

Los Angeles DSA endorses mayoral candidate Nithya Raman after she abandons call to defund police

Jacob Crosse
3 September 2026

The Los Angeles chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) endorsed City Councilmember Nithya Raman for mayor Wednesday, only months after declining to endorse her in the primary and amid her increasingly open repudiation of the limited reforms she promoted during her first campaign for office.

Raman, a member of the DSA, secured the endorsement with 937 votes in favor, 484 against and 52 abstentions. Although she cleared the DSA's required 60 percent threshold, only 1,473 people participated in the online vote out of a chapter that claims more than 6,000 members.

The endorsement commits the DSA to providing volunteers, canvassers and organizational resources for Raman's campaign against incumbent Democratic Mayor Karen Bass in the November 3 election. Raman will head a slate of nine DSA-endorsed candidates in local and federal races.

The decision is a further exposure of the DSA's role as an auxiliary of the Democratic Party. Raman's campaign is directed toward convincing the Los Angeles financial elite, real estate developers and the police establishment that she can administer the city's deepening social crisis more efficiently than Bass.

This is expressed most clearly in Raman's repudiation of her previous call to "defund the police." Running for the City Council in 2020 amid the mass protests sparked by the police murder of George Floyd, Raman adopted the slogan as millions of workers and youth took to the streets against police violence.

Now seeking the mayor's office, Raman has dispensed with even this limited rhetoric. Asked by CNN's Jessica Dean whether she continued to support reducing police funding, Raman replied immediately,

"No."

"Public safety is incredibly important, and our police force has shrunk significantly," Raman declared.

Raman has attacked Bass's costly agreement with the Los Angeles Police Protective League, but entirely from the standpoint that the hundreds of millions of dollars handed to the notoriously violent Los Angeles Police Department failed to attract and retain enough officers.

"We now have 1,500 fewer officers in LAPD, and we're paying half a billion dollars more per year for them," Raman told CNN in June.

Raman's objection is therefore not to the diversion of immense public resources to the armed body responsible for suppressing the working class and decades of police killings and beatings. She complains that the city has not received enough police officers for its money.

The three other DSA members on the City Council, Hugo Soto-Martínez, Eunisses Hernandez and Ysabel Jurado, have endorsed Bass. Raman herself endorsed Bass shortly before entering the race.

The nominally socialist wing of Los Angeles politics is therefore divided between Raman, a pro-police and pro-developer Democratic Party functionary, and Bass, whose administration has expanded police spending, conducted encampment sweeps and imposed mass layoffs. The division reflects no difference of political principle. It is a conflict between competing factions of the same affluent petty-bourgeois layer over positions and influence within the Democratic Party.

"Our base of left-leaning demo socialists are fed up with the status quo and really want to see a significant

change in how the city is run,” Tal Levy, a member of DSA-LA’s electoral politics committee, told the *Los Angeles Times*. The committee voted only three to two to recommend Raman’s endorsement before the organization-wide vote.

Levy stated that Raman has been less reliable on DSA priorities than the organization’s other elected officials. Nevertheless, he continued, “I think there is near unanimity that she is the better candidate in the race in the general election.”

The claim of “near unanimity” is belied by the vote itself. Nearly one-third of the members who cast ballots opposed the endorsement, while more than three-quarters of the chapter’s claimed membership did not participate.

More revealing is Levy’s admission that Raman’s repeated repudiation of the DSA’s stated positions is no obstacle to her endorsement. His defense of Raman was not based on a socialist program, a principled political record or even adherence to the DSA’s own minimal policies. It was based entirely on the calculation that she was the “better candidate” to defeat Bass.

These are the politics of what is a faction of the Democratic Party. Candidates are judged according to their electoral prospects and usefulness within the existing political establishment. Any program they claim to support can be discarded whenever it conflicts with their ambitions.

This is the same Raman whom DSA-LA censured in early 2024 after she sought and accepted the endorsement of Democrats for Israel-Los Angeles, a pro-Zionist Democratic Party organization. At the time, DSA-LA acknowledged that Raman had accepted support from a group whose unconditional defense of Israel stood in direct opposition to Palestinian liberation.

The censure was politically worthless from the beginning. DSA-LA simultaneously retained its endorsement of Raman and continued mobilizing its members to secure her reelection to the City Council. Two years later, after Raman has moved even further to the right, the organization has elevated her to the top of its citywide electoral slate.

The episode demonstrates the fraudulent character of the DSA and its claim to be a socialist organization. The DSA label is used to hoodwink workers and youth

moving to the left and seeking a socialist solution to the historic crisis of capitalism, expressed in unending war, widening inequality and escalating attacks on democratic rights.

DSA Democrats, no less than their “establishment” counterparts, pursue alliances with Zionists, police organizations, developers and the financial oligarchy. Their entire political orientation is based on preserving capitalism, subordinating the working class to the Democratic Party and blocking the development of an independent revolutionary socialist movement.



To contact the WSW and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact