

EBDSA 2018 Electoral Endorsement Questionnaire

Mayor of Oakland – Saied Karamooz

General		
1	Why do you want East Bay DSA's endorsement?	<p>Because my values and vision align completely with East Bay DSA's.</p> <p>When it comes to supporting such basic reforms as Medicare for All, repealing Costa Hawkins, instituting universal rent control, providing for tuition-free college, saving public education from the privatization movement, and not taking any corporate donations, I am in complete agreement. In addition, I support the current movement to establish a Public Bank of Oakland on the model of the Public Bank of North Dakota.</p> <p>Over the years, I have devoted significant time, energy, and effort to other causes, such as police demilitarization and accountability, privacy advocacy, fair wages, and justice system reform.</p> <p>To attain our shared objectives, we need synergies. I believe that East Bay DSA's endorsement of my campaign will have a amplifying impact on my efforts over the coming months as I share my perspective with the voters.</p>
2	Are you a democratic socialist? How do you define democratic socialism?	<p>My vision is to serve as a catalyst to instill a just society in Oakland, where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic human needs, such as education, housing, jobs, and healthcare are available to all of our citizens equally irrespective of their socio-economic status, - Dignity, equality, and respect for individuals are afforded to all residents without prejudice, and - Our election process is free from undue influence of money and power, thereby ensuring fair and informed elections <p>If these are consistent with the definitions of a democratic socialist, then, yes, I am.</p>
3	If elected, how would you relate to East Bay DSA?	<p>As stated publicly on a number of occasions, I am a firm believer in Collective Wisdom. No one amongst us is smart enough to have all the right answers. But I am certain that together we do. Within EBDSA, there is representation across a wide spectrum of individuals and organizations with intimate knowledge of challenges and robust solutions for our schools, housing, environment, healthcare, economy, and virtually every aspect of life in Oakland. As such, I would rely heavily on EBDSA and other community-based and non-profit organizations to serve not only in a consultative capacity, but</p>

Candidate for Mayor of Oakland – Saied Karamooz

		also in a validation and accountability capacity to ensure that implementation of solutions actually achieve the intended outcome.
4	Describe your top priorities and the policy areas that will be of most interest to you if elected.	<p>Housing, Education, and Jobs. My entire career has been devoted to architecting business operations to achieve process efficiencies, quality improvement, and cost reduction in large enterprises such as the FDIC, American Airlines, and the US Navy.</p> <p>I intend to apply my professional skills to generate 10-15% productivity gains in city operations, including OPD. In the private sector, cost reduction is achieved through job elimination. And the savings are passed onto shareholders as stock buy-back or dividends and paid to executives as cash bonuses and equity grants. In contrast, I would maintain the same funding level after productivity gains and apply the excess funds (~\$75M) to improve public services, particularly in the initiatives targeted for housing expansion, education improvement, and jobs creation. In the process, we will achieve much better public safety results with this approach than with the status quo.</p>
5	Please describe your plan to win this race. What is your “win number”? How will you get there?	<p>In Oakland’s mayoral race, the safe number for securing the election comfortably is 50,000. Without disclosing too much of my campaign strategy, I am confident that my message of Unwavering Principles, Uncompromising Practices, and Unambiguous Promises underpinned by my actions and accomplishments will have broad appeal among all voters. Therefore, I will be able to garner sufficient votes to outlast all other candidates in the voting count iterations and defeat the incumbent. More specifically, if mayor Schaaf does not win in the initial tally, it is unlikely that she will be on any other candidate’s second, or third, choice. In fact, in 2014, she captured only 272 votes (0.5% gain) in the first 10 rounds of elimination. Her eventual victory was a function of elimination such conservative candidates as Bryan Parker and Joe Tuman. Dynamics are dramatically different in this year’s election. Given the current political climate locally and dire situation of our city, candidates who have a progressive agenda and can demonstrate their qualifications to be an effective mayor will have a distinct advantage over other candidates.</p>
6	If endorsed, what participation would you like to see from East Bay DSA in your campaign?	<p>Active amplification. I would hope that East Bay DSA would encourage its members to serve as campaign volunteers and spread the word. Furthermore, I would hope to get invited to various events to share my perspective, platform, and programs.</p>
7	What is your campaign budget, and how much have you raised thus far? What is	<p>My campaign finance situation is as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-imposed limitations: Refuse donations from non-

