

LOS ANGELES MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS: IS HOSTILITY TOWARDS TURKS THE CRITERION?

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The Los Angeles Mayoral elections will take place on November 8th, 2022. Two candidates, Karen Bass and Rick Caruso, are running for Los Angeles mayor. Both candidates were put to the test for Turkish hostility by the Armenian National Committee of America - Western Region (ANCA-WR). According to the answers they gave during the survey held in August 2022, both candidates aimed to gain ANCA's sympathy and voter support regarding the issue of anti-Turkish sentiment.

Thus, ANCA stated that as a result of this test, they would determine which of the candidates would be suitable for them in terms of anti-Turkish sentiment and declared that they would direct their support according to the final evaluation of the answers they received from the candidates.

According to the responses given by Karen Bass and Rick Caruso, the positively evaluated candidate will be invited for an interview on the date determined for the face-to-face interview. Ultimately, ANCA will support the candidate, who is considered to be the most anti Turkish, in the elections.

There are 18 questions in the questionnaire directed to the candidates. The questions are generally antagonistic towards Turkey and Azerbaijan. For this reason, the questions deviate extraordinarily from those that would normally be directed to a mayoral candidate. The answers given by the candidates to the questions based on discrimination are also noteworthy. Candidate Rick Caruso said he had Armenian relatives. Candidate Karen Bass stated that she had worked with Armenians before and that she would like to work with more Armenian executives if she took office. They defined the nature of their struggle as "Armenophobia" rather than openly stating that they would generally fight against violence in Los Angeles. In the survey, in which the animosity against Turkey and Azerbaijan was also among the topics, Karen Bass stated that the so-called state Artsakh was occupied by Azerbaijan and that Azerbaijan violated the ceasefire with the support of

Turkey. Apparently, candidate Karen Bass seems to have forgotten that Armenia ruthlessly occupied Azerbaijan 30 years ago. Candidate Rick Caruso also stated that denying the killing of 1.5 million Armenians would never be acceptable and that Los Angeles would not be a shelter for those who deny the 1915 allegations. However, there is an important point that Caruso forgot. The Turks living in Los Angeles have as much freedom of expression as the Armenians. Thus, Candidate Caruso discriminates and argues that a certain group does not have freedom of expression[1].

In summary, ANCA openly encourages hostility and aggression towards a certain section of the electorate through its poll. It should not be forgotten that our diplomats were murdered in Los Angeles not so long ago. Traces of almost all of the murderers were never found again. The only murderer caught was released in 2021 and was merely rewarded by enabling him returning to Armenia. As a matter of fact, this terrorist continues to work to fuel the hatred of Turkey and Turks in Armenia.

It would not be correct to say that anti-Turkish sentiments and/or Islamophobia is limited to the Armenian community in the United States. In this context, it is stated in Justin McCarthys book The Turk in America □□□□□□□□□□ in 2010 that the image of Turkey began forming in a negative way since the early history of the United States. It is emphasized that the New American Republic is a conservative Christian state, despite the principle of secularism in its Constitution. It is stated that very little is known about the religion of Islam except that it is the supposed enemy of Christianity. McCarthy wrote that Americans are justifiably proud of their new democracy, while they think that the Turks have no connection to democracy whatsoever. In short, with limited information, prejudices against Turks continue in the United States[2]. Emphasizing that the state policy of the United States of America is based on religion, Justin McCarthy says that religion is one of the components of the formation of the Turkish image in the United States[3]. Although the title of the book is The Turk in America, American missionaries in the Ottoman Empire laid the foundations of todays United States and its legal systems and propaganda activities were formed according to these missionary activities.

As a result, it is seen that the American people are still being influenced by the results of some observations and propaganda activities in the 1800s. The Los Angeles Municipal elections are on the way to becoming a precedent where this biased approach takes root once again. It is understood that no matter which candidate is elected, he/she will not go beyond being a supporter of Armenian views under the guidance of ANCA.

*Photo: *https://www.presstelegram.com/2022/10/19/survey-la-voters-answer-9-questions-leading-up-to-nov-8-election/*

[1] LA Mayoral Election: ANCA-WR Publishes Candidates Responses to Questionaire, ANCA-WR, 11 October 2022, https://ancawr.org/press-release/la-mayoral-election-anca-wr-publishes-candidates-responses-to-questionnaire/.

[2] Justin McCarthy, The Turk in America Creation of an Enduring Prejudice, The University of Utah Press: Salt Lake City, p. 9.

[3] Ibid, p.9

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