

EBDSA 2018 Electoral Endorsement Questionnaire

Name: Cat Brooks

General

1. Why do you want East Bay DSA's endorsement?

We are committed to many of the same values. We both believe in grassroots organizing, defeating the power of big money interests in our politics, and fighting for real solutions to human needs. We are both committed to the implementation of single-payer healthcare, opposing militarism and police violence, fighting for truly affordable housing, and ending the abuses of our capitalist system. I have worked actively on these issues for years, and I believe that together we can strengthen community power and forge a better path forward.

2. Are you a democratic socialist? How do you define democratic socialism?

Yes. I have been an activist throughout my life against the negative impacts of capitalism and racism, including fighting against the prison-industrial complex, traveling to Standing Rock to participate in the water protectors encampment to work against the ravages of the oil industry, and more. I know we have to work to put human needs ahead of corporate greed, and that some of the most inhumane suffering we see, from denial of healthcare to those who are suffering, to the skyrocketing homelessness crisis, to mass incarceration, to environmental devastation, are caused by unmitigated capitalism. Part of the solution is to bring forward a system that values all people and puts people ahead of profits while valuing democratic participation. I do not accept corporate campaign contributions and oppose the influence of big money in politics.

I have actively supported and campaigned for DSA candidates, and am continuing to do so, such as Tony Kelley for SF Board of Supervisors and Jovanka Beckles for State Assembly.

3. If elected, how would you relate to East Bay DSA?

If elected, we will engage in participatory governance. To us, that means that Oakland's policies, budgets and the direction of the City will be developed in partnership with community members - this would include East Bay DSA members - willing to help shape a radically progressive agenda for our Town.

4. Describe your top priorities and the policy areas that will be of most interest to you if elected.

Low-Income/Workforce Housing and Homelessness: I will immediately work to address this crisis in our city in the same manner I would if a bomb dropped in the center of Oakland. Because it has. A gentrification bomb has fallen into the middle of our City. If that bomb were literal rather than figurative, we would pull every resource from every area to address the crisis. That is what needs to happen now. Additionally, if Proposition 10 (Repeal Costa Hawkins) passes, the City will need to develop an immediate plan to implement radically progressive rent control policies, including intensifying pressure on the County to provide us with existing resources to interrupt and end this disaster for our most impacted and vulnerable community members.

Equitable city services throughout Oakland: There is no justifiable argument for why the hills and downtown are resourced and clean while the flats of East and West Oakland continue to languish and be covered in litter. Further, the recent Oakland Equity Indicators report gave Oakland a score of 1 out of 100 with respect to pedestrian safety, clearly indicating that the safety of Oakland residents is only prioritized for the privileged. We will implement policies that center on development without gentrification and which will equitably prioritize all of Oakland.

Redefining public safety: For far too long, we have prioritized criminalization over prevention. We need to get a hold of the gun before the bullet is fired - not after. I will work with Council and community to create a budget that invests heavily in education, housing, social services and jobs, and other initiatives proven to improve public safety rather than militarized policing and mass incarceration.

Environmental justice and public health: I understand environmental justice and public health are linked not only to the fight for clean air, water, and soil, but also to the quality of our homes and our neighborhoods; access to fresh, nutritious food, the quality of our public schools; the safety of our streets. Environmental justice is a public health concern and must be connected to the lives of those who suffer the most, our children, our elders, those impacted by poverty, and especially those communities of color pushed out of their homes. A healthy environment also means attending to the culture of fear that many of our residents share, especially our undocumented residents and those in our immigrant communities. Solutions for environmental concerns are intrinsic to the work of City Government, our School Board, our Police and Fire Departments, our Hospitals and Emergency Rooms, as well as the economic powers controlling development in Oakland.

I utilized my platform at KPFA to call attention to the the efforts to fight developers working to bring coal to and through Oakland. I have been on the front lines in the public health fight as well, recently supporting the young people's protest against coal and even reaching out to Phil Tagami to explore his willingness to find a jobs solution that does not

include coal. I will fight to ensure we regain our seat on the Air Quality Control Board and bring much needed funding for programming that will mean a cleaner and healthier Oakland.