Candidate for Mayor of Oakland – Saied Karamooz

	your average donation size? What is your strategy to continue fundraising?	<p>Oaklanders, corporations, or in excess of \$45.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. <u>Total expenditure forecast:</u> \$60,000 - \$80,000 3. <u>Total donation forecast:</u> \$40,000 - \$60,000 4. <u>Total donor forecast:</u> 2,000 donors 5. <u>Projected Average donation amount:</u> \$10 (current average: \$25) 6. <u>Current cash balance:</u> \$180,000
8	Do you use public financing?	No.
9	Have you ever, during this race, or in a previous electoral race, accepted campaign contributions from a corporation, corporate PAC, or lobbyist? If yes, please explain in detail.	<p>No. Absolutely NOT. I would NEVER!</p> <p>In fact, I don't stop with refusing shady donations from corporations, PACs, investors, or lobbyists. I also reject all donations from non-Oaklanders or in excess of \$45. To me, non-Oaklanders have no business influencing our elections and \$45 is an amount that is within reach of every Oaklander.</p> <p>As I have said publicly, I am willing to lose this election, but not willing to compromise on my principles. By winning this race and honoring this principle, we will show that there is a way to overcome the corrosive impact of dirty money in politics.</p> <p>Furthermore, in Oakland, campaign finance corruption is not limited to corporations, developers, or special interests. In fact, Oakland's Public Ethics Commissions has codified corruption as "Form 301 – Voluntary Campaign Expenditure Ceiling." By signing this form, mayoral candidates are allowed to quadruple their per-individual donation limits (from \$200 to \$800) in exchange for agreeing to an unreachable limit (of \$400,000). This so-called "Voluntary Campaign Expenditure Ceiling" is no different than agreeing not to exceed 400 MPH on freeways in exchange for permission to drive 60 MPH in school zones. Corruption is happening right in front of us, within our government, and with absolute audacity.</p> <p>For this reason, I have refused to sign form 301 and intend to bring attention to its deceptive nature and the duplicity of candidates who sign it.</p>
10	Is your race partisan? What is your relationship to your political party, if any? Why?	No. I am registered Green . And I plan to run as the Green Party candidate. Truthfully, there is no difference between the Democrats and Republicans. They are both owned and operated by big corporations.
11	What community organizations are you a part of?	I have participated in a number of local activist organizations in Oakland, such as Oakland Justice Coalition, Anti-Police Terror Project, Fight for \$15, and Oakland Privacy Working Group. But my main focus has been the Coalition for Police Accountability where I serve as a member of the Steering Committee. Coalition for Police

Candidate for Mayor of Oakland – Saied Karamooz

		<p>Accountability was the driving force behind Measure LL that passed with over 83% support in 2016 to establish a Police Commission with unprecedented powers, including the firing and hiring the Police Chief.</p> <p>I have also been on the Privacy Advisory Commission since its inception in August 2016. I am a member of Jack London Improvement District and have served in officer capacities (President, Secretary, and Treasurer) for the past three years.</p>
12	<p>What is your profession? Is a significant portion of your income derived from capital holdings (e.g. investments, property, etc.)</p>	<p>Majority of my career was at Accenture, a global management consulting firm that provides strategy, technology and operations services. I retired from Accenture in 2008.</p> <p>Currently, my wife and I own and operate a B Corp Certified personal care product manufacturing company in West Oakland that we created from scratch in 2011. As a B Corp Certified operation, we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pay our entry-level employees at 50% above minimum wage - Enforce a strict supplier code of conduct to ensure fair treatment of all employees by our vendors - Operate with utmost respect for the environment, such 100% solar-powered facility and ZERO Waste production <p>Our B Corp Certification affirms our commitment to meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability. We don't just believe in preaching social justice, we exercise it at every possible opportunity.</p> <p>In addition, we own a registered historic landmark commercial building in downtown Oakland that we refurbished in 2014. Since then, we have continued to retrofit this building with energy and water saving appliances and fixtures. Solar panels installed on this building have brought the energy consumption to near zero. Not bad for a 95-year old building. ☺ This building currently serves a number of highly creative minds, hands, and sounds with rental charges substantially below market rate.</p> <p>No. Our income is NOT from capital holdings.</p>
13	<p>Describe your record of public service.</p>	<p>Majority of my career has been in the private sector. However, over the past decade, I have become active in politics. Currently, I serve in the following capacities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coalition for Police Accountability – Steering Committee member - Privacy Advisory Commission – Commissioner since inception - Jack London Improvement District – Board member, with officer

