

## Henry T. Perea looks strong for state Assembly re-election | Elections

By John  
Ellis

Henry T. Perea DARRELL WONG — Fresno Bee Staff Photo | [Buy Photo](#)

Fresno Democrat Henry T. Perea has around \$900,000 in his campaign account and is seeking a third Assembly term riding a wave of high-profile legislative successes, including co-authoring a revamped water bond that will go before voters in November.

Walter Villarreal, his 31st Assembly District opponent, has no money and is just formulating a campaign plan that at this point can be summed up as a general discontent with government. He won 24 votes as a June primary write-in candidate.

Asked if he could beat Perea in November, the 51-year-old Del Rey resident said "I would like to say yeah. I'm honestly not sure."

Perea, by contrast, sounds like a well-oiled machine.

"Like any election, I'm very focused on communicating with voters and working really hard to get my message out," he said.

Perea, 37, pointed to three bills he authored or co-authored as the best of his second-term accomplishments — and legislative work he said he would continue to build on in a third term.

Besides the water bond, there was legislation to extend three state programs to improve air quality and ensure investment in clean transportation technology, and another that authorizes the state Public Utilities Commission to restructure electricity rates while protecting low-income customers and encourage more renewable energy use.

Perea said the latter piece of legislation will bring "greater equity in what customers pay across the state." He said high energy costs and the lack of water reliability are the two biggest hurdles to business recruitment in the Fresno area.

"That's why I want to focus on those," Perea said. "Energy and water are the two primary economic drivers in any region."

Perea also said he will run a "dual campaign" this fall — for his own re-election and for Propositions 1 and 2.

Prop. 1 is the water bond. Prop. 2 would force California to save money in a rainy-day fund to help when the state goes through another economic downturn.

Villarreal, by contrast, is not aligned with any political party, but sounds Republican or even Libertarian in his political views.

"I'm fed up with big government," he said. "The politicians get in there and forget about the people."

He hates the state's proposed high-speed rail project and thinks it should be killed. The plan, he said, has violated the intent of what was promised to voters. In addition, he favors both lower taxes and fewer restrictions on gun ownership.



Villarreal in 2008 was elected as a Sanger Unified School District trustee. He served one term. He is currently on the board of directors of the Del Rey Community Services District.

After commuting to Los Angeles where he worked as a dispatcher and emergency medical technician, Villarreal said he then helped two different ambulance services companies start up before coming back home when his grandmother broke her hip. He now takes care of her full time.

So far, his campaign amounts to talking to businesses and people and trying to reach out to the agriculture community.

At this point, he doesn't even know if he will raise any money for the campaign.

"I want a full-blown campaign — if I can get it going," he said.

The reporter can be reached at (559) 441-6320, [jellis@fresnobee.com](mailto:jellis@fresnobee.com) or [@johnellis24](https://twitter.com/johnellis24) on Twitter.**HENRY T. PEREA**

**Age:** 37

**Hometown:** Fresno

**Occupation:** Assembly member

**Education:** Fresno State, Bachelor of Arts in political science

**Family:** Married, two children

**Party preference:** Democratic

**Web:**

[asmdc.org/members/a31](http://asmdc.org/members/a31)

**Twitter:** [@AsmPerea](https://twitter.com/AsmPerea)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/AssemblymemberPerea](https://www.facebook.com/AssemblymemberPerea)

**WALTER VILLARREAL**

**Age:** 51

**Hometown:** Del Rey

**Occupation:** Health-care provider

**Education:** Sanger High School, attended Fresno City College

**Family:** Single

**Party preference:** No party preference

**Web:** n/a

**Twitter:** n/a

**Facebook:** n/a

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