

Candidate Questionnaire

Name and email address

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What Berkeley City Council District do you live in?

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

As an organizer, I have been a Steward and leader with the union, Unite Here 2850. I have organized in support of policies for low income, truly affordable housing, rent protections and neighborhood appropriate design setbacks, along with density that does not harm existing infrastructure and livability. I have organized with seniors in low income housing against harms by management/owners. I have been an organizer for equity and reparative policies throughout Berkeley, working on the right to return and preference policy for displaced Berkeleyans. In addition I have been organizing in South Berkeley specifically as a member of Friends of Adeline since the start of the Adeline Corridor "revitalization" process and throughout the creation and development of the Adeline Plan. We organized with neighbors to create a community led vision for the Ashby BART development (among our many other endeavors). I was unanimously appointed to the City of Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board prior to being elected by Berkeley voters in 2020. I served on the City of Berkeley Housing Advisory Commission (former vice chair) supporting affordable housing projects at Saint Paul's Church and Ephesians Church, as well as serving on the Community Advisory Group for the Ashby and North Berkeley BART developments. I have additionally organized in support of unhoused neighbors and families with Brave Families Rising Above.

What local issues are most important to you?

The integrity and accountability of local leadership is one of the most important issues of the past 10 years (which is why I am running). Instead of being, "of the people, by the people, for the people", Berkeley leadership has been playing into the hands of special interest industries and lobbies. There has also been a political culture that is being taught that effectively influences folks to give up much of their personal intelligence to "play politics", as they are coached into "conforming" to the faulty structure that has got us into the horrible situation that we now find ourselves. "Good" people entering into an unfamiliar arena become immediately intimidated by the scrambling energy and influence that goes on behind the scenes, resulting in everyone playing right into the power structure, rather than building capacity towards the shift we need.

Every issue is the most important because in truth nothing happens that doesn't affect everything else, and what's at the heart of all of it is injustice and inequity. So, injustice and inequity is what is most important to address on a fundamental and foundational level and should be at the forefront of every specific category of concern. That being said, the inequitable and unjust issues of importance begin with: economics and predatory capitalism, housing, people's safety from systemic entities of power, accessibility for seniors and disabled, climate and sustainability, infrastructure and responsible growth, or even the need for degrowth, and to what, who and how we allow entities to invest.

Will you opt into public financing of your campaign?

☒ Yes

☐ No

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

I am open to creating and developing as many different kinds of policies as we can that will be effective in addressing rent control and housing as a human right. Ending Costa Hawkins would be a good start and possibly exploring a rent freeze due to our current affordability concerns. We can also create policies that encourage benefits to our communities as opposed to milking benefits for investors. We can do this by working with impact investors who want to shift our culture around finance and investing, moving us away from predatory investment. I also don't think any one person has the answer or all the solutions, I believe that when leaders work closely with passionate neighbors (with lived expertise) and advocates who represent the diversity of community perspectives and realities, we can create inspiring alternatives and solutions that have never been done or thought of (or were avoided due to the political culture I identified in my previous answer).

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

Upzoning is an agenda run by lobbies who are benefiting from the commodification of housing and extraction of such assets for broader capital gains (games). Municipalities are being bullied by state legislators who are working to force inappropriate and invasive densities under falsely represented "housing crisis" narratives. Neighbors, neighborhood geography, natural resources and, factual, safety and climate concerns should be respected, appropriately engaged and listened to by anyone who takes a position of leadership. Unfortunately, as we have seen, there is minimal opportunity for reasonable conversations and exploration for what people want, or truly need, when there is a "political agenda" motivated by predatory capitalism. We can do more things to organize for change around these issues but we have to work for it and that starts with shifting leadership who will work with the people to do it.

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

I actually think that a bigger part of an elected's job is to be available to the people. We've created a structure where people in office are almost untouchable, unless you are part of their lobby. There is less and less engagement in dialogue with constituents. They might listen to your public comment (if you're lucky) and then just ignore it. As a leader it is imperative to speak to everyone to get an understanding of where differences exist in the needs and realities of people's lives. A good leader has to have discernment around understanding the lobbies and agendas that are exclusive and discriminatory and be able to identify and uphold their responsibility to the needs of the entire community of whom they serve.

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

Accountability is a requirement for everyone. There is no where in our society where accountability should ever be excused or sacrificed and especially with entities that yield tremendous power. Surveillance does not create safety, it does the exact opposite. It exacerbates distrust in one another and tends to create a culture that criminalizes its citizens. Healthy, equitable and loving communities create safety for everyone. And why are we prioritizing surveillance, K9 units and tear gas to combat riots? Overall crime is actually down and if we are taking care of our responsibilities to our community, what future riots are we planning to be prepared for...? This seems a bit like a red flag. Are leaders being complicit in setting the stage for more threatening restrictions and oppressive control over communities? In regards to fiscal accountability, our auditor already identified budget oversights and overspending within our police department. We can put these valuable resources towards taking care of our community instead.

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?

Standing up for humanity is a necessity of justice. As MLK Jr. said, "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere". This is not a complicated issue, one must always stand up for justice. However we must also be vigilant around the rampant injustice right here in our communities and additionally be doing great and extensive work concurrently here at home. The more strength we are able to create here, the greater the strength we will have abroad.

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

I plan to take my campaign to the people. Any campaign to make change is going to be people powered. We have the power if we act together, but it will take all hands on deck to organize, educate and inspire voters. The failure to get new leadership this election is a mistake Berkeley cannot afford to make. We need fearless leadership with strong ethics, integrity and accountability. My strengths are that I am a people person and my work is driven in service to the greater good. I am personable and friendly and I have enthusiastic inspiration because I do believe in, know and understand the beneficial impacts for all and I am willing to work in service to achieve it.

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

I anticipate being endorsed by community groups in Berkeley who know me and who I have worked with, folks who know my ethics and have seen me prove my commitment to my community. I am currently engaging with labor groups and others through their endorsement process. I do anticipate receiving endorsements from these groups as I am a former member and leader in a union as well as part of the demographic of who they represent.

How can we help you with your campaign?

You can support my campaign by volunteering to door knock and phone bank and continuously educating and sharing about the need for change in Berkeley. You can also encourage people to join our campaign. Donations from Berkeley voters whose donations are matched by the city will be a great support as well. And vote for me Nov 3.

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