5. Please describe your plan to win this race. What is your “win number”? How will you get there?

We will never outraise the incumbent, but with almost 500 volunteers signed up to knock on doors and get on the phones, we will out-organize her. Our plan to win is through a strategic and targeted ground game coupled with both a local and national communications plan that will raise the visibility of the campaign, get more voters to the polls, and increase donations. Part of this plan includes registering and transporting unhoused people who wish to vote to the polls, getting ballots to people inside Santa Rita and Glenn Dyer jails who are eligible to vote, and targeting low-propensity voters. Our win number is 70,000 voters placing Cat Brooks anywhere on the ballot.

6. If endorsed, what participation would you like to see from East Bay DSA in your campaign?

The most important contribution to our campaign is boots on the ground. If that is not possible, we would request that DSA signal boost #thepeoplescampaign messaging and include information about the campaign in your communications to members.

7. What is your campaign budget, and how much have you raised thus far? What is your average donation size? What is your strategy to continue fundraising?

We have a goal to raise \$180,000 by November. We have raised just over \$75,000. Our donations range from \$25 - \$800 with an average of about \$75. We will continue to use social media, call times, and direct asks to raise the remainder of our budget.

8. Do you use public financing?

No. This is a city-wide office and public financing is not available to us.

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.

No

10. Is your race partisan? What is your relationship to your political party, if any? Why?

No

Over the years, I have been registered as both an Independent and a Democrat based on where it strategically made sense to engage in the electoral process to move the needle for justice. I also have had strong criticisms of the Democratic Party and its failure to truly address the needs of Black, Brown, working class and poor people. I am currently registered as a Democrat but not running as one. That is in part because there

are key debates where it will be important to raise radically progressive issues that we would be locked out of if we were not registered under this designation.

11. What community organizations are you a part of?

Anti Police-Terror Project
Lower Bottom Playaz
3 Girls Theater Company
Youth Together
Black Arts Movement Business District
Screen Actors Guild
Oakland Justice Coalition

12. What is your profession? Is a significant portion of your income derived from capital holdings (e.g. investments, property, etc.)

I am the executive director of The Justice Teams Network, a radio host on KPFA, and an actress.

No

13. Describe your record of public service.

I am Cat Brooks - Executive Director of the Justice Teams Network, co-founder of the Anti Police-Terror Project, co-host of KPFA Radio's Upfront, former Executive Director for the San Francisco National Lawyers Guild, a mother, a wife, an organizer, and a proud resident of Oakland, California who has dedicated the last two decades of my life to working on a myriad of social justice issues including land use, education, and police violence.

My work in the struggle for justice for Oscar Grant was transformed into the Anti Police-Terror Project (AFTP), where I became a trailblazer for the Movement for Black Lives. AFTP is a truly grassroots organization whose mission is to rapidly respond to and ultimately eradicate police violence in communities of color. AFTP has successfully developed a model for first response to police violence that centers impacted families; it is currently being replicated in several California cities, and is looked to as a model across the country.

The importance of the voice and needs of the people is at the center of my work. I currently serve as the Executive Director of the Justice Teams Network, a statewide network of organizations working to change the way in which law enforcement engages communities through advocacy, organizing, communications, and policy. Until I stepped down to run for Mayor, I leveraged my role as co-host of KPFA's morning news show "UpFront" to bring the work of justice and equity into a public forum that not only served to educate the public, but also to activate them in moments of engagement and resistance. In addition, during my tenure as Director for the National Lawyers Guild - San

Francisco Bay Area, I guided an organization that provides legal support for organizers and activists on the frontlines of resistance work.

I have an extensive background in fighting for educational equity. I served as the community liaison for The Education Trust, West, and played a leadership role in a campaign that made the A-G curriculum the default curriculum for OUSD, ensuring that every child graduates with the ability to apply to a state school. This experience has anchored my work -- not only as Executive Director of Youth Together, but also on boards and commissions such as the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth.

I have a BA from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in Performance Theater. I trained at the National Royal Theater Studio in London and am currently touring "Tasha", a one-woman show I created about the in-custody murder of Natasha McKenna in the Fairfax County Jail. I live in West Oakland with my daughter and husband.

14. Please list other major endorsements.

Councilmember Rebecca Kaplan
Pastor Harold Mayberry, First AME Church
Pastor Ben McBride
Pastor Michael McBride
Patrisse Cullors, Black Lives Matter
Melina Abdullah, Black Lives Matter
National Union of Healthcare Workers (Sole)
Oakland Rising Action (Sole)
Alliance of Californians For Community Empowerment

Housing

1. Do you support Proposition 10, the Affordable Housing Act?

Yes. California has a major affordable housing crisis with rising rents devastating our communities. We must repeal Costa Hawkins by passing Proposition 10 to solve this problem.

