

## **Shawn Nelson (CA-39) Research Report**

The following report contains research on Shawn Nelson, a Republican challenger in California's 39<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. Research for this report was completed by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee's Research Department in March 2018.

By accepting this report, you are accepting responsibility for all information and analysis included. Therefore, it is your responsibility to verify all claims against the original documentation before you make use of it.

Make sure you understand the facts behind our conclusions before making any specific charges against anyone.

### **Significant Findings**

- ✓ *Nelson's career has been defined by his "brash" attitude. His demeanor has been repeatedly criticized as "discomforting," and his Orange County Board of Supervisors and Fullerton City Council colleagues have criticized his attitude.*
- ✓ *Nelson ran for the Board of Supervisors in 2010 pledging to cut pensions, drawing strong union opposition in his first campaign.*
- ✓ *Despite pledging to not accept a pension, Nelson accepted one, claiming he was legally obligated to. He later drafted an ordinance, enacted by voters, mandating that all supervisors take the minimum pension offered to county employees.*
- ✓ *In 2010, the Fullerton Police Officers Association called Nelson a "liar" and "typical politician" after his actions on pensions. The union endorsed his opponent, and sent Nelson a cease-and-desist letter, claiming that he misrepresented police support on his campaign mailers.*
- ✓ *Nelson called himself "the godfather of the Orange County Tea Party" and in 2009 organized a rally to burn Gov. Schwarzenegger's movies to protest state spending.*
- ✓ *Nelson claimed in 2010 that he was not interested in using the supervisor's office as a political stepping stone. He has held elected office for 15 years.*
- ✓ *Though he decried wasteful spending, Nelson simultaneously accepted a car allowance from the county and a free, taxpayer-funded car from the South Coast Air Quality Management District.*
- ✓ *In 2017, Nelson accepted cigars and wine from lobbyists for county contractors before repaying the cost of the gifts from his campaign account.*
- ✓ *In 2015, Nelson was criticized for re-naming his committee "Shawn Nelson For Supervisor 2018," despite being ineligible to run for supervisor in 2018.*
- ✓ *In 2015, Nelson claimed that he did not own any stake in his law firm, despite his state mandated disclosure forms stating that he owned a 10% stake and an advertisement from the firm referring to him as "Of Counsel."*
- ✓ *In 2010, Nelson was criticized for language on his law firm's website marketing to sex offenders. He claimed that the language was placed on the site without his knowledge by a web designer.*
- ✓ *In 2011, Nelson opposed awarding a county mental health services contract to a non-profit called Latino Health Access because of the word "Latino" in the group's name.*
- ✓ *A lifetime member of the NRA, Nelson holds a concealed carry license and stated that he supports the expansion of concealed carry in California.*

**Nelson Campaigned On A Platform Of Pension Reform, Then Accepted A County Pension, Claiming He Was Required To Do So**

**2010: Nelson Signed Up For A County Pension That He Had Campaigned Against, Claiming There Was No Way For Him To Opt Out.** “Fourth District Supervisor Shawn Nelson campaigned his way to victory on an anti-pension platform. But that didn't keep him from signing up for a county pension. Simply by signing up, he instantly transformed the pension he made as a part-time Fullerton city councilman into a retirement worth more than 13 times what he actually earned because of a reciprocity agreement between the two retirement systems, Total Buzz has found. That means Nelson turned what would have been a \$1,184.23 city of Fullerton pension every year into \$15,596.99 a year benefit beginning at age 50. [...] Nelson found a loophole that allows him to void his county pension selection. Apparently he signed the pension paperwork eight days before he was officially sworn in to his new post June 22, and that was enough for the Orange County Employees Retirement System to pull the plug on his pension selection. ‘I do not have a pension,’ Nelson said, adding that any money taken out of his paycheck for his pension will be repaid. [...] Nelson said he was told after he made his selection that he had until Aug. 20 to opt out, an option he said he took before the deadline. [...] According to Nelson, he didn't have a choice when it came to signing up for a pension. Nelson says he was forced to pick one of two pension plans – ‘1.62 percent at 65’ or ‘2.7 percent at 55’ and that there was no option to opt out. It wasn't until after he had opted in that he was told he could opt out, he said.” [Orange County Register, 9/30/10]

**2010: Nelson Threatened To Sue His GOP Opponent If He Claimed That Nelson Had A County Pension.** “The race has been a contentious one, with much of the drama centering on Nelson's decision to sign up for the most generous county pension after he campaigned on an anti-pension platform. Sidhu called Nelson a hypocrite, sending out glossy mailers with a caricature of Nelson with his hand caught in the cookie jar. [...] Amid howls of hypocrisy from bloggers, political pundits and Sidhu, Nelson found a loophole that allows him to void his county pension selection. He signed the pension paperwork before he was officially sworn in to his new post June 22, and that was enough for Orange County Employee Retirement Systems to pull the plug on his pension selection. ‘What he ran on and what he did are two different things,’ Sidhu said. ‘He's a lawyer. He knew what he was doing.’ Nelson, who blamed the pension mishap on misinformation provided to him by the county, then threatened to sue Sidhu if he claimed Nelson had a county pension. ‘I don't expect everyone to treat me with kid gloves,’ Nelson said. ‘Call me whatever names you want, but you can't lie.’” [Orange County Register, 10/31/10]

**Orange County Register Editorial: “Once In Office [Nelson] Opted For The Most Lucrative Pension Benefit Available To County Employees,” Compromising His Credibility.** “Shawn Nelson, the newest Orange County supervisor, disappoints our Editorial Board, which endorsed him, because, once in office he opted for the most lucrative pension benefit available to county employees upon assuming his new post. From our perspective, his credibility on pension reform, the central focus of his campaign, is now in question. Mr. Nelson won a June election to serve the rest of the term in the Fourth Supervisorial District after Chris Norby was elected to the Assembly. Mr. Nelson essentially campaigned on one issue: pension reform. In a meeting with our Editorial Board, he lamented the richness of the county's current pension system for non-public safety workers, which pays 2.7 percent of final year salary for each year worked, with retirement eligibility beginning at age 55.” [Orange County Register, Editorial, 8/19/10]

**Orange County Register Editorial: “Fortunately, Nelson Found A Loophole” And Was “Able To Decline Participation In The Pension System.”** “Such is true in the recent decision by the newest county supervisor, Shawn Nelson, to opt in to the overly generous pension plan for county workers after making pension reform the centerpiece of his campaign. Then, with his integrity questioned, Mr. Nelson not only withdrew from the pension plan but also announced plans to unveil a new reform proposal in the form of a 401(k)-style pension plan for county elected officials, like himself. [...] ‘When I was given my benefits paperwork, I was told that I must choose a pension option, that I had no choice but to do so,’ Mr. Nelson told us and showed the paperwork he signed which states he ‘must’ choose from two options for pension benefits. [...] Fortunately, Mr. Nelson found a loophole. He signed his benefits paperwork prior to being sworn in to office, a technicality which

nullified his pension choice. He was then able to decline participation in the pension system.” [Orange County Register, 9/12/10]

**2015: Nelson Claimed He Had No Choice But To Take A Pension Under A Voter-Approved Law He Sponsored.** “A voter-approved law aimed at reducing the tax money going to elected officials' pensions has instead led to Orange County owing nearly \$250,000 on behalf of a lucrative plan for a supervisor who pledged never to take a pension. Shawn Nelson says he had no choice but to sign up for a pension after he was re-elected to the Board of Supervisors last year because a ballot measure sponsored by Nelson and approved by voters in 2012 requires all supervisors sign up for the least expensive plan, but doesn't allow them to choose not to enroll at all. He said he was surprised when the Orange County Employee Retirement System told him that because he'd briefly enrolled in the system five years ago, it was like he had never left. That meant he owed \$75,861.67 for the employee contributions he would have paid had he not announced he would no longer participate in the pension system in the midst of a re-election bid against another vociferous anti-pension politician. Now the county has to pay its part of the pension for those five years, too: \$247,625. ‘I'm not real thrilled about it,’ Nelson said. ‘It wasn't like, ‘Hey, I got re-elected, how can I go backward?’ OCERS called me. I didn't call them.’” [Orange County Register, 10/24/15]

