Los Angeles DSA mayor-elect Nithya Raman reassures the establishment

Isaac de Vries, Alex Diaz
25 November 2026

Nithya Raman, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), will take office on December 14 as mayor of Los Angeles, the second most populous city in the United States. Raman defeated incumbent Democrat Karen Bass by nearly 10 percentage points, a margin of about 111,000 votes. Bass is the first Los Angeles mayor since 2005 to lose a bid for a second term.

These results express the deep anger among youth and working people over rents, homelessness, poverty wages, and the feeble response to the January 2025 Palisades fire, which destroyed nearly 7,000 structures.

The result of the Los Angeles mayoral election was part of a national rebellion at the polls. Ninety percent of voters named the cost of living as their major concern, and nearly 70 percent said the economic system favors the wealthy. The war against Iran and the terror campaign led by Trump's ICE gestapo fueled the election results.

The most significant shift was seen amongst young people. In the final Berkeley IGS/*Los Angeles Times* poll, 69 percent of likely Los Angeles voters ages 18 to 29 supported Raman, compared with 15 percent for Bass. According to research from Tufts University, the Democratic margin among voters under 30 jumped from 14 points in the 2024 House races to 36 this year. Young men, who gave Trump a majority only two years ago, voted 59 percent Democratic, and youth turnout was the second highest for a midterm in three decades. Voters under 30 were more likely than any other age group to rank the cost of living highest in importance, and were the demographic most critical of the war in Iran. According to the Harvard Youth Poll just nine percent of young Americans believe the country is headed in the right direction.

Despite these shifts, young voters have attached themselves to neither party. Gallup found that 56 percent of Generation Z identify as independents, with the swing from Trump in 2024 to the Democrats in 2026 showing a generation searching for an answer within the constraints of the two-party duopoly.

As the Ninth National Congress of the Socialist Equality Party noted in August, "Capitalism's standing among young people has fallen to the lowest level ever recorded." The DSA has been the initial beneficiary as a faction of the Democratic Party whose principal task is to prevent the emergence of an independent political movement of the working class. For a decade it has captured each new wave of opposition, placed its personnel inside the trade union bureaucracy, and promoted the claim that the Democratic Party can be transformed from within.

In her victory speech, Raman praised Bass for giving "decades of her life" to the city and pledged to Bass voters and those who stayed home that she would work "every single day to earn your trust." She then phoned Los Angeles Police Department Chief Jim McDonnell, whom she had promised to replace during her campaign.

Raman called to "defund the police" during her 2020 City Council campaign. As a city councilmember, however, she voted for at least four budgets that increased police funding, and in 2024 she supported McDonnell as chief, despite his record of collaboration with Trump's ICE gestapo in his prior position as Los Angeles County Sheriff.

When asked during her mayoral campaign whether she still supports reduced police funding, she answered, "No."

Under McDonnell's command, LAPD officers attacked peaceful anti-ICE and "No Kings" demonstrators in June 2025 with tear gas, rubber bullets, batons and horses. McDonnell defended these actions recently in a cover-up report to the Police Commission. The LAPD reported spending a staggering $12.14 million on overtime in two weeks during the June 2025 protests.

McDonnell described Raman's call as "positive." At

© World Socialist Web Site

her first post-election press conference Raman declined to comment on whether McDonnell would remain in charge of the 8,500-officer agency, and she later told reporters they were "mending fences."

On November 20, Raman unveiled a 30-member advisory body, "A Committee for the City," to lead her transition. The committee includes billionaires, corporate executives, real estate interests and trade union bureaucrats. Among its members are Evan Spiegel, billionaire co-founder and CEO of Snap Inc.; Nick Pritzker, director of the Anthony Pritzker Family Foundation and heir to a business empire that includes the Hyatt hotel chain; and Jason Oppenheim, founder of a luxury real estate brokerage. Sitting alongside them is Leslie Chang, co-chair of the Los Angeles DSA. They will serve alongside Ada Briceño, co-president of UNITE HERE Local 11, Rafael Jaime, president of UAW Local 4811, and Pete Rodriguez, a senior official of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters.

Mamdani made a similar choice in New York a year earlier. The day after his election, he named veteran Democratic Party operatives to oversee his transition. They included Maria Torres-Springer, who headed the city's Economic Development Corporation under Bill de Blasio and went on to serve as first deputy mayor under Eric Adams. Mamdani also retained Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch.

Mamdani has since met with Trump multiple times and opposed a primary challenge to unseat the deeply unpopular House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries. Mamdani's recent appearance at the *New York Times* DealBook Summit at Lincoln Center, the annual gathering of corporate and banking chiefs, which amounted to a roll call of the oligarchy. Mamdani used the occasion to affirm his commitment to working with Trump.

Jeffries, the Democrats' nominee for House speaker, declared the Democrats "ready, willing and able to find bipartisan common ground." The phony "socialist" Bernie Sanders praised Trump as a "good politician." The *New York Times* urged Democrats to put the country on a "sustainable fiscal path," in other words, cut the social programs on which millions depend.

Raman has described herself as "a capitalist" and "a democratic socialist" in the same sentence. She declared, "Yes, I'm a YIMBY," using the acronym for "yes in my backyard" and siding with real estate interests that measure housing policy by developer profit.

Raman is proposing to cut street homelessness in half before the 2028 Olympics. That deadline, and the security necessitated by the event, threaten the city's substantial unhoused population with even greater repression and abuse.

Raman's conduct since her victory has moved in lockstep with the Democratic Party in Washington, where the party's leadership responded to the mandate issued by the voters by extending a hand to the president those voters just repudiated.

On November 6, federal immigration agents brought a person in custody to Adventist Health White Memorial in Boyle Heights for treatment and blocked the ambulance entrance. Local rapid-response groups reported that agents detained at least two people outside the hospital. Doctors complained that administrators were allowing ICE agents to interfere in medical procedures. The following day, Raman condemned the raid and joined a march to the hospital, signing a letter to its president requesting a written account of the incident and a bilingual public statement. The letter made no appeal to the doctors, nurses, and hospital workers who exposed the abuses. The signatories addressed their demands to hospital management and made no appeal for independent action by the hospital workers who exposed the abuses.

The DSA's expanded bloc in Congress, its mayors in the nation's two largest cities, and its allies in the union apparatus will attempt to provide pseudo-left cover for this right-wing program. In Los Angeles the pressures of a strained city budget, the Olympics, and a hostile police union will be resolved at the expense of the working class.

The radicalization expressed in the vote will inevitably animate the class struggle. Workers in Los Angeles hospitals, hotels, schools, and warehouses must build rank-and-file committees of their own, linked through the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) to workers across the country and internationally. This requires a complete break from the Democratic Party and its DSA appendage, and the building of an independent political movement of the working class on a socialist and internationalist program.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site