

Candidate Questionnaire

Name and email address

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What Berkeley City Council District do you live in?

District 4 (to the 8th power!)

Do you have any background in Berkeley politics or community organizing? Please describe.

1. Berkeley City Peace and Justice Commissioner: I served as a Berkeley City, Peace and Justice Commissioner for about a year. I presented a Berkeley Sister City proposal with Gaza City, modeled from Berkeley's 1988 sister-city proposal for the Jabalia refugee camp (Measure J), driven forward by a combination of a progressive local official (former Councilmember Maudelle Shirek Rest in Peace) and a grassroots activist coalitions.

https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/legislative-body-meeting-attachments/September%20Agenda%20Packet_2025.pdf

2. Student at UC Berkeley 2011'. Their activities include:

Multicultural collaboration through the Bridges Multicultural Resource Center, representing MSA and SJP, and building solidarity among underrepresented student groups.

Participation in protests and demonstrations, including Occupy Oakland (2011) and anti-racism actions with the Black Student Union.

Advocacy for Palestinian rights, including involvement in BDS efforts at Cal (first university in the nation to BDS via student votes in ASUC to be later vetoed by student body president)

Support for immigrant and undocumented students, working with MEChA on DREAM Act campaigns.

Humanitarian work, such as preparing food packages for unhoused individuals through MSA.

Cultural and historical remembrance, including commemoration of the Armenian Genocide and attending the Indigenous Peoples' Sunrise Gathering on Alcatraz Island.

3. Small business owner: As a small business owner in the Berkeley, I've hosted house parties and community gatherings in partnership with Faith in Action and Bay Area Muslim Council representatives, alongside other local community members. I've also organized 5K fundraising runs for MECA, sponsored their bicycle runs, and hosted small business bazaars at Jaffa Coffee Roaster to support local vendors and build community connections.

What local issues are most important to you?

(1) Affordable housing, (2) safer and cleaner neighborhoods. saving small businesses

Will you opt into public financing of your campaign?

☒ Yes

☐ No

What policies would you put forth/endorse regarding housing and rent control?

Upzoning and Density: I'm pro-housing, but I'm not pro-developer giveaway. Berkeley should build more homes while protecting the people who already live here. If we give a project more density, Berkeley should get a real public benefit in return. We can support more housing and still believe residents and small businesses deserve a meaningful voice in how their neighborhoods change (Solano, Elmwood, Shattuck and San Pablo)

Commercial vacancies: We support a carrot-first vacant storefront policy: no fee for the first 12 months, then gradually increasing fees for long-term vacancies, with exemptions for legitimate barriers. We'd offer landlords incentives, renovation assistance, and help finding local businesses—and dedicate any revenue to social housing, small-business support, and homelessness prevention.

Social housing: We support a ban on algorithmic pricing, universal just-cause eviction protection and expanded social housing.

What are your views on upzoning and support of local businesses?

Upzoning should protect the people who already live there - not just developers and speculators. I support increased density when it includes deep affordability, union labor and community benefits. I oppose the building of market-rate luxury towers that displace working families.

For businesses, I support cutting health permit and business license fees, creating an improved, one-stop-shop permitting portal, supporting street vending / pop-ups, and freezing chain store expansion. I support industrial rent stabilization to protect independent shops.

For example, there was no impact study completed for the dozens of small businesses on Hopkins street. These businesses will suffer from prolonged construction and less available parking for those who are considered ADA, unable to ride a bicycle and those who come from other parts of Berkeley and the East Bay to frequent family owned small businesses such as Monterey Market.

How do you plan to make yourself available to and interact with constituents, particularly those that disagree with you?

I will hold public office hours in parks and in public, as well as my office. I'll respond to constituent emails and calls and never shy away from hard conversations.

What are your views on police accountability? Please discuss both surveillance and crowd control measures (Flock cameras, tear gas) as well as fiscal accountability.

I support strong police accountability. I oppose mass surveillance systems like Flock. As a West Bank resident of Hebron, my hometown has a surveillance-camera system that is broadly comparable to Flock-style automated surveillance, although it is not for "supposed safety" and the systems are intended for military use rather than a municipal, private-policing product.

I oppose the use of militarized police equipment such as tear gas or sound cannons. I support demilitarization of the police and increasing community oversight. I support creation of a unionized team of community ambassadors to help people in mental health crisis and to act as first responders alongside police to help with mental health crisis situations. This will be incredibly beneficial to small businesses and the general public who do not have the means or training to help address the growing mental health crisis all around the City.

How do you view the role of the City Council in Berkeley's long history of standing up for international human rights? How will you deal with outside foreign lobby groups, such as the JCRC (Jewish Community Relations Council), when evaluating such concerns?

Berkeley has a long history of supporting human rights - and the City must continue that legacy. As a dual citizen Palestinian-American, I believe we must divest and establish a sister city program with Gaza City. I will listen to any individual or organization that wishes to speak with me, but ultimately I'll vote with human rights in mind.

When concerning proposed ceasefire resolutions on the genocide of Gaza, some Councilmembers continue to peddle rhetoric such as, "Berkeley has no jurisdiction over international affairs. He explicitly stated that the city does not set foreign or military policy."

However, historical record shows Berkeley's Council has repeatedly discussed international affairs, wars, genocide remembrance, foreign governments, refugees, and international human-rights issues on its agenda and adopted resolutions/proclamations concerning them.

Jurisdiction and community voice are two different topics. Berkeley can't conduct foreign policy, but that doesn't mean we have to be silent about human rights, war, genocide, or issues directly affecting Berkeley residents, especially when as Americans we fund the carnage that is taking place in Gaza against innocent people.

How do you plan to campaign? What are your strengths as a campaigner?

We are building people-powered campaign of door to door canvassing, community events, engaging my fellow UC Berkeley student and alumni and only accepting small-dollar donations. My campaign comes from my lived experience as a renter, a small business owner, a Palestinian-American and a father. I listen, tell the truth and connect our local struggles of high rent, unfair fees and unsafe streets and connect it to the need for real systemic change.

Do you have any community, labor, etc. groups that you anticipate will endorse your candidacy?

We are in active conversations with tenant groups, small business associations, labor allies, immigrant rights organizations, student groups, and Palestine solidarity organizations. We cannot announce formal endorsements yet, but our campaign has deep support among working people, renters, small business owners, and progressive activists who want a real alternative to the machine.

How can we help you with your campaign?

We need volunteers for canvassing, phone-banking, small dollar donations and endorsements. We need folks in the district willing to help with hosting house party events, display yard signs / banners, and share our message with their network. Mostly we need people to register and vote.

Lastly, tell Berkeley!

On October 27th, I can't vote from the River to Sea, but on November 3rd you can make history and vote for me!

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