**Nelson Drew Criticism From A Former Supervisor Who Claimed He Was Trying To “Distort The Facts” About His Pension.** “State Sen. Pat Bates, who is the only other county supervisor who has chosen not to enroll in a pension, accused Nelson of using ‘legal doublespeak’ and said his apparent disregard of his five-year-old anti-pension pledge is ‘very, very disturbing’ and ‘kind of shocking.’ ‘This is a breach of trust, as far as I'm concerned,’ Bates said. Bates agrees that the 2012 law forces all supervisors to enroll in the cheapest plan, but she said Nelson, who helped write the law, falsely portrayed it to voters as a way to reign in supervisor pensions when he knew it actually enabled him to ditch his pledge not to participate. [...] Nelson said he knew the ballot measure would require him to sign up for a pension but said he didn't discuss that at the time because the topic never came up. ‘That wasn't even in the discussion,’ he said. ‘It wasn't purposeful or negligent.’ Bates also said Nelson is wrong when he says OCERS told him his recent enrollment voided his decision to ditch his enrollment five years ago. ‘I do not believe that someone is forced to get retroactive pension benefits,’ said Bates. [...] ‘I feel very disappointed that someone wants to distort the facts in the matter.’ [...] Bates isn't the only one who disagrees with the retroactive pension participation. Auditor-Controller Eric Woolery for months refused to authorize payments to OCERS for the \$247,625 owed for Nelson's last five years.’” [Orange County Register, 10/24/15]

### **Nelson Received A County Car Allowance And Drove A Publicly Owned Car**

**Nelson Collected A \$765 Monthly Car Allowance From The Board Of Supervisors In Addition To Getting A Free Prius From The South Coast Air Quality Management District, Drawing Union Criticism.** “Board of Supervisors Chairman Shawn Nelson zips around town in a silver Toyota Prius - a \$44,000 plug-in hybrid - which he gets to drive for free. Nelson gets the 2012 Prius - and got a natural gas Honda Civic before that, and a hydrogen fuel cell Honda FCX Clarity before that - because he's the Orange County board's representative on the South Coast Air Quality Management District, a separate agency charged with keeping Southern California air breathable. Nelson and other AQMD reps pilot those late-model advanced-technology cars so they can be ‘clean air ambassadors’ when they meet constituents around town. [...] Nelson also collects a \$765 car allowance from the County of Orange every month - \$9,180 per year - even though the Prius he usually drives costs him nothing. Nelson doesn't appear to be breaking any rules, but taking both the AQMD car and the county auto allowance has raised the ire of union officials. Labor leaders say the supervisors' benefits are excessive, considering they ask rank-and-file employees to take little or no pay raises.” [Orange County Register, 2/15/14]

**Nelson Said That “It’s A Legitimate Question” Whether He Should Get A Car Allowance And A Free Prius, But Said, “I’m Not Making Any Apologies. I Drive A BMW. I Have A Nice Car. I Could Be Taken**

**Off The AQMD Board Any Minute.”** “Nelson said ‘it’s a legitimate question’ whether the AQMD representative should get a car allowance, if he or she automatically gets a clean-air vehicle. He pays for his own gas, but charges the district for some maintenance, like tires and \$17 car washes. ‘I’m not making any apologies,’ Nelson said about the car allowance. ‘I drive a BMW. I have a nice car. I could be taken off the AQMD board at any minute.’ [...] The district reports board members’ vehicles as taxable fringe benefits, according to AQMD records. Nelson’s car perks were valued between \$2,600 and \$4,200 annually since 2011. On the forms, Nelson reported he drove the cars for personal reasons between 36 percent and 63 percent of the time. In a recent interview, he said he uses the Prius ‘most days.’ [...] Nelson, a lawyer, says he is sacrificing earnings by serving on the Board of Supervisors, so such perks should be taken in perspective. Also, he notes, he declined a county pension. ‘My bonus (as a lawyer) was almost double what my current salary is,’ he said. ‘It’s all part of the big picture. I’m hardly getting away with something here.’” [Orange County Register, 2/15/14]

**Nelson Created A “Shawn Nelson For Supervisor 2018” Committee, Despite Being Ineligible To Run In 2018, In A Possible Attempt To Misperceive Donors**

**2015: Nelson Created A “Shawn Nelson For Supervisor 2018” Campaign Committee, Despite Being Ineligible To Run In 2018 Due To Term Limits.** “It’s not surprising that a campaign committee called ‘Shawn Nelson for Supervisor 2018’ has been raising eyebrows: Orange County Supervisor Nelson is termed out and can’t run for re-election. That hasn’t stopped him from raising money for the account - \$44,000 through the first half of the year, bringing the account balance to \$121,000. Welcome to the wacky world of campaign-finance rules. [...] As for Nelson, he has expressed an interest in being a superior court judge. Those jobs are filled by the governor if a judge retires midterm. Otherwise, they go on the ballot. Nelson said he plans to fill out an application for appointment, but he didn’t rule out a judicial campaign. And he would be able to transfer his supervisorial dough into a judicial account, according to Jay Wierenga, spokesman for the state Fair Political Practices Commission.” [Orange County Register, 12/7/15]

**After Criticism, Nelson Changed His Campaign Committee’s Name Back To “Shawn Nelson For Supervisor 2014,” And Said His Donors Were Aware He Could Not Run Again.** “Nelson said the committee name was changed from ‘Shawn Nelson for Supervisor 2014’ at the recommendation of his treasurer, Jen Slater, because it was no longer a committee for last year’s election. [...] The Political Reform Act requires the committee name to include the candidate’s name, the office sought and the year sought. After the Voice of OC story and criticism from Shirley Grindle, author of the county’s campaign-finance law, Nelson changed the campaign name back to ‘Shawn Nelson For Supervisor 2014.’ Wierenga said no complaint was filed against Nelson. It appears that no punitive action will be pursued. Grindle said that while county law doesn’t address the issue, the committee name could be misleading. Nelson said his donors, some of whom do business with the county, are well aware that he can’t run again.” [Orange County Register, 12/7/15]

**The District Attorney’s Office Cleared Nelson Of Any Wrongdoing Stemming From His Committee Name.** “Last week, District Attorney Tony Rackauckas’ office quietly cleared Nelson of any wrongdoing. But a prominent legal authority and the author of the local law are openly disagreeing with the DA’s position, saying the law prohibits Nelson’s actions. State authorities have already cried foul, saying he couldn’t keep using 2018 in the name because he’s not running for that office. That prompted Nelson to change the year back to 2014 last month. But that doesn’t necessarily get him off the hook. Retroactively changing the name of the committee doesn’t change the fact that he raised the money under the false premise of running for an office he can’t hold, say campaign finance watchdogs.” [Voice Of OC, [1/8/16](#)]

**2017: Nelson Received More Than \$700 Worth Of Beer And Wine After Voting To Award Two Contractors County Contracts**

**2017: Nelson Received More Than \$700 Worth Of Wine And Cigars From Two Contractors After He Voted To Award Them County Contracts And Insisted He Did Not Break The Law Because He Repaid Them Using Campaign Funds.** “Orange County Supervisor Shawn Nelson received more than \$700 worth of wine and cigars from two contractors after he voted to award them county contracts, and his handling of the ‘gifts’ may be a creative way around the county’s gift ban, but a possible violation of state law. Among the items Nelson recently reported was \$539 worth of wine from Potomac Partners, a Washington D.C.-based lobbying firm that won a county contract last year. [...] But during the Board of Supervisors’ public discussion in October, Nelson said Potomac was the strongest choice, and he made the motion and was a deciding vote in the 3-2 decision to pick the firm for a \$1.3 million county contract. [...] On June 30, 2015, McCarthy and Potomac’s president and chief lobbyist under the county contract, Richard Alcalde, each donated \$1,000 to Nelson’s ‘officeholder’ campaign account. Nelson used that same account this year to reimburse them \$708 for the wine and cigars. [...] Nelson said his approach is legal because campaign funds were used to repay the contractors for the items, and because the wine and cigars aren’t for his personal use, but rather for ‘officeholder’ purposes.” [Voice Of OC, [8/16/17](#)]

**2017: Nelson Voted To Award His Campaign Donor A Contract At John Wayne Airport**

**Nelson Was The Board Of Supervisors’ Most Vocal Supporter Of ACI Jet, His Campaign Donor That Was Ranked Fifth Out Of Six For A Lucrative County Contract.** “An intense battle over a lucrative John Wayne Airport lease ratcheted up Tuesday, with promises of legal action after Orange County supervisors granted the lease to a firm that was ranked fifth out of six by the county’s evaluation panel. Two companies, first-ranked Signature Flight Support, which has held the lease for over 20 years, and fifth-ranked ACI Jet, have been locked in an intense competition for the lease to run general aviation services at the airport, which covers everything from corporate jets to small propeller planes. [...] Supervisor Shawn Nelson and several Signature tenants have said at recent board meetings that Signature overcharged customers at John Wayne Airport with fuel prices that far exceed market rates. Signature disputes such claims and alleges supervisors illegally sidestepped bidding rules. None of the supervisors have explained why they chose the No. 5 firm, ACI, instead of a higher-ranked company. [...] Nelson received \$1,000 from ACI supporters [...] Nelson, who’s been the board’s most vocal supporter of ACI, said it was false for Signature to claim the evaluation panels rankings should be followed. When it comes to bid evaluation panels, Nelson said, sometimes they’re just there to give us a guide. Signature isn’t treating all of its customers the same, Nelson said, adding it’s his duty to ensure the airport serves all of its customers fairly.” [Transportation Monitor Worldwide Magazine, 3/3/17]

**Nelson Denied Impropriety In How The Airport Contract Was Awarded.** “Signature’s COO and President Maria Sastre took the company’s allegations further by accusing county supervisors of acting on a biased predisposition to award the contract to a smaller operator such as California-based ACI Jet - which is set to win the contract to replace Signature. [...] Supervisor Shawn Nelson denied that there was any impropriety in how the contract was awarded and framed Signature’s allegations as a last-ditch attempt to reclaim a contract it seems poised to lose. [...] Nelson has accused the companies of abusing a government-created monopoly. When supervisors announced their intent in July to search for alternate contractors, Atlantic’s fuel price quickly dropped by 31 percent, according to Flightaware.com, which tracks information about airports. Signature waited at least three months to drop its price, eventually lowering it by 16 percent around the time applications for the contract were due. Nelson later called the swift price drops ‘an admission’ by the companies. Signature has said that its posted fuel prices accounted for only 5 percent of sales, but Nelson still considered it a problem.” [Chico Enterprise-Record, 2/28/17]

## **2010: The California Fair Political Practices Commission Sent A Warning Letter To Nelson After He Filed A Statement Of Economic Interest 10 Days Late**

**2010: The California Fair Political Practices Commission Sent A Warning Letter To Nelson, Saying That He Violated The Law By Filing A Statement Of Economic Interest 10 Days After The Deadline.** “In an April 6 letter to Nelson, the FPPC said ‘your actions violated the (Political Reform) Act’ because he should have filed his statement by March 12 but ‘only filed your statement on March 22, 2010, after you learned that a sworn complaint (by Grindle) was filed against you.’ There are no fines or other actions associated with warning letters. Nelson, a lawyer and Fullerton city councilman, said today he knew he had to file his annual city conflict form by April 1 and didn’t realize the state had an earlier deadline. ‘I had April 1 in my mind,’ he said. Besides, he added, before the economic interests deadline he spent 45 minutes with the staff of the Orange County Registrar of Voters and they never told him his economic interest statement was missing. ‘Someone there cleared me to go,’ he said. [...] Nelson said that when the FPPC told him his filing was late ‘I faxed it to them that day.’ ‘This letter serves as a written warning,’ it continued. ‘The information in this matter will be retained and may be considered should an enforcement action become necessary based on newly discovered information or future conduct.’” [Voice Of OC, [5/5/10](#)]

## **Nelson’s Law Firm Advertised Services To Alleged Sex Offenders On Its Website**

**A Local Liberal Blog Claimed That Nelson’s Law Firm Was Advertising Services On Its Website To Alleged Sex Offenders, Including Those Accused Of Child Enticement And Child Molestation.** “Using the Wayback Machine at <http://www.web.archives.org> I found the archive of his business website <http://www.rizioandnelson.com>. Below is how Nelson and his law partner describe their work as Southern California Criminal Defense Attorneys. [...] They describe their many areas of practice in helpful categories such as: ‘child abuse, child enticement, child pornography, date rape, failure to register, indecent exposure, internet pornography, lewd/lascivious conduct, marital rape, molestation, obscenity, pandering/pimping, pornography, prostitution, rape, sexual abuse, sexual assault, sexual harassment, statutory rape.’ Let’s take a look deeper at the area of Child Enticement. Here is what [Rizio & Nelson’s website] has to say on the matter. ‘Unfortunately child enticement has an extremely broad definition and it is possible that this charge may be rendered against a person who had no actual criminal intent. Fortunately the prosecution has the burden to prove intent to harm the victim.’” [Liberal OC Blog, [3/11/10](#)]

**Nelson Claimed That He Was Unaware That His Law Firm Was Advertising To Sex Offenders And Said That He Had The Language Removed From The Firm’s Website.** “He’s has been hammered by mailers from Sidhu and unions that call him a ‘seedy’ defense lawyer whose law firm web site solicited business from prostitutes, sex offenders, terrorists and murders. Nelson’s firm has a criminal defense department, and he admits removing that language from his web site. But he says it was there in the first place as a way to get a higher Google ranking on online searches, and he didn’t know about it. And his firm’s clients are not sex offenders or career criminals, he says. They’re your neighbors and family members who get in trouble for ‘small potatoes’ crimes.” [Orange County Register, [5/22/10](#)]

**Nelson Claimed He Did Not Own Any Interest In His Law Firm, Despite His Disclosure Form Stating That He Kept An Ownership Stake And An Advertisement From The Firm Referring To Him As “Of Counsel.”** “‘I don’t practice law, I haven’t in five years. I don’t own any interest in the firm anymore,’ said Nelson. Under state disclosure laws, that appears to exempt Nelson from having to reveal any clients of the firm. However, Nelson’s claims appear to contradict his own disclosures, which say he kept an ownership stake in the firm, as well as a recent advertisement by the firm that described him as being ‘of counsel.’ In addition to his income from the law firm, Nelson reported that he has a significant investment in the firm. In addition to his income from the law firm, Nelson reported that he has a significant investment in the firm. His disclosure forms for 2011 through 2014, in particular, state that he owned at least 10 percent of the firm, with his ownership stake valued at between