2. What are the causes of the housing crisis in California and the Bay Area?

We need to treat housing as a human right, not just an opportunity for private profit. The housing crisis in the Bay Area is caused by several factors, including the heavy influence in our political system of those who make their money by making housing expensive. We need to use public land for public good, which includes prioritizing the use of public land for affordable/low-cost/workforce housing. In Oakland, the housing crisis has been worsened by an administration that has prioritized high-end housing and used public land for private profit instead of public needs, and has repeatedly failed to demand that developers who build in Oakland invest in the community as part of the deal. We need to build publicly-owned affordable housing so it will not be left to the whims of the market, and to pass laws to help ensure affordability, including rent control. This is why I strongly

support the repeal of Costa Hawkins via Proposition 10, and in Oakland, will work for renter protections on the local level. Another part of the problem is increasing evictions, which is why I support strengthening Just Cause for Eviction to protect tenants from displacement. Finally, it is outrageous that Oakland's administration failed to issue over \$2 million in funding that the Council had authorized for tenant assistance. It is yet another example of the financial neglect and mismanagement that has plagued the current administration, especially with respects to housing.

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.

I will immediately work to get every single unhoused person off of the streets and into transitional housing. To do this, we need to look at alternative housing options like Tiny Homes on public land, city owned warehouses that can be partitioned and equipped with toilets and showers and closed school buildings that can provide immediate shelter.

We will develop and pass a radically progressive rent control policy that includes rent control on all units. We will close landlord loopholes and also work to pass a resolution similar to Measure F in San Francisco that ensures every person facing eviction has a city funded attorney through the process.

We will purchase and refurbish blighted and rundown properties and ensure they are converted to low-cost/workforce housing.

We will work to grow land trusts in the City to ensure people with lower incomes have the ability to secure permanently affordable homes.

We will ensure that all new development is geared toward providing low-income/workforce housing and that any market rate development comes with inclusionary zoning and community benefit agreements.

Finally, we will impose a tiered real estate transfer tax that makes it less lucrative for people to buy and flip properties in Oakland.

Healthcare

1. Do you support Medicare for All, and what would such a system entail?

Yes. Medicare for All, single-payer healthcare for everyone. (Similar to Canada and other countries).

The United States has approximately 30 million uninsured people and millions more are severely underinsured. Even so, the US spends millions more per capita on health insurance than other similar countries like Canada, France, Germany and the United Kingdom only to produce worse health outcomes that particularly impact working class poor people of color.

While Americans are literally dying due to our unsustainable and unfair healthcare system, insurance and pharmaceutical companies are raking in billions in annual profits.

We need healthcare system that provides no-cost comprehensive healthcare to every single person in this country without limitations or restrictions. This looks like:

- Health coverage for undocumented people
- Health coverage for same sex couples
- Health coverage for Trans peoples
- No out of pocket expenses
- No insurance premiums, deductibles or copayments
- Inclusion of dental and vision

This system should be paid for by a tiered tax increase - meaning the wealthier pay more. This small tax increase will be nothing compared to the thousands of dollars we currently shovel out (or don't and get more sick or die) every single year.

2. If elected, how will you use your position to fight for Medicare for All?

As Mayor, my attention must be centered on the healthcare needs of a diverse city. Efforts to advocate for universal coverage are absolutely critical for quality of life. We need to direct efforts to change the landscape of healthcare in Oakland by simultaneously developing and supporting measures that promote preventative care and provide equitable health solutions for all Oakland residents. I will actively work to help pass universal single-payer healthcare in California, and to use the power of and state lobbyist for the City of Oakland to push for its passage. I will also use my platform to advocate for Medicare for All at the national level

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?

The issues in our current education system are many and severe. They include but are not limited to:

- High teacher dissatisfaction, burnout and turnover.
- Inconsistent academic rigor in the classrooms leaving students unprepared for college once they get there
- High numbers of teachers are non credentialed
- Black and Brown students don't see teachers that look like them
- School to Prison Pipeline, disproportionately impacting Black and Brown youth
- Racial disparities in referrals, suspension and expulsion
- College Readiness is not a priority in scheduling, counseling and family engagement given the level of crisis our schools are in.
- Loss of 50% of AA students district-wide since 2004.
- Unaddressed/untreated trauma in our students, families and school staff
- Lack of arts or trade/skilled labor options in schools

- Police in our schools
- Lack of before and after school programming

Our education policy team, led by Maureen Benson has developed “Education as a Vital Sign” which would provide a model that focuses on teacher recruitment and retention., This model seeks to address the first 7 of these items. In addition, we intend to partner with the unions, OUSD, and local organizations to focus on the impacts of state sanctioned violence, gentrification, lack of arts/trade, and provisions of before and after school programming to support enrichment and extended day activities for youth.

