compete fairly on a level playing ground, offering compatible products, and allowing the lowest bidder to win the job. As a result project cost is kept low, saving tax payers’ money, and helping colleges stretch their funds.

Without the “Or-Equal” clause, this type of specs wording lead to a monopoly, where one manufacturer becomes the exclusive supplier, holding the community college as hostage, dictating prices, and violating Anti-Trust laws.

Consequently the Edward Systems (a subsidiary of GE) was excluded automatically, even though they make reliable products, which are in use in several LACCD buildings, and most importantly cost much less than the ones specified.

Let’s take a closer look at the tax payer cost: The Simplex Company is charging about \$200,000 per building above the competition, and since there are ten buildings involved, that adds up to two million dollars of overspending. It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out that this money could have been put to better use. Either way you look at it, specifying one exclusive manufacturer, was a bad decision to say the least.

Realizing the existence of such overspending problems in the LA Community College District, and being a problem solver, I decided to run for office utilizing my technical expertise to help fix similar problems.

If you get sick you go to a doctor and not a plumber, and to deal with contracts you need to elect an engineer not a professor.

On March 6th elect me Hanna Hajjar for Trustee Seat #5 of the LACCD. Thank you for your time.