\$100,000 and \$1 million. In an interview, Nelson insisted his ownership ended when he took office in 2010, which could mean that he filled out the forms inaccurately. [...] Under State Bar rules, 'of counsel' can only be used in a law firm advertisement when the attorney has a 'close, personal, continuous, and regular' relationship with the firm. Asked about his 'of counsel' title, Nelson reiterated that he does no legal work, but is available if the firm needs him. 'I don't work, nor do they ask me. I think for Greg's benefit, he's welcome to use my face in any way,' Nelson said. Of counsel is a very polite way of putting it. I'm available if they need me; phone hasn't been ringing.' A leading government ethics expert says that while elected officials shouldn't be penalized for 'maximizing their honest income,' the ad doesn't seem to pass the 'sniff test.'" [Voice Of OC, [4/30/15](#)]

### **Nelson Recommended Mike Giancola As County Executive, Despite Sexual Harassment Claims**

**Nelson Encouraged Mike Giancola, The Successful Applicant For The Orange County CEO Position, To Apply For The Job.** "Mike Giancola, the county's waste chief, is poised to take the CEO job after 34 years working his way up from a parks groundskeeper. Supervisors will consider a contract with a base salary of \$245,000, less than former CEO Tom Mauk's annual pay of about \$253,000. [...] When the recruitment of Wallar fell apart, county officials took a look within their own ranks for a successor, Orange County Board of Supervisors Chairman Shawn Nelson said. 'We all looked at each other and (Supervisor) Pat Bates and I decided to form our own subcommittee, and we just tried to short-list people we should be interviewing and we hadn't,' Nelson said. In the initial search for a new CEO, the county-hired recruiter only had one internal candidate, Nelson said. Nelson and Bates encouraged Giancola to apply, and he interviewed well, Nelson said. 'We sat down to negotiate terms and he couldn't have been easier to deal with. It's like a dream come true,' Nelson said. Hiring Giancola would send a positive message to county employees, Nelson said.'" [City News Service, 5/7/13]

**Mike Giancola, Who Nelson Recommended For County CEO, Had Previously Been The Subject Of A Lawsuit The County Tried To Settle For \$350,000, Stemming From Accusations That He Demoted And Sexually Harassed A Human Resources Manager.** "One potential hiccup might be that Giancola is the subject of a lawsuit that county officials have tentatively agreed to try to settle for \$350,000. County officials say an independent review of the matter cleared Giancola. The lawsuit involved allegations that Giancola demoted a former human resources manager for refusing to bend county recruitment policies and for the way he handled a sexual harassment case. Nelson said, 'I would hope we put this to bed for the sake of the county. We need to identify a leader and move forward.'" [City News Service, 5/7/13]

**After Nelson Voted To Hire Giancola As CEO, A Superior Court Judge Dismissed The Sexual Harassment Suit Against Giancola, Citing An Outside Investigation That Found No Substantiation For The Harassment Claims.** "A Superior Court judge in Santa Ana on Tuesday dismissed a lawsuit a former county Waste & Recycling Agency employee brought against county CEO Mike Giancola. Kathleen Tahilramani, who had worked as the waste agency's Human Resources manager, alleges she was retaliated against and harassed by the office's then-director, Giancola. Judge John C. Gastelum granted the county's motion for summary judgment in full, and Tahilramani has 60 days to appeal the decision, according to a statement from county spokeswoman Jean Pasco. The county Board of Supervisors, which appointed Giancola the CEO on May 7, had denied he did anything wrong as the Waste & Recycling Agency director and praised his 34 years of county service after an outside investigation found no substantiation for any of Tahilramani's claims, Pasco states.'" [OC Weekly, [10/23/13](#)]

### **Nelson Criticized A Grand Jury Report That Found The County Had A Culture Of Sexual Harassment**

**Nelson Criticized A Grand Jury Report That Found That The County Had A "Culture" Of Sexual Harassment, Calling The Jury "Completely Irresponsible" And Arguing That Officials Had Undertaken Sweeping Reforms.** "An Orange County grand jury today released a report arguing that there's been a 'culture' of

sexual harassment in the workplace that ultimately led to sex charges filed against former county executive and Santa Ana Councilman Carlos Bustamante. The grand jury ‘identified a disturbing pattern of sexual harassment claims being overlooked, ignored, poorly investigated, and even suppressed,’ it said in its report. [...] Orange County Board of Supervisors Chairman Shawn Nelson criticized the report, arguing that officials have undertaken sweeping reforms since Bustamante’s arrest. [...] ‘I think the grand jury is completely irresponsible, and in many cases purposefully half-informed,’ Nelson said. All the county leaders in charge at the time of the allegations against Bustamante have left the county, Nelson said. Also, county officials have changed the way sexual harassment claims are reported and investigated, he added. ‘Those people are all gone,’ Nelson said. ‘And you couldn’t make more sweeping changes.’ [...] ‘This particular grand jury is almost purposefully irresponsible, or they’re just intellectually lazy,’ Nelson said. ‘They’re more interested in sensationalizing a headline.’” [City News Service, 5/8/13]

**2013: Following A Lawsuit By Orange County’s Former Equal Employment Opportunity Official Alleging A Climate Of Discrimination And Harassment, Nelson Claimed That He Had Spearheaded A Complete Reorganization Of The Department.** “Paula Kitchen, Orange County government’s former equal employment opportunity official, alleges in a lawsuit filed last week that the county’s 17,000 employees work in a toxic environment of sexual harassment and discrimination, fueled by a decades-long practice of pushing political aides into the county’s bureaucracy. [...] Supervisors’ Chairman Shawn Nelson declined comment on the specifics of the Kitchen lawsuit but defended the county’s human resources department, saying that he spearheaded a complete reorganization of the department. Nelson and Supervisor Pat Bates co-chaired a supervisors’ subcommittee last year that reviewed a highly critical audit of the department by Danley, who was then the county’s performance auditor.” [Voice Of OC, [8/1/13](#)]

#### **June 2010: Nelson, His Wife, And His Business Partner Defaulted On A \$354,128 Loan**

**June 2010: Nelson, His Wife, And His Business Partner Defaulted On A \$354,128 Loan.** On 6/10/10, Robert S. Nelson and his wife Sharon F. Nelson, as well as his business partner Gregory G. Rizio and Ericka M. Rizio, defaulted on a \$354,128 loan for a site located at 3890 10<sup>th</sup> Street Riverside, California 92501-3520 in Riverside County. The final judgement amount was \$350,450 and the lender was Wells Fargo. The trustee was WT Capital Lender Services and the parcel number was 215-091-001, listed for commercial use with a land value of \$116,962 and an improvement value of \$539,473. [Nexis Bankruptcy, Judgments, & Liens search, accessed 1/19/18]

*NOTE: The Notice of Default is available for purchase on the Riverside County Recorder website.*

#### **2010: Nelson Was Sued By The Owner Of A Martini Bar That He Previously Owned A Partial Ownership Stake In For Allegedly Misrepresenting The Business**

**2010: After Being Sued By The New Owner Of A Martini Bar, Nelson Claimed That He Had Sold His Partial Ownership Stake In The Establishment.** “A Fullerton councilman seeking a seat on the Board of Supervisors faces a \$285,000 lawsuit over a martini bar. The suit against Shawn Nelson alleging fraud and breach of contract stems from a stock sale involving the Sky Lounge in Brea. The plaintiff, Damian McLawhorn, is demanding more than a quarter-million dollars he contends he paid Nelson and two other defendants for 50 percent ownership in the business. McLawhorn alleges they misrepresented the business, saying it had a license to host disc jockeys and provide entertainment when it did not. Also being sued are Nelson’s law partner, Greg Rizio, and Fullerton businessman Sean Francis. Nelson said the allegations of fraud and breach of contract in the suit amount to a political shakedown. [...] ‘He wanted to stick a dagger in me, and he did,’ Nelson said. ‘I think he roped me in there thinking I would put pressure on the other guys or be forced to deal with him. I think he was hoping with the suit to shake me down. I’m just not going to let him do it. The unfortunate thing is that anybody can file a lawsuit for any reason.’ Nelson said he got rid of his partial ownership of the Sky Lounge venture by selling all his stock in it to McLawhorn more than a year ago.” [Orange County Register, 4/17/10]

