

Top Three Issues: A Solutions Platform

Rochelle Sherlock | February 16, 2020

HOMELESSNESS: TREAT MENTAL ILLNESS & DRUG ADDICTION, + ACCOUNTABILITY

Homelessness is a complex, multifaceted issue. There are different reasons why people become homeless. My three-pronged approach targets the underlying cause of homelessness.

- I. **Target Audience:** Those priced out of the market (seniors on a limited income, transition-aged youth exiting the foster care system, women fleeing domestic violence, and individuals and families who do not make a living wage.

Solutions: 1) Rapid Re-Housing, short-term rental assistance, 2) job training to help people get better paying jobs, and Share Housing program which makes use of existing housing stock by matching home owners/renters with compatible individuals who rent a room and/or do housing chores in exchange for rent.

- II. **Target Audience:** Many veterans with war time experience find themselves homeless and with PTSD.

Solutions: 1) We need to ensure the County Office of Veteran's Services has the resources to help the veteran's access all of their benefits, 2) connect them to services, and 3) veteran's housing, like the innovative veteran's home in Dixon.

- III. **Target Audience:** Chronically homeless... the visible homeless. The *real issue* here is *untreated mental health and drug addiction*, not housing. One estimate suggests 90% of the chronically homeless are meth addicts. Drugs change the brain and they are no longer motivated to get services and will decline a shelter bed when offered to them.

- Solutions:** 1) **Repeal or modify Proposition 47 so we can mandate treatment. Prop 47 stripped away law enforcement's ability** to enforce the law which is why we've seen a spike in homelessness and crime. It also removed Drug-Court's ability to mandate drug treatment instead of jail time. Drugs rewire the brain, so addicts are not motivated to receive services which is why they decline shelter beds when offered to them.
- 2) Assign a Mental Health Specialist to accompany law enforcement to encampments and assess the individual for mental health and addiction issues and connect them to services.
- 3) Increase detox and residential treatment services locally.
- 4) Enforce a no camping ordinance. According to the 9th circuit court, law enforcement cannot enforce a no camping ordinance if there are no shelter beds for the homeless individual. Solano County has shelter beds but the homeless decline the bed because they can camp wherever they want (see repeal/modify Prop 47). We need to motivate them to get better and can do so by enforcing a no camping ordinance and connecting them to treatment.

PUBLIC SAFETY – REPEAL/MODIFY PROP 47

REPEAL/MODIFY PROP 47 - Proposition 47, the “The Safe Neighborhood and Schools Act”, has made our neighborhoods and schools less safe. The proposition, which was designed to not criminalize addiction issues, reduced certain felonies, such as theft of less than \$950 per location and drug possession to a misdemeanor. The problem is, it stripped away law enforcements ability to enforce the law and keep us safe. Crimes that used to result in arrest and either Drug Court or jail time, now result in a citation. If there are no consequences for criminal activity, then there is no motivation for criminals to stop and they remain on the streets. **We must repeal or modify Prop 47.**

INVEST IN EVIDENCED-BASED DIVERSION AND REENTRY PROGRAMS

Drug Court and other diversion programs have been very successful in addressing underlying issues and reducing recidivism by helping people get clean and sober, job training, and developing life skills to be successful, productive members of society.

I brought \$6 million dollars to reduce recidivism among non-violent offenders by creating a robust reentry program. Roughly 60% of the jail-based population are homeless and

when they exit jail they return to the streets. The Solano County Reentry program has been very successful transitioning people from jail back into the community by placing them in a sober living environment, connecting them to drug treatment programs, comprehensive case-management, record remedies, job training and life skills. The graduates of this program are employed, have reunified with their families, and are living productive lives.

INVEST IN JOB TRAINING

Individuals need a way to earn a livable wage. The Vocational Center at the jail and innovative partnerships between the Carpenter's Union (and other Building Trades) and the Sheriff's Office are connecting people to union jobs and helping them become self-sufficient.

We need to support career technical education programs in the high schools and through the Workforce Development Board.

PUBLIC SAFETY - WILDFIRE/DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Solano County does not have a Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan. I have taken the lead to establish the first Fire Safety Council and Fire Wise site in partnership with CAL FIRE, the Cordelia Fire District, and residents. We will be conducting a community wildfire assessment on March 14th and 15th and developing an action plan to address wildfire risk in the area and a plan for evacuation in the event of a disaster. As County Supervisor I will work to ensure this program is rolled out county-wide and that a Solano County Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan is developed.

Moreover, I will be a champion for disaster preparedness throughout the county, ensure the County Office of Emergency Services (OES), and Office of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) have the resources and tools to orchestrate a state-of-the-art emergency response.

Public education is a key component of wildfire and disaster preparedness. I will work with OES, EMS, the cities, Fire Departments, community-based organizations and faith communities to deliver education and resources for residents throughout the county.

MAKING COUNTY GOVERNMENT WORK FOR, AND WITH, US

Not everything is wrong with County government, but we can do a better job partnering with the cities to address key issues and not pointing fingers. There has been too much blaming and not enough collaborating.

I will build public-private partnerships, strengthen relationships between the County, cities, CBO's, faith communities and residents. We are all in this together and each have a different role to play in addressing key issues.

I will ensure that residents have a voice and are consulted before major decisions are made that directly impacts their lives. I will establish a resident advisory council so residents can have regular access to me, and it can provide a venue to hear their concerns.

We need to leverage more resources. The County leaves money on the table when it doesn't go after available grants, or when it returns millions of dollars to the State every year rather than serving people. I will get to the bottom of this and be sure we leverage every available resource to meet the needs of the community.

ABOUT ROCHELLE: A BUSINESSWOMAN WITH 25 YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE



*With Crisanto Beltan at the
Centenarian Commemoration*

Rochelle Sherlock has spent her life in public service; from helping seniors and youth to reducing crime and fixing transportation, she is a fixture in Solano County. Today, she's intent on finding a real solution to the surge of homelessness in recent years.

Sherlock has a proven track record of bringing people together to develop realistic solutions - and as a community advocate, she's proven she's ready to lead.

Together with others, Rochelle launched the Senior Coalition of Solano County and the Centenarian Commemoration. She founded the Fall Prevention Partnership, the Senior Poverty Program, and the award-winning Mini-Medical School that keep seniors active and healthy. She co-founded and chairs the Green Valley Fire Safe Council, one of her wildfire and disaster preparedness programs that are helping neighborhoods take safety seriously.



She brought in \$6 million to reduce recidivism among nonviolent offenders and get them off the streets. She's led more than a dozen transportation summits, creating better transit access and pedestrian safety. She's strengthening non-profits and is a co-founder of the Volunteer Center of Solano County and the Solano Commission for Women and Girls – where she serves as the Chair.

Rochelle started her career as a social worker due to her own challenging childhood experiences. Today, she's a successful business owner and sought-after expert in leadership and organizational effectiveness, working with organizations across the West Coast.

Rochelle has a B.A. in Sociology, M.A. in Psychology, and is a Doctoral Candidate at The George Washington University. Sherlock and her husband, Joe, live in Cordelia. They have three adult children - Jeremiah, Allison and Doug.