Finally, we need to create full-service community schools that serve the whole family. Schools should be community hubs that social and nonprofit services feed into. Schools can and should be open seven days a week, offering support with things like adult education, conflict resolution, substance abuse counseling and more. This takes the pressure off of teachers to solve every single social ill and allows them to focus on what we want them to do best: teach.

2. What is the role of charter schools in your desired education system? Would you support a immediate, statewide moratorium on charter schools in California?

The Oakland Unified School District is set to close up to 30 schools this school year. Under those conditions, there is no way I could support the building of any more charter schools in our City. Charter schools are a technical answer to an adaptive problem. Without addressing systemic racism and classism in public education, you inevitably re-create significant inequities. Often, these inequities disproportionately impact our most marginalized schools, forcing parents who are most impacted to make difficult choices, myself included. The reality is that choosing between a sizzling frying pan and a pot of boiling water isn't really a choice, yet this is the reality for parents of color across our City every single school year. We need massive reinvestment in our public schools while increasing accountability and transparency from existing charter schools.

3. 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?

Working with teachers unions, we must oppose the epidemic of union-busting that has taken over much of the country. We must focus on a city wide initiative that will center several main areas to create the most effective, supported, and highly retained teaching force for our schools. This would include:

- Creating conditions in schools that prioritize teacher-led collaborative development, administrative support, and influence in governance of the school/district
- Redistribution of city budget to in order to subsidize teacher salaries that makes us competitive and will attract and retain educators; including providing housing benefits
- Ensuring adequate preparation prior to entering the field

- Prioritizing our highest-need schools as a method to interrupt the system of inequitable resource distribution in our schools. Specifically, the City should support adequate implementation of the Local Control Funding Formula and ensure these designated dollars go to where they are supposed to.

We intend to create a scalable US model for teacher recruitment, development, compensation and working conditions that would interrupt the high attrition rates in urban school districts and create equitable results for our most marginalized youth.

Anti-Militarism

1. How will you use your office to oppose war and imperialism?

One of the greatest powers that the Mayor has is that of the bully pulpit. I will use my platform to advocate against both war and imperialism.

2. Do you support the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions movement to oppose the occupation of Palestine?

Yes. I am on record in media interviews, on social media, and in rallies about my support for BDS.

Police & Prisons

1. How will you use your office to fight against police brutality and other forms of state violence?

I have spent more than a decade of my life solely focused on challenging state violence and supporting its survivors. Moving from activist to Mayor, I will hold members of the Oakland Police Department truly accountable for their actions - a practice wholly inconsistent with that of the current administration. I will make clear through my statements and actions that police brutality is not tolerated in Oakland, and will use my platform to connect the concept of state violence to our current immigration system, our treatment of the unhoused, our treatment of sex workers, and other areas where state violence negatively impacts our community members. Additionally, I will continue to support legislation like AB 931 and SB 1421 that erode at the many vehicles law enforcement agencies have to evade accountability.

2. What policies do you support to reduce and end mass incarceration?

- Diversion programs
- Reduction of law enforcement numbers and budgets
- Moratorium on incarceration of drug or other low-level, non-violent offenses
- A complete elimination of youth incarceration and interruption of the school-to-prison pipeline.

The Environment

1. What's your ideal timetable for phasing out fossil fuel production and consumption including coal, oil and natural gas?

The City of Oakland should - and will, under my leadership - commit immediately to a date by which all the energy consumption in Oakland is 100% clean and renewable. Every natural gas-fired power plant powering our city contributes to air and water pollution for communities impacted by fracking, particularly communities of color where these toxic sites are typically located. A reasonable deadline to do so would be by 2030 at the latest, and I will push to reach this goal even sooner. But we don't have time to wait - ideally, our nation's reliance on polluting fossil fuels should end immediately. As Mayor I will fight any proposals like the scheme to ship coal through the former Oakland Army Base that pollute our air at home or our global climate. But Oakland's biggest issues with air pollution and some of our largest contributions to global climate change come in the form of transportation emissions. I will work to improve access to transit, biking and walking infrastructure that increases public safety, is accessible to all our communities, and improves the quality of the air that our children breathe.