**The Lawsuit Against Nelson Was Dismissed on 7/28/10.** [Orange County Superior Court Civil Case Access Search, Case No. 00375890, accessed [1/23/18](#)]

**Nelson Voted To Block The Orange County Health Care Agency From Seeking A Federal Grant Because It Would Have Been Funded By The Affordable Care Act**

**2012: Nelson Voted To Block The Orange County Health Care Agency From Seeking A Federal Grant Because It Would Have Been Funded By The Affordable Care Act.** “Orange County’s Board of Supervisors has blocked the county’s Health Care Agency from seeking more than \$10 million in federal grants because some board members see the money as tainted by ‘Obamacare.’ [...] ‘I’m taking the posture that if it’s anything to do with, I’ll use the term Obamacare, I’m going to be a no,’ board Chairman John Moorlach said from the dais during last week’s board meeting, explaining that he was ‘trying to reflect the mood of my (board) majority.’ Moorlach was joined by supervisors Patricia Bates and Shawn Nelson in voting to put a retroactive kibosh on an application that the Health Care Agency had submitted (it will now be withdrawn) for an American Public Health Association grant called ‘The Power of Policy: Innovation to Improve Health.’” [Orange County Register, [3/7/12](#)]

**On His Campaign Website, Nelson Posted A Piece From A Conservative Blog Praising His Vote, Titled “Stopping Obamacare’s Implementation With Local Government.”** [Shawn Nelson For Supervisor Website, [3/12/12](#)]

**Nelson Objected To The Use Of The Word Latino In The Name Of A Group That Applied For A County Mental Services Contract**

**2011: During A Debate About Awarding A Contract To A Nonprofit Called Latino Health Access, Nelson Questioned The Use Of The Word Latino In The Group’s Name And Said, “Unless This Agency Wants To Rename Itself, I Have No Interest In Supporting This Kind Of Approach.”** “This week, county Supervisor John Moorlach held up more than \$1.5 million in funding for a mental health services contract because the nonprofit that administers the service uses a Spanish word, promotora, instead of ‘health care worker.’ [...] That piqued the interest of Supervisor Shawn Nelson, who wondered aloud why the program uses a Spanish name if it serves a countywide population. Nelson then also questioned why Latino is used in the name of the nonprofit. Nelson called the name ‘ridiculous’ and added that ‘unless this agency wants to rename itself, I have no interest in supporting this kind of approach.’ Latino Health Access is a nonprofit offering health access programming throughout Orange County’s central core, specializing in reaching populations that health care workers have had problems reaching. [...] That multicultural twist appeared to put supervisors in an odd mood. When the next Health Care Agency item came up — a \$1-million contract for outreach to the Vietnamese Community — the entire board went silent. There wasn’t even a second to Campbell’s motion to move the item forward.” [OC Weekly, [6/10/11](#)]

**Nelson Called For The Removal Of A Chicano Mural, Claiming It Validated Gang Activity**

**2008: As Fullerton City Councilmember, Nelson Called For The Removal Of A Mural Depicting A Low-Rider Car And Said That The Mural Validates Gang Activity.** “A police update on gang activity in Fullerton prompted Councilman Shawn Nelson on Tuesday to call for the immediate removal of the mural on the Lemon Street pedestrian overpass south of Valencia Drive. Nelson said the mural inscription, ‘The Town I Live In,’ with its picture of a low-rider car makes it appear that the city validates ‘that kind of activity’ often linked to gangs. He said some gang-types have the inscription tattooed on their bodies. Councilman Don Bankhead said he was a young police officer when the area’s low-rider car club started as law-abiding citizens. But police now say the group morphed into the Fullerton Toker Town gang, which has the most members of the three documented gangs in the city. Nelson made

the recommendation for the mural's removal toward the end of the meeting. No action was taken." [Orange County Register, [4/2/08](#)]

**Los Angeles Times Op-Ed: Nelson's Mural Proposal "Embodies Orange County's Long-Standing Hostility Whenever Its Chicano Communities Try To Commemorate Their Long-Neglected Past Via Public Art."** "Last week, Fullerton City Councilman Shawn Nelson stated during a council meeting that the city should remove a set of 1970s-era murals on a pedestrian overpass spanning a stretch of Lemon Street just south of Valencia Drive. Nelson claimed that the depictions -- classic lowriders, sultry girls in sombreros and fedoras, stylish pachucos and the Virgin of Guadalupe -- might make people think Fullerton sanctions gang activity. The words 'The Town I Live In,' currently emblazoned on a stairwell, are also dangerous, Nelson said; he's seen gang members sporting them as tattoos. Rubbing out those murals, Nelson insisted, would help the city combat juvenile delinquency. [...] But the councilman's argument isn't what interests me so much as the way Nelson embodies Orange County's long-standing hostility whenever its Chicano communities try to commemorate their long-neglected past via public art." [Los Angeles Times, Gustavo Arellano Op-Ed, [4/16/08](#)]

**Nelson Apologized For His Mural Statement, Calling His Remarks "A Poor Choice Of Words."**

"Councilman Shawn Nelson, whose suggestion to remove the murals on the Lemon Street overpass drew an outcry from the neighborhood, apologized at Tuesday's council meeting for what he called 'a poor choice of words.' Nelson's remarks at the April 1 council meeting followed a police department gang report. He said the artworks could be construed as representative of gang activity. During public comment on Tuesday, Nelson and Mayor Sharon Quirk said they met with some of the concerned Latinos and out of the dialogue agreed that the focus should move toward establishing a program with youths, parents, churches and community groups to help at-risk children." [Orange County Register, [5/7/08](#)]

### **2018: Nelson Formed A Committee To Run For Orange County Superior Court Judge And Later Announced His Congressional Campaign**

**January 2018: Nelson Announced His Congressional Campaign After Rep. Ed Royce's Retirement.** "The latest to jump into the fray are Orange County Supervisor Shawn Nelson and former state Senator Bob Huff. [...] Nelson is facing being forced from elective office at the end of the year by term limits. He had been hunting for a Superior Court seat in which to run, but even then he might have to share the ballot with an assistant district attorney -- and candidates with that ballot title are difficult to defeat. The 4th Supervisor District -- which Nelson has represented since 2010 -- covers much of CD39. Nelson also has roots in the district, having served as a Fullerton City Councilmember before moving up to the Board of Supervisors." [Anaheim Blog, [1/10/18](#)]

**Prior To His Congressional Campaign Announcement, Nelson Planned To Run For Superior Court.** "Nelson will shut down a 2018 committee he opened to campaign for an Orange County Superior Court judgeship, according to his campaign consultant, John Thomas." [Los Angeles Times, [1/10/18](#)]

### **2016: Nelson Declared His Campaign For Superior Court And Later Dropped Out**

**2016: Nelson Filed Paperwork Declaring His Intent To Run For Orange County Superior Court Judge Office No. 40.** "Orange County Supervisor Shawn Nelson filed paperwork this week declaring his intent to run for a Superior Court judgeship - a campaign that could cause him to vacate his board seat prematurely if he wins. Nelson is set to term out from his board seat in 2018 and has publicly expressed his desire to run at some point for a judicial seat. On Monday, he filed paperwork to run for Superior Court Judge Office No. 40, a position up for grabs in the upcoming June primary election. [...] Campaign finance documents show Nelson raised \$105,780 last year in his supervisorial account, bringing his account balance to \$162,832 by year's end. That money can be transferred to his run for the vacated judicial seat." [Orange County Register, 2/11/16]