Candidate for Mayor of Oakland – Saied Karamooz

		positions, President, Treasurer, and Secretary over the years. -
14	Please list other major endorsements.	Block by Block Organizing Network (BBBON), Bay Area Small Merchants Chamber of Commerce, Oakland Greens, Green Party of Alameda County. I have been short-listed on a number of other progressive organizations and feel confident that I will secure their endorsements over the next few weeks.
Housing		
1	Do you support Proposition 10, the Affordable Housing Act?	Absolutely! But I see it as stopgap measure. The real answer is home ownership. That’s why a key component of my platform is building public housing for sale to low income Oaklanders with no down payment and low interest rate mortgages.
2	What are the causes of the housing crisis in California and the Bay Area?	Incompetent elected officials. Influx of highly paid technology workers is not a new or an unexpected phenomenon. Abundance of resources and opportunity in California, particularly in the Bay Area with its exceptionally comfortable and pleasant climate, has been a well-known fact. And yet our elected officials are caught off guard when it comes to ensuring adequate housing. Such incompetence would be met with immediate termination in the private sector. But our elected officials manage to convince the public that they have no fault in deterioration of our society and expect to move up the political ladder and cause more damage on issues of greater importance with broader impact. To be abundantly clear, this is a solvable problem. In the 2014 mayoral race, I promised two key programs to address the imminent housing crisis in Oakland (from 2014 campaign website): <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>Create an Anti-Displacement/Affordable Housing Officer position and fund it by cutting the mayor’s salary by 50% for duration of my term.</i>2. <i>Establish a No-Net-Loss of affordable housing due to gentrification. Begin by taking inventory of the current supply of affordable housing, by type and by neighborhood.</i> If we had taken these two steps, we would have averted our current housing crisis. Oakland has more than enough land, labor, and material to build sufficient supply of housing for all Oaklanders. But it takes political will and practical skill to dissect the problem, devise alternative solutions, assess feasibility of each approach, make the difficult decisions, establish a clear execution plan, oversee implementation of the plan, and take corrective steps along the way to optimize the

Candidate for Mayor of Oakland – Saied Karamooz

		<p>project. This is what an executive does in the private sector; this is what the mayor must be able to do to serve the people of Oakland effectively, including solving the housing needs and the humanitarian crisis in our city.</p> <p>No other candidate has the firsthand experience in going through every stage of solution formulation and implementation in complex situations as I. None!</p>
3	Describe your vision for housing justice. If elected, how will you use your position to advocate for this vision? Please cite any specific policy examples.	<p>To me, housing justice has two aspects. First, it encompasses prevention of displacement of residents who have been in their neighborhoods for generations. Second, it represents availability of quality and affordable homes for the working class residents in safe neighborhood, with good schools, and near public transportation.</p> <p>Expecting profit-motivated developers to solve our housing crisis by succumbing to arm-twisting pressure to include a few affordable units in their massive market rate projects has always been and will always be a fool’s errand. Therefore, our only hope is to embark on an aggressive public housing construction project. To address our housing crisis, I am committed to build public housing (for rent or sale) for low-income residents. Under my plan, the city would build 1,500-2,000 homes with the exact same standards as market rate homes, but without the profit motive. Market rate homes are not expensive because they are expensive to build. They are expensive because of the greed element in the private sector.</p>
Healthcare		
1	Do you support Medicare for All, and what would such a system entail?	Absolutely. Medicare for all should be an extension of the current program with the qualifying age reduced over a period of seven to ten years to include all Americans. This system would not only provide quality healthcare for all, but also would unshackle workers who are beholden to their employers for healthcare coverage.
2	If elected, how will you use your position to fight for Medicare for All?	I would use my leadership position to influence our State government to implement Universal Coverage for all Californians.
Education		
1	What’s wrong with the current education system? What reforms would you like to see, and has the contemporary educational reform movement been effective at achieving them?	<p>Over the years, quality of public education in our state, and city, has eroded steadily. Needless to say, the main cause is the assault of powerful lobbyists and special interests on our politicians. It is indisputable that most charter schools are charter in name only, and nothing but a façade for private entities with profit motives.</p> <p>With each downturn in the economic cycle, public education resources are reduced without restoration upon recovery of the</p>