2. Please describe your vision for combating climate change, both globally and locally. How will you use your office to fight climate change?

As a nation, I believe, we need to rejoin the Paris Accord Agreement immediately. At the local level, I stand in solidarity with our community and will work to prevent the transportation of coal through our city, disperse city resources equitably so that all of our city streets are free from trash and debris, and fight to retrieve our seat on the Bay Area Air Quality Control Board.

Immigration

1. How will you use your office to fight against deportations and other attacks on immigrant communities?

For years, I have stood in solidarity with our immigrant and undocumented communities. Most recently, I went to the border to stand with Mijente and locally stood with thousands demanding family reunification at the Richmond Detention Center, in addition to supporting the hunger strikers at the Federal Building in Oakland. At the state level, legislators must work to truly ensure California is a sanctuary state. Locally, we must refuse to collaborate with ICE, complete an audit of city information collected on our residents that can be mined by ICE, immediately cease the practice of undocumented people being picked up from our local jails, and join our community to put pressure on Sheriff Gregory Ahern to end his practice of collusion with ICE.

2. How would you use your office to strengthen the rights of immigrants and their access to public services and quality of life?

Last summer, when the Oakland police department actively assisted ICE with a raid in West Oakland, I stood in solidarity with community and denounced it. When Mayor Schaaf wrongly claimed that the family who was attacked by ICE had engaged in human trafficking, I stood in solidarity with the family and denounced the participation of

OPD in ICE raids. When the Oakland City Council then considered a ban on all OPD collusion with ICE, I supported that effort, and was pleased that it passed.

As Mayor, I would continue to stand in solidarity with immigrant communities. My actions would be informed by impacted communities and the organizations that advocate endlessly on their behalf. Additionally, I would use my platform to continue to advocate for programs and protections at the State and National level.

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?

Progress isn't progress if it does not benefit everyone. One of the ways in which I would use the powers of the Mayor's office is in the creation of a budget that is equitable in nature, that provides more services and dollars to our ignored communities of color and that prioritizes spending on law enforcement. Sanctuary in Oakland would mean sanctuary for all; sanctuary from ICE, sanctuary from police violence, and sanctuary from fascists coming into our community.

2. How would you fight against the criminalization of people of color?

The tone and tenor in our communities toward people of color flows from City Hall and into our streets. For example, there is no difference between the violent way in which #joggerjoe (Henry Sintay) threw Drew's belongings into the lake and trash cans and the violent clearing of homeless encampments by the current administration. The administration must set an example for the people by denouncing and ending such practices.

Taxation

1. How do you propose to change our budget and tax structure (on the federal, state, or municipal level) to better fund public services?

Not only does OPD accrue over thirty million dollars in unauthorized overtime yearly, their budget for 2018 is nearly \$500 million dollars. I would propose to not only close the unauthorized overtime loophole, I would call for a comprehensive audit of the Oakland Police Department to determine where funds can be cut.

Additionally, I support a tiered Real Estate Transfer Tax which would make it less lucrative for people to purchase and flip houses in our City while increasing our revenues and I am interested in exploring a business tax based on gross receipts that would support businesses making large profits in the City of Oakland to pay their fair share.

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.

My father was a card-carrying member of IATSE Local 720. My first experiences with labor unions impacted me deeply; as my father fell on hard times, it was the union who took care of him, and of me. The level of loyalty and commitment I saw from the Union as a young girl made me a union girl for life.

As a Screen Actors Guild member, I understand the need for strong labor unions who stand on the front lines in the fight to improve conditions for everyday working people. During the big commercial strike in Los Angeles in 2000, I was not yet a Union member. When I was offered a commercial job, I called the Union to ask them what to do. They told me to accept the job, show up for the job and then walk off the job in support of the strike. I did...and got my SAG card!

2. What is the role of the labor movement in achieving your policy priorities?

Labor has a long history of being a critical ally in the fight for social justice. With the passing of the JANUS decision, the partnership between labor and community has never been more crucial as we continue the struggle for workers rights and human rights. Strong rank and file labor unions are the counterbalance that is needed against the escalating attacks on working people and the weakening of workplace rights.

3. What specific labor or workers rights policies will you pursue?

- Card Check Agreements for all new development
- Card Check Agreements for existing businesses
- Right to