

## News

### CAMPAIGN 2008

#### MORTGAGE CRISIS LOOMS OVER RACE

By **Zachary K. Johnson**  
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Record Staff Writer

STOCKTON - The repercussions of the mortgage meltdown are felt from neighborhoods to global financial markets, and state officeholders can play a part in the response to the crisis, two candidates for state Senate said Monday.

"This crisis has turned into a disaster," Democrat Lois Wolk said. The Legislature can change the practices that led up to the crisis, said Wolk, a member of the Assembly.

She said that as an assemblywoman, she has supported legislation to tighten rules governing mortgage brokers and to prevent the "shoddy" loans that helped bring about the crisis.

Republican Greg Aghazarian, also an Assembly member, said he has a three-pronged approach to the crisis: One, which is already going on, is providing resources for homeowners who have questions about their mortgages, he said; two, continue to revamp the system; and three, hold accountable those who knowingly led people into unaffordable mortgages, he said.

"We need to throw the book at them," Aghazarian said.

The candidates are competing to replace termed-out state Sen. Michael Machado, D-Linden, in the 5th Senate District, and they answered questions Monday night at a forum sponsored by People and Congregations Together in a south Stockton church.

Aghazarian represents Assembly District 26, which includes parts of San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties. He is a former member of the Lincoln Unified School District governing board.

Wolk represents Assembly District 8, which includes Yolo and Solano counties. She is a former Yolo County supervisor and mayor of Davis.

The 5th Senate District includes most of Stockton, Tracy, Lathrop and Manteca. It stretches north into parts of Solano, Yolo and Sacramento counties.

Wolk offered three points when asked how to reduce crime: community-based policing, community partnerships, and early intervention and prevention.

"There are three legs that hold up the stool," she said. She stressed the importance of reaching parents and children. She also pointed to legislation she wrote to give administrators authority to tackle hazing in schools.

The state needs to give local agencies the tools to reduce crime, but crime prevention starts in the school system, Aghazarian said. He also pointed to prison reform legislation he wrote to reduce recidivism.

"People have a right to feel safe and secure ... in their communities," he said.

Contact reporter Zachary K. Johnson at (209) 546-8258 or zjohnson@recordnet.com.

#### THE FORUM

[VISIT HIS BLOG](#)

People and Congregations Together held a forum Monday night for candidates for state and local offices. The candidates for the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors District 1 and state Senate District 5 seats appeared together, answering questions about crime, health care and housing, among other issues. PACT held the forum at St. George's Catholic Church and plans to hold a forum in October for candidates for the Stockton Unified School District Board of Trustees.