

# PEZHVAK OF PERSIA EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH JUDGE JIM GRAY CANDIDATE FOR US SENATE

**Soheila Taheri Staff writer:**

*In a recent interview, Pezhvak of Persia had a one-to-one talk with Judge Jim Gray, candidate for US senate, in an effort to gain insight on his views and goals if elected senator.*

## **Judge Jim Gray how do you see evolution of Iranian-Americans in political process of California? What are the ways that they can become more involved?**

Before I respond to your specific questions of me, let me first ask you a question. How effective or helpful in the true sense of the word do you believe either Republicans or Democrats have been in promoting the Iranian-American community or their causes? From my standpoint, the answer is that they have been of little help, if any at all. So when you ask what people of the Iranian-American community can do to become more involved, I respond that you can join me and register to vote with the Libertarian Party. We are clearly the party that believes in individual freedoms, liberty and responsibility, along with reduced government. The Libertarian Party is the third largest political party in our country, and in my view is the one in which the strong voice of the Iranian-American community will best be able to be heard.

With regard to the answers to your specific questions, from what I have seen, the Iranian-American community today does not have a genuine voice either in Sacramento or in Washington. Instead the people of that community are treated as an ATM every election, and then forgotten by the elected officials until the next election. As a practical matter, that will not change until Iranian-Americans register to vote, and elect officials who understand and represent their issues.

However, until a member of the Iranian-American community is elected to Washington, I believe that I can be that voice.

## **What is your position on Patriot act? Iranian-American community is very disturbed with this act and we will support strongly the candidates who oppose this act and work towards eliminating it.**

As a candidate for the United States Senate, I believe that we must have smaller, less costly, intrusive and bureaucratic government. Many people in the United States are concerned about the growth of government, and the increasingly excessive intrusions into our boardrooms, bedrooms and wallets, but many people from Iran have actually lived under such excessive government control. As a result, when legislation like the so-called Patriot Act becomes law, we all have a genuine reason for alarm. I view the Patriot Act as a direct and frontal assault upon our civil liberties, and its repeal is one of the main reasons I have taken an unpaid leave of absence from my duties as a judge of the Orange County Superior Court to run for this office. Tragically, no one is spreading the alarm? This legislation is a constitutional disaster, and directly imperils our freedoms. It must be repealed as quickly as possible! This is a critical element of my campaign.

## **Immigration issues and getting Visa for Iranian-American relatives are major problems after 9/11. Thousands of Iranian were unjustly arrested at Immigration offices when they were asked to go there and register their status. People between statuses who were waiting for Immigration to respond on their case were even arrested, among them were 16 year old child and old men over 75. Our Community is very much saddened and disturbed by this unconstitutional and unjust act by Immigration authorities. Incidents like this, causes people to loose faith in government and political system which stands for liberty and justice for all. How can you help us to stop unjust acts like this in the future? Please elaborate on what you see as a fair and effective immigration policy?**

Similarly, and it grieves me to see this happen, today the government of the United States appears to have two sets of laws with regard to immigration and visa issues: one for people from the Middle East, and another for the rest of the world. I have a friend who recently married a man from Iran, and they both tried to get a visa for his grandmother to come to this country from Iran to attend the wedding. They couldn't do it, not because she was suspected of being a terrorist, but simply because of her country of residence. This is not what our

country should stand for. It is a constitutional and fundamental outrage, and must not be tolerated! People in our country need to see how those from Iran who have come to this country are almost always good and solid citizens -- people who contribute in virtually every constructive way to our society. They are probably the most educated of all immigrant groups, and the most professional and successful. In fact, coming from long experience as a judge in criminal court matters, I can tell you that it is a rare occurrence for an Iranian-American to be a defendant in a criminal case. Instead, the people of this great American community contribute something like \$600 billion each year to our economy.

Accordingly, it is long overdue for the Iranian-American community to be recognized and appreciated. So if I win this election and become a United States Senator, or even if I do not win the seat and I return to my position as a judge of the superior court, I dedicate myself to the effort to obtain the appropriate community recognition of the contributions of the Iranian-Americans to our great country.

## **What are your plans for rebuilding California's Economy? What TAX proposals you have in this regards?**

Overriding all of my views is the belief that, although there is a definite need for government in many ways (like a strong military, provisions for foreign intelligence, a police force, a judicial system, and other simila matters), the federal government as it exists today is far to large, costly, bureaucratic and intrusive. As such, I do not talk about reducing taxes. Instead, I talk about reducing government spending, because if that happens, lower taxes will naturally take care of themselves.

If one is interested in promoting small government, then we should reduce the large amount of unnecessary government regulations. For example, if one wants to promote low-cost housing, understand that about 30 percent of the cost of all houses is spent in attempts to comply with government regulations. If one wants more jobs in our communities, reduce government regulations that drain so much from the private economy. That would free up our resources for economic expansion, which means more jobs. So in the final analysis, who is in a better position to decide how best to spend your money -- you, or the government? I think that is an easy question to answer. Or, to put this issue a different way, we must take steps to return the control of California to Californians.

## **What is your proposal to fight against drugs in California?**

Another important issue that is central to my campaign is to get the federal government out of the marijuana prohibition business. As a trial judge for the past 20 years, I have seen firsthand in my courtroom how the War on Drugs has only served to increase the size of government and our prison population. But for everyone else, this policy has been a disaster.