**Nelson Dropped Out Of The Superior Court Race Less Than Two Months After Announcing His Intent To Run.** “County Supervisor Shawn Nelson, who surprised many observers in February by filing paperwork to run for a Superior Court judgeship, is no longer a candidate in the June primary. County Registrar of Voters Neal Kelley confirmed through an aide Thursday that Nelson is not running for the judicial race. March 11 was the deadline to file candidacy statements and other documents. Nelson declined to comment when reached by phone for this story. If Nelson had stayed in the judicial race this year and won, to take office he would have had to resign his supervisor post more than two years before his term is up and trigger an election for his open seat on the Board of Supervisors.” [Voice Of OC, [4/7/16](#)]

#### **2014: Nelson Was Re-Elected As Chair Of The Board Of Supervisors By A 3 To 2 Vote**

**2014: Nelson Was Re-Elected By Colleagues As Chair Of The Orange County Board Of Supervisors By A 3 To 2 Vote.** “The Orange County Board of Supervisors was facing a changing of the guard Tuesday, with the body expected to choose a new chair and vice chair for the year. Instead, citing a need for continuity in contract negotiations with the county's biggest labor unions, Supervisor Patricia Bates asked to hang on to her place as the board's vice chairwoman, allowing Supervisor Shawn Nelson to serve another year as chairman. Bates, who represents the board's District 5, said that in this ‘unique year,’ the board would benefit from the stability afforded by Nelson. [...] Nelson said that while it was a bit of an ‘awkward’ situation, ‘I want to serve, and commit to doing the best I can.’ Nelson and Bates kept their posts with a 3-2 vote. Spitzer and Moorlach dissented.” [Daily Pilot, 1/29/14]

#### **2011: Nelson Was Named Chair Of The Southern California Regional Rail Authority, Metrolink**

**2011: Nelson Was Named Chair Of The Southern California Regional Rail Authority, Metrolink.** “Southern California's troubled rail agency, Metrolink, has a new board chairman: Orange County Supervisor Shawn Nelson. Nelson's appointment, approved unanimously by the agency's governing board Friday, comes as the rail agency continues to struggle with broken ticket machines, run-down trains and questions over its financial management. [...] Nelson said his first two orders of business will be getting a mobile phone ticket app functional, ‘so people don't have to deal with all these broken ticket machines,’ and hiring a new CEO. The supervisor hasn't always been this hopeful about Metrolink's prospects - he even suggested rail services might be run by another agency in October. But now he is convinced that his fellow board members at Metrolink ‘understand the problem and are willing to come to the table.’ ‘I would not waste my time if I didn't believe it could be fixed,’ Nelson said.” [Orange County Register, 1/11/15]

#### **November 2010: Nelson Was Elected To His First Full Term On The Board Of Supervisors**

**November 2010: Nelson Was Elected To His First Full Term On The Orange County Board Of Supervisors Despite Criticism Over His Decision To Accept The Most Generous County Pension And His Brash Demeanor.** “Fourth District Supervisor Shawn Nelson appeared to be heading to another victory Tuesday night, over Anaheim City Councilman Harry Sidhu, to keep his seat for the next four years. [...] Much of the squabbling in the supervisor's race focused on Nelson's decision to sign up for the most generous county pension after he campaigned his way to a June primary win on an anti-pension platform. Sidhu, who still had the backing of the deputies' union this time around, but not their money, called Nelson a hypocrite. He sent out glossy mailers with a caricature of Nelson with his hand caught in the cookie jar. After being criticized for his pension choice, Nelson discovered he signed the pension paperwork before he was officially sworn in to his new post June 22. That loophole was enough for Orange County Employee Retirement Systems to negate his pension selection. Nelson, whose brash style on the dais has already won him friends and enemies, then threatened to sue Sidhu if he claimed he had a county pension.” [Orange County Register, 11/3/10]

## **Nelson Called Himself “The Grandfather Of The Tea Party In Orange County”**

**2010: Nelson Called Himself “The Grandfather Of The Tea Party In Orange County” And Said That He Organized A 2009 Rally To Burn Copies Of Gov. Schwarzenegger’s Movies To Protest State Government Spending.** “Nelson rejects the notion that Sidhu, 52, can represent the district and thinks he’ll capture tea-party voters. ‘As far as I know, I’m the grandfather of the tea party in Orange County,’ he says, noting that in 2009, he organized a rally to burn copies of Arnold Schwarzenegger’s movies to protest state government spending. ‘Shawn is certainly the candidate of the tea-party movement,’ said Chris Thompson, a conservative resident of the Fourth District and self-described tea-party ‘sympathizer’ who has volunteered to campaign for Nelson. An entrepreneur who calls Sidhu ‘not ideologically pure’ and Galloway ‘basically dumb,’ Thompson, also believes that ‘if Shawn kicks ass, that will certainly imply that the tea-party movement has had some significant traction.’ ‘These people are saying, ‘I’m tired of this. What did I do wrong?’ Nelson says. ‘I’ve just been working hard, and now I’m wondering why my president is trying to blame me. How much is expected of me? They’re trying to redistribute wealth. Aren’t I already doing my share? We are the ones pulling the wagon. Why whip us? Enough already!’” [OC Weekly, [5/27/10](#)]

## **2004: Nelson Was Unanimously Elected Mayor By The Fullerton City Council**

**2004: Nelson Was Unanimously Elected Mayor By The Fullerton City Council.** “In a selection process that took less than one minute, Shawn Nelson was chosen mayor and Leland Wilson mayor pro tem by unanimous votes Tuesday night. Councilman Dr. Richard Jones nominated Nelson while Councilman Don Bankhead put Wilson’s name on the ‘ballot.’ [...] ‘This (serving as mayor) is a dream; this is my childhood home,’ Nelson said. ‘I’m a graduate of Sunny Hills High School, and I will do everything to make the city proud.’” [Fullerton News Tribune, 12/9/04]

## **2002: Nelson Was Elected To The Fullerton City Council**

**Nelson Said He Ran For Fullerton City Council Because He “Wanted To Be The Business Person Who Could See Things Like A Business Person Would.”** “Nelson said he decided to run in June 2002 when he learned that Norby would run for supervisor. ‘I didn’t have a lot of issues with Norby’s policies, but he could have been more diplomatic to get council members to vote with him on city issues,’ he reflected. ‘I believe that over time there were council members who voted against an issue because they did not want to vote with Norby. But the people were behind him, and I was supportive.’ ‘Chris [Norby] and I see a limited role of government and power of individual issues the same,’ Nelson continued. ‘When I got on the council, I wanted to be the business person who could see things like a business person would. I wanted to relate to small and mid-size business owners.’” [Orange County Register, 11/6/03]

## **Nelson Developed A Reputation As Outspoken And Brash**

**Nelson Developed A Reputation As Outspoken And Occasionally Brash.** “Shawn Nelson, first elected in 2010, is the only incumbent county supervisor defending his seat this year. He’s drawn a single challenger, Rudy Gaona, in the contest for District 4, which reaches from Brea to Anaheim. As outspoken and occasionally brash as Nelson is, his first term as county supervisor has been largely uncontroversial. Nelson, 47, has gained the reputation among some public employee union leaders as being the one supervisor who will meet with them individually and hear them out. But while he’ll consider suggestions that will make the county run more smoothly, he’s stood tough on employee contract negotiations and has been an advocate for having employees covering all the cost of their pensions. Nelson himself has declined to participate in the county-supplemented public pension program available to supervisors.” [Orange County Register, 5/29/14]

