

It's an exciting time here in Los Angeles. Vibrant new leadership in our city has given us the opportunity to seriously address difficult issues and improve the quality of life for our families and our neighborhoods.

I am proud of what I have been able to accomplish in just one short year on the City Council. And I ask for your support to help keep moving Los Angeles forward.

I was elected just over a year ago to fill out the unexpired City Council term of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. During the election I pledged to work for safer neighborhoods, better schools, greater opportunity and a greener city. I have kept those promises.

I joined with Mayor Villaraigosa in supporting additional funding to add 1,000 police officers to the LAPD. We have already begun the process of recruiting, hiring and training the additional officers.

While violent crime has dropped to the lowest levels in over 40 years, gang violence continues to be a huge problem in some neighborhoods. That is why I am supporting a substantial effort to expand the city's gang and drug prevention efforts. I have also worked with the Police and Parole Departments to better track paroled sex offenders living near schools to better protect our children.

In every neighborhood in Los Angeles, people say that increasing traffic gridlock is one of their top concerns. That is why I have been a strong champion for the expansion of public transit in Los Angeles. I have worked for a rapid completion of the Eastside Gold Line extension. I am working to better synchronize traffic lights and install more left hand turn lanes. And I am thrilled that, after many years of delay and inaction, we are about to begin working on the Valley Boulevard grade separation in El Sereno.

Our district has far too little park space. I have fought to bring more parks and recreational facilities to our community, including working to open the Ascot Hills Nature Park and the Garvanza Skate Park and opening the new Pecan Park Gym.

I have fought to protect our hillsides from overdevelopment by championing the Interim Control Ordinance. And I am joining with the residents of Mount Washington to protect the future of the Southwest Museum.

I served as a member of the LA School Board where I fought to end the achievement gap, reduce dropouts, build more schools and to ensure that every student has access to college preparatory classes.

Serving as your Council member has been the greatest honor of my life. I grew up in this district, in Boyle Heights. I was the son of a hard working immigrant parents who came here seeking a better future for their family. My father, Simon, was a migrant farm worker who became a machinist. My mother, Isidra, worked in a meat packing plant.

Because of their loving guidance and personal sacrifices, I graduated from Salesian High and went on to earn degrees from UC Berkeley, Princeton and UCLA Law School.

And today, as City Councilman, I have a unique opportunity to help dreams come true for our neighborhoods. I have been given so much, by this country, by this community, that I hold this responsibility as a sacred trust.

I thank you for your support and look forward to continue working with you and your neighbors as your City Council member for a full four year term.