Candidate for Mayor of Oakland – Saied Karamooz

		<p>economic conditions. As a result, there has been a decline and elimination of key programs, such as extracurricular activities, in-school libraries, vocational skills, arts, sports, and languages, social/civic/special interest clubs, and many others that were commonplace not too long ago.</p> <p>While I won't be able to overhaul the entire education system as the mayor, I will be able to dedicate the financial resources (\$25M/year) to restore programs that will enrich the educational experience of our students and enable them to widen their horizons and gain many life-skills that will prove invaluable, as they become young adults.</p>
2	<p>What is the role of charter schools in your desired education system? Would you support an immediate, statewide moratorium on charter schools in California?</p>	<p>Profit-motivated enterprises have no place in our public school system. Although charter schools are intended to address certain limitations with the public school system, they have become a vehicle to privatize our education system. Without exception, operating an enterprise with dual purposes of education and profits will inevitably cause friction and conflict between these competing priorities. As such, I would support an immediate moratorium on charter schools in Oakland.</p> <p>Once there is an opportunity to examine the performance of existing charter schools in Oakland and merits of additional charter schools, I would be open to consider charter schools that are authorized, overseen and regulated by the school district to promote diversity in our education system.</p> <p>Finally, I would oppose selling city property to any private entity, including charter schools, without absolute support of the people of Oakland.</p>
3	<p>What role do teachers' unions play in the education system? What role should they play, and what policies would you pursue to achieve this vision?</p>	<p>In virtually every encounter with teachers (active and retired), I have been told that beyond all else, "Teachers like to teach." Therefore, Oakland Education Association's (OEA) primary focus should be to demand conditions that make teaching enjoyable, effective, and rewarding for teachers. More specifically, schools should have the necessary resources, such as clinicians, librarians, and counselors, so that teachers are not confronted with non-teaching distractions.</p> <p>In support of the aforementioned focus, I would devote city resources (\$25M/year) to provide for staffing and upkeep of school buildings, fund overlapping functions (e.g., OPD Resource Officers, maintenance of playgrounds, in-school librarians), and provide before/after/summer school programs.</p> <p>I find it extremely troubling that our teachers are so underpaid and overworked, particularly in OUSD. Therefore, I will do whatever I can</p>

Candidate for Mayor of Oakland – Saied Karamooz

		in my position as the mayor to support OEA’s demands to increase teacher pay and improve work conditions.
Anti-Militarism		
1	How will you use your office to oppose war and imperialism?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My platform includes an immediate withdrawal of OPD from Urban Shield. 2. I will target every location and method that the military uses for recruiting Oakland’s youth and devise alternative programs to prevent our youth from entering the military. In my own small way, I would deprive the military of its most needed resource, young men and women who have no other viable option than to join the military.
2	Do you support the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions movement to oppose the occupation of Palestine?	<p>Yes. In 2016, my wife and I toured the West Bank and visited the village of Douma where Israeli settlers firebombed a Palestinian’s family’s house, killing three of the four family members. But atrocities don’t end with an occasional act of violence.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">    </div> <p>We saw how IDF shoots holes in Palestinian water tanks to deprive them of this very basic need. To make matters worse, Israeli government charges Palestinians three times the amount that settlers pay for water. We walked the dirt paths designated for Palestinians next to paved sidewalks for all others. We encountered the cumbersome checkpoints and random blocking of streets and market passages strictly for the purpose of frustrating locals. The injustice is real. And the only non-violent means to bring international attention to it is BDS.</p>
Police & Prisons		
1	How will you use your office to fight against police brutality and other forms of state violence?	<p>My track record and active involvement for ending the racially-biased practices of OPD are evidenced by my actions and commitments as listed below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Serving on Coalition for Police Accountability (CPA) Steering Committee for the past two years and an active member since its inception. CPA was the driving force that spearheaded Measure LL and, ultimately, the creation of Oakland’s Police Commission. The Police Commission is empowered with unprecedented authority, including firing of the chief of police.