However, by treating marijuana like alcohol, not only would we help to return control of California to Californians, but we would also save California about \$1 billion per year spent in its hopeless enforcement costs, and generate about \$1.5 billion per year in revenue. This would make a substantial difference in our yearly state budget deficit, not to mention making marijuana less available for children than it is today (Marijuana dealers today don't ask for i.d.). The key to fighting the problem of drugs in our communities is to treat drug addiction as a medical problem, and use the criminal justice system to hold people accountable for their actions (just like we do with alcohol), and take the illegal money out of the distribution of these drugs. People in the federal government do not want this to occur, because politicians love to spend tax money, and the War on Drugs generates a lot of big government programs, and big government tax money. The agencies of our government are addicted to spending our tax money, and do not want to give it up. As a result, it will take citizens and voters outside of government to put an end to it.



**Judge Jim Gray, candidate for US senate**

## **6. What is your position regarding abortion?**

With regard to abortion, that is truly not an issue in which the federal government should be involved at all. But if I were involved in state government, I would vote so as to have a woman have control of her body, with the counsel and advice of her family and her doctor. However, if the fetus were so advanced as to be viable outside the womb, to abort it would be tantamount to murder.

## **What is your plan to improve health system and services and also education system in California?**

With regard to issues like education and healthcare, the answer is to get the federal government out of these areas as well. Why? Look at the status of public education back in the mid 1960s. Our system was the envy of the entire world. But at that time, the federal government began to get its tentacles into local education and control it. And now look at us. Our system is a bureaucratic mess. If we return control back to parents and local school boards, we will again have local accountability, and quickly see positive results.

The same analogy is true with regard to our healthcare system. Back in the middle 1960s, Emergency Rooms were widely available, and one never heard discussions about not being able to find quality healthcare for reasonable prices. But then the federal government began to get its tentacles into the field, and now look at what we have. Who is better able to decide what healthcare a person needs, a patient and his/her doctor? Or the federal government? That answer is an easy one, and by getting the federal government out of the equation, we can and will regain quality healthcare for a reasonable price. (Nevertheless, I believe that we should have a safety net for all of our people that will assist people in our country who truly cannot afford coverage. This probably would take the form of government assisted medical care at an institution like a Kaiser Hospital, etc. However, under this system, government would be the last resort.)

## **What is your view on US involvement in Iraq and Middle East?**

With regard to the burning issue of Iraq, it is clear to me that we must adopt a policy that allows each country to choose its own government. That is as true for Iraq as it is for Iran and everywhere else. To act otherwise attempts to put the United States into the role of the world's protector and policeman, and that is something that we will never be able to do. Nor should we.

## **9. How do you feel about Barbara Boxer's comment who called Iranians "a Nation of terrorism"?**

Finally, I feel an open outrage when I hear people like Barbara Boxer or President Bush call Iranians a nation of terrorism.

## **Biography of James P. Gray**

Judge James P. Gray was raised in the Los Angeles area, graduated from John Muir High School in Pasadena, received his undergraduate degree at UCLA in 1966, and his Law Degree from USC in 1971. Judge Gray also served with the Peace Corps in Palmar Norte, Costa Rica, where he taught physical education, recreation and health from 1966 to 1968.

From 1972 until 1975, Judge Gray was a Staff Judge Advocate and Criminal Defense Attorney for the U.S. Navy JAG Corps at the Naval Air Stations in Guam and Lemoore, California.

For about 3 \* years, Judge Gray was a Federal Prosecutor with the United States Attorney's office in Los Angeles, where he eventually headed a unit which prosecuted various frauds against the VA, FHA and other governmental agencies.

After working for 5 years in private practice in Newport Beach in civil litigation with the Law Firm of Wyman, Bautzer, Rothman & Kuchel, Judge Gray was appointed by Governor Deukmejian to the Santa Ana Municipal Court in December of 1983. While on the bench of the Municipal Court, Judge Gray was active in trying to combat the major problem of Drinking Driver and other Alcohol-Related offenses, earning a commendation from the Orange County Board of Supervisors for these efforts in September of 1990.

Judge Jim Gray was elevated by Governor Deukmejian to the Superior Court in July of 1989, where he received awards as the 1992 "Judge of the Year" by the Business Litigation Section of the Orange County Bar Association, and the 1995 "Judge of the Year" from the Orange County Constitutional Rights Foundation, and was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Jurisprudence Degree from Western State University College of Law.

Judge Gray has been a member of the California Judicial Council, the Alcohol Advisory Board to the Orange County Board of Supervisors, the Advisory Board to the California Department of Alcohol & Drug Programs, the Board of Directors of the Volunteer Center of Orange County as well as the Orange County Law Library, and has served as an elected member of the Executive Committee of the Orange County Superior Court. He also was the founding President of the William P. Gray Chapter of the American Inns of Court; A member of the Board of Councilors of the USC Law School; a Member of the Committee on Juvenile Justice for the California Judicial Council; and a Founder of Peer Court, which adjudicates real juvenile cases in numbers of Orange County's High Schools using students as jurors.

Judge James P. Gray is presently presiding over a civil litigation calendar, is married to Grace Walker Gray, has three children, including an adopted Vietnamese son, is a member of the Methodist Church, and lives in Newport Beach, California.  
[www.JudgeJimGray4Senate.com](http://www.JudgeJimGray4Senate.com)

That is flat out untrue and offensive. Unfortunately for us all, it discloses their lack of understanding of the ways of the world, and shows them to be shallow people who are playing to the emotions of others for their shortrun political advantage.

I believe that our great country is off the track. That is why I am running for U.S. Senate, and why I will give the people of California not only a viable choice, but a positive choice. I request the support or Iranian-Americans and every other immigrant group in this campaign, and hope that all of those people view support for this campaign as an investment in good government.

**Judge Jim Gray, on behalf of Pezhvak of Persia, Owner/Editor, Shahbaz Taheri, I would like to thank you for sharing your views with Iranian American Community and wishing you all the success in the upcoming election.**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your questions.

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