## **2010: Nelson Said That He Did Not “Intend To Stay In The Political Arena”**

**2010: Nelson Said “I Don’t Intend To Stay In The Political Arena” And Insisted He Was Not Using The Supervisor Role As A Stepping Stone For Higher Office.** “Nelson insisted he does not consider the supervisor job as a stepping stone to higher office. ‘I really have done this in the middle of my life because I believe I can make a difference,’ Nelson said. ‘I want to make a difference and then I want to go right back to what I was doing before... I don't intend to stay in the political arena.’ And he said he was not doing it for the money. ‘My pay is less than my bonus last year’ as an attorney, Nelson said.” [City News Service, 11/2/10]

## **2016: Nelson Introduced A Failed Proposal To Place A Countywide Initiative On The Ballot To Change Term Limits, Drawing Criticism That The Proposal Was For His Own Benefit**

**Nelson Introduced A Failed Proposal To Place A Countywide Initiative On The Ballot To Change Supervisor Term Limits From A Ban On More Than Two Consecutive Terms To A Lifetime Limit Of Three Consecutive Terms.** “County Supervisor Shawn Nelson on Tuesday dropped his proposal to alter supervisors' term limits, saying he still thinks the change would have been beneficial but that the idea faced too much opposition. ‘I was trying to fix something for the good of the people who live here,’ Nelson said. ‘A lot of people were taking an opportunity to hijack the purpose of the measure, and that wasn't what I got involved in this for.’ Nelson's proposal would have placed a countywide initiative on the November ballot asking voters to institute a lifetime limit of three four-year terms for supervisors, which could have been served consecutively.” [Orange County Register, 7/28/16]

**Nelson Was Criticized By Supervisor Todd Spitzer And Republican Activist Jon Fleischman, Who Claimed Nelson Proposed The Term Limit Change To Get Another Term In Office.** “Currently, supervisors can serve only two consecutive terms but there is no lifetime limit. [...] Supervisor Todd Spitzer and Republican activist Jon Fleischman have publicly opposed the proposal, saying they thought Nelson was using it as a vehicle to get another term in office.” [Orange County Register, 7/28/16]

**Nelson Argued That His Term Limit Proposal Would Allow Supervisors To Serve Long Enough To Wield Their Experience And Said That He Planned To Run For Judge, Not Supervisor, In 2018.** “Supervisor Shawn Nelson, who proposed the initiative three weeks ago, has argued that the new term limits would allow supervisors to serve long enough to wield their experience, while preventing politicians from jumping to the statehouse and back. [...] The change would allow Nelson, who is otherwise set to be termed out in 2018, to run for an additional term. But Nelson said he plans to run for judge, not supervisor, that year. The initiative would work around the state law, Nelson said, by keeping the current ordinance intact. Instead, supervisors will vote to add an ordinance to the county's municipal code. He said County Counsel Leon Page has supported the ordinance and its legality in a written opinion, which Nelson said he will ask his colleagues to vote to release today.” [Orange County Register, 7/26/16]

## **Nelson Was A Lifetime Member Of The National Rifle Association**

**Nelson Was a Lifetime Member Of The National Rifle Association.** [OC Weekly, [4/14/11](#)]

## **Nelson Applied For A Concealed Carry Permit**

**2011: Nelson Said He Applied For A Concealed Carry Permit Because “There Are Nutty Guys Out There And I Speak My Mind.”** “Now, Orange County Supervisor Shawn Nelson, a lifetime member of the National Rifle Association, wants one too. ‘I don't have a pressing need [for a CCW],’ Nelson told me today. ‘I don't fear walking out of the building. And I'm not asking for one because I'm an important person, but I want to be smart about reality. There are nutty guys out there and I speak my mind.’ [...] More recently, the supervisor said his

office has received ‘occasional threats--including one guy who came close to going nutty.’ According to the Fullerton resident, he's already taken all the necessary gun training courses and, once Sheriff Sandra Hutchens formally issues him a permit, will carry a semi-automatic Colt Commander .45 caliber handgun. Any future lunatic should be warned. Said Nelson, ‘I’m a pretty good shot.’” [OC Weekly, [4/14/11](#)]

**Nelson Said That Law Abiding Citizens Who Go Through Training Should Be Allowed To Have A Concealed Carry Permit**

**Nelson Said That Law Abiding Citizens Who Go Through Training Should Be Allowed To Have A Concealed Carry Permit.** “Every law-abiding citizen who wants to carry a concealed weapon and is willing to go through the training should be allowed to have one, 4th District Supervisor Shawn Nelson told Total Buzz. Nelson, a longtime shooter and self-acknowledged button-pusher, is now in pursuit of his own concealed weapons permit – just in case. He’s also, he told us, a pretty decent shot. ‘I’m in the limelight. I walk on the edge of controversy constantly,’ said Nelson. [...] ‘We get wingnuts all the time,’ Nelson said. [Supervisor John] Moorlach wrote one of Nelson’s letters of recommendations in support of his CCW application – but he nor the other supervisors carry a concealed weapon. ‘I just felt it was prudent to do it when there wasn’t an emergency,’ Nelson said. ‘God forbid if something happens, I’ll be prepared.’” [Orange County Register, 4/18/11]

**2010: Nelson Opposed A Proposed High Speed Rail Project**

**Nelson Letter To The Editor: Proposed High Speed Rail Project Would Enrich Consultants, “Ruin Many Neighborhoods,” And Duplicate Services.** “I have been struck lately by the supporters of the high-speed rail and their seeming lack of common sense when it comes to problem-solving. My observations have led me to believe that the current leadership of the program has become more focused on getting a pot of government gold to spend (the more the merrier) and enriching the myriad players involved in the process. By ignoring existing opportunities to run the rail project on existing Metrolink and Amtrak lines, the current design for the HSR to run from Anaheim to Los Angeles provides a windfall to those in the consulting industry by requiring countless hours for public outreach and environmental impact study. [...] The road we are on now is going to exhaust all the funding available at the state and federal levels, enrich a few well-connected consultants, ruin many neighborhoods that don’t need disturbing and accomplish virtually nothing but duplication of service already provided. Why can’t common sense have a place at the table? Government doesn’t have to be the home of poor execution, but in order to get results that are good for the citizens we need to demand accountability before it is too late.” [Orange County Register, Shawn Nelson Letter To The Editor, [4/9/10](#)]

**Personal Political Donations**

According to the California Secretary of State Cal-Access contribution search, Shawn Nelson has given a combined \$495 to a conservative women’s PAC, a Republican Assembly candidate, and a non-partisan PAC. His wife, Sharon, gave \$100 to the campaign of Young Kim for State Assembly. Kim is also seeking the 39<sup>th</sup> Congressional District seat.

<b>Shawn Nelson Political Giving History - State</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Candidate (Office Sought) or Committee</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Amount</b>
8/26/16	Ofelia Velarde Garcia For Assembly 2016 (AD-69)	R	\$250
10/14/15	League of California Cities CITIPAC	N/A	\$145
4/21/09	California Women’s Leadership Association PAC	R	\$100
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$495</b>

[California Secretary of State Cal-Access contribution search, accessed 1/19/18]

<b>Sharon F. Nelson Political Giving History - State</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Candidate (Office Sought) or Committee</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Amount</b>
10/29/15	Young Kim For State Assembly (AD-65)	R	\$100
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$100</b>

[California Secretary of State Cal-Access contribution search, accessed 1/19/18]

According to an FEC individual contribution search, Shawn Nelson gave \$1,500 to Ed Royce's 2006 congressional campaign and \$2,300 to Mitt Romney's 2008 presidential campaign. His wife, Sharon, also gave \$2,300 to the Romney 2008 campaign.

<b>Shawn Nelson Political Giving History - Federal</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Candidate/Committee</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Amount</b>
3/21/07	Romney For President	R	\$2,300
8/16/06	Ed Royce For Congress	R	\$1,000
6/7/05	Ed Royce For Congress	R	\$500
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,800</b>

[FEC, individual contribution, accessed 1/18/18]

<b>Sharon F. Nelson Political Giving History - Federal</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Candidate/Committee</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Amount</b>
3/21/07	Romney For President	R	\$2,300
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,300</b>

[FEC, individual contribution, accessed 1/18/18]

## **Endorsements**

### **2018: Nelson Was Endorsed By The California Republican Assembly In His Congressional Campaign**

**Nelson Was Endorsed By The California Republican Assembly.** "Nelson said, 'I'm honored that Orange County's oldest and most prestigious Conservative organization has chosen me to lead the Party to success in June and going forward in the midterms. They understand the importance of uniting behind a proven Conservative fighter to hold this seat.' He continued, 'Illegal immigration poses a threat to America. As your Representative, I will work tirelessly to tighten our border security. The first step will be building the wall. And I'll fight against dangerous sanctuary city laws that threaten public safety. Americans will come first.'" [Shawn Nelson For Congress press release, [3/19/18](#)]

**The California Republican Assembly Opposed Marriage Equality And Abortion Rights, And Believed In Christian Scripture As The "Guiding Force Of Moral Law."** "We believe in the guiding force of moral law as expressed by the Judeo-Christian ethic and contained in the Holy Scriptures of these historic faiths. [...] We believe that the traditional American family, defined as any persons related by blood, marriage of a man and a woman and/or adoption, is the cornerstone of our American society, and the government is duty bound to protect the integrity of the family unit through legislation and taxation policies. [...] We believe that the preborn child is a human being deserving the full protection of the law." [California Republican Assembly, accessed [3/21/18](#)]

---

**2018: Nelson Was Endorsed By Rep. Dana Rohrabacher In His Congressional Campaign**

---

**Dana Rohrabacher Endorsed Nelson's Congressional Campaign.** "It's an honor to receive the endorsement from @DanaRohrabacher. I fully intend to build on this momentum in the next days as the Conservative leader you can trust." [Shawn Nelson, Twitter, [1/16/18](#)]

---

**2018: Nelson Was Endorsed By Assemblyman Phillip Chen In His Congressional Campaign**

---

**Assemblyman Phillip Chen Endorsed Nelson's Congressional Campaign.** "I'm very grateful to have @PhillipChenCA's endorsement. We still have challenges that require a fighter in Washington. I will be that fighter. I'll bring my experience to Congress to tackle the toughest challenges. #CA39 #OC" [Shawn Nelson, Twitter, [1/16/18](#)]

---

**2010: Nelson Was Endorsed By Rep. Ed Royce And Then-State Senator Mimi Walters**

---

**2010: Nelson Was Endorsed By Rep. Ed Royce And Then-State Senator Mimi Walters In His Campaign For Supervisor.** "'With government at all levels facing tough budget decisions, the people of the 4th District will be well served by having a proven budget hawk and taxpayer advocate representing them on the Board of Supervisors,' said Senator Walters. [...] 'I am proud to have the support of Senator Walters, a recognized champion for taxpayers and property owners,' said Nelson, who is also supported by United States Representative Ed Royce.'" [Shawn Nelson Campaign Press Release, [8/19/09](#)]

---

**2010: The Orange County GOP Endorsed Nelson Over His GOP Opponent**

---

**2010: Nelson Was Endorsed By The Orange County GOP After Pledging To Not Accept Money From Unions And Promising To End A Defined-Benefit Program For County Workers.** "Both took the no-union-money pledge. But as Baugh described it, Nelson was unequivocal that the days of a defined-benefit program for county workers are over. Sidhu was less certain. Also, Nelson would let the lawsuit in which the county is attempting to eliminate some retroactive pension benefits play out in appellate court, while Sidhu says he would drop it. The GOP endorsed Nelson." [Orange County Register, 6/3/10]

---

**2010 And 2014: Orange County Register Endorsed Nelson**

---

**June 2010 Editorial: Citing His Stance On Pensions, The Orange County Register Endorsed Nelson In The Special Election For Supervisor.** "Given the pension reform criteria, of the three leading candidates - Fullerton Councilman Shawn Nelson and Anaheim Council members Lorri Galloway and Harry Sidhu - Mr. Nelson is the best choice. Mr. Nelson stated a commitment to reforming county public employee pensions, saying he would support moving new employees into a defined-contribution plan. He has pledged not to accept union campaign money and did not meet with public employee union leaders for their potential endorsement, sending a message that he will not be a pawn for union interests. Most importantly, he has pledged to continue appealing the board's lawsuit challenging the 2001 retroactive pension increase. If the board prevails, it would have statewide and national implications for pension reform." [Orange County Register, Editorial, 6/3/10]

**2014 Editorial: Orange County Register Endorsed Nelson And Cited His "Willingness To Defend The Taxpayer From The Dais And From Across The Negotiating Table With The County's Public Employee Unions."** "In reality, it would be hard for anyone to earn our endorsement over Supervisor Nelson's commendable record, and that is why this editorial board is endorsing his quest to finish the county's business left undone. Supervisor Nelson continues to follow through on the promises he made to voters when he was first elected to the board in 2010. And he has shown a willingness to defend the taxpayer from the dais and from across the negotiating

table with the county's public employee unions. Similarly, Supervisor Nelson has fought the encroachment of nanny-state style governance in the county, opposing proposals like the countywide social host ordinance that have made him a voice of the liberty-minded - a voice we are happy to have on the board.” [Orange County Register, Editorial, 4/28/14]

---

## **2010: The Fullerton Police Officers Association Opposed Nelson**

---

**The Fullerton Police Officers Association Called Nelson A “Liar” And A “Typical Politician” And Endorsed His Opponent In The November 2010 Election.** “Nelson won the endorsement of the Fullerton Police Officers Association in 2004, but after what the union says was a series of broken promises, their relationship turned sour. The union didn't endorse him in 2008. Now they're backing Sidhu. ‘We just thought he was a liar,’ association President Barry Coffman said of Nelson. ‘He's a typical politician - kissing babies and stealing their lollipops.’” [Orange County Register, 10/31/10]

**The Fullerton Police Officers Sent A Cease-And-Desist Order To Nelson, Claiming That He Misrepresented Police Support For His Campaign.** “Standing to the side at Wednesday’s news conference were the Fullerton Police Officers Association officials who say Nelson is being dishonest regarding who in law enforcement supports him. He’s trying to ‘dupe’ voters into thinking that public safety supports him. And at least in Fullerton, that’s not the case, said Barry Coffman, president of the local officers union. Coffman said Nelson wants it both ways. He’s sought police union support in the past but declined to seek it now because of a Republican Party mandate that no endorsed candidates accept contributions from public unions, including cops and firefighters. Yet in his mailers, he’s showing off old photos of cops and firefighters shaking his hands, Coffman said. And that’s duplicitous, the union argues. [...] Coffman said the union has sent Nelson a ‘cease and desist order,’ which he’s ignored. And the union says it may soon seek a restraining order in court. Nelson disagrees and said he’s tired of public safety unions linking support for cops to their unions. ‘I’m not allowed to support public safety unless I support unions?’ Nelson said. He noted that the photos he’s using in his mailers are his. The cops and firefighters who posed for photos in 2004 knew what they were doing when they stood next to a politician, he said.” [Voice Of OC, [5/27/10](#)]