Candidate for Mayor of Oakland – Saied Karamooz

		<p>I have committed to bring the Negotiated Settlement Agreement (NSA) to a successful end within twenty-four months. To achieve this feat, which numerous mayors since 2003 have failed to accomplish, will require working closely with the community, OPOA, and the Federal Monitor. I am under no illusion that it will be a simple task, but given the gravity of the situation and its dark cloud on our community, we must take the difficult and deliberate steps to ensure its successful end.</p>
2	<p>What policies do you support to reduce and end mass incarceration?</p>	<p>At any moment, over 4,000 of our black and brown brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers spend their days in jail and away from the families, jobs, and communities. Many are there because they can't afford bail; many are there for trumped up charges just so the DA can get a settlement for a lesser charge; and many are there for the most insignificant of petty crimes. The human cost of this senseless mass incarceration is astronomical and, possibly, incalculable.</p> <p>First and foremost, I will work tirelessly to prevent recidivism. In my platform, I have committed to establish a "Re-entry" Fund to assist all Oaklanders who are released from jail with housing, job training, and other basic needs upon release.</p> <p>Secondly, I have committed significant funding (\$75M) to address education, housing, and jobs needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized members of our community.</p> <p>Finally, I will advocate for elimination of monetary bail that is so damaging to the livelihood of poorer families.</p>
The Environment		
1	<p>What's your ideal timetable for phasing out fossil fuel production and consumption including coal, oil and natural gas?</p>	<p>10 years. My platform includes a specific commitment to switch to 100% renewable energy by 2028. As the first step, I will embark on an aggressive plan to reduce the city's overall energy consumption. In parallel, I will institute an innovation center to not only ensure Oakland achieves the 10-year 100% renewable energy goal, but also create a thriving economy to assist other cities around the world.</p>
2	<p>Please describe your vision for combating climate change, both globally and locally. How will you use your office to fight climate change?</p>	<p>Lead by example. I would embark on a city-wide program to encourage businesses to adopt energy-saving programs and to create employment opportunities for our residents in the process. As an example, our business operations are 100% solar-powered and ZERO Waste through innovative programs.</p> <p>When it comes to making policy decisions and exercising authenticity, there is no substitute for leading by example.</p>
Immigration		

Candidate for Mayor of Oakland – Saied Karamooz

1	How will you use your office to fight against deportations and other attacks on immigrant communities?	What I do will be as discreet and low key as possible to minimize attracting national attention. I will engage with legal services to gain a full understanding of options and resources available to Oakland’s undocumented immigrants. Then I will work with community groups to inform them of their options and available services.
2	How would you use your office to strengthen the rights of immigrants and their access to public services and quality of life?	As one of my first actions as the mayor, I would ask City Council to allocate \$1M to create a legal fund for our undocumented residents so that they have access to proper legal representation and translation services. Frankly, the funds can be generated by managing OPD’s overtime and excessive crowd control staffing levels.
Anti-Racism		
1	How would you use your office to strengthen the rights of people of color and their access to public services and quality of life?	<p>Racism is the source of most, if not, all malaise in our society. But it’s real and it’s pervasive. The road to recovery begins with reckoning.</p> <p>My campaign is squarely anchored in the belief that to solve problems, we must first acknowledge their existence. As such, I intend to elevate the awareness about the racially biased practices of OPD that have plagued our city for decades. As the first step, I will work with the police chief, OPOA, and community stakeholders to bring the Negotiated Settlement Agreement (NSA) to an end in 24 months. Once the disgraceful cloud of racially biased practices of OPD (<u>the city’s largest department</u>) is removed, I will rename OPD to Oakland Public Safety Department.</p> <p>I will stop the practice of hiding violence statistics in our city to give the false impression of security as is done routinely in Oakland and other cities. In fact, I will recognize the loss of every life in Oakland, many of whom are black or brown young men, by declaring a day of mourning. The outrage must begin with the first life lost due to gun violence each year, not after the first 80 lives lost.</p>
2	How would you fight against the criminalization of people of color?	Upward mobility. I will devote \$25M per year to ensure that our black and brown youth have access to a wide variety of growth opportunities, such as technical training, vocational skills, arts, and sports. It is imperative that we create a space where all children can explore their interests to discover their strengths and their passion. I will personally visit communities of color and faith-based organization to ensure that my administration is in tune with their needs and open to their ideas.
Taxation		
1	How do you propose to change our budget and tax structure (on the federal, state, or municipal level) to	At the local level, I have promised to implement Participatory Budgeting as a key element of my platform. Once we engage the public in establishing our city’s priorities and demonstrate its positive impact, we will be able to influence other municipalities around the

Candidate for Mayor of Oakland – Saied Karamooz

	better fund public services?	country and, ultimately, the state or the federal government to adopt similar programs. True -modern- democracy is not achieved in election of individuals alone; it is realized in allocation of resources.
Labor Movement		
1	Are you a member of a union? Have you ever been? Please provide specifics and describe and leadership roles you have played.	I have never worked in an organization with union representation. As such, I have never had the opportunity to join a union.
2	What is the role of the labor movement in achieving your policy priorities?	I have sought advice from a number of union members, including Mr. Michael Rubin and Mr. Bill Balderston.
3	What specific labor or workers rights policies will you pursue?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. \$16 per hour by 2018 and \$1 increase per year to \$20 by 2022. 2. Re-entry program for formerly incarcerated. I will set up a fund to partner with local labor unions to provide job training and apprenticeship programs for Oaklanders upon their release from incarceration. 3. End the Temporary Part-time designation in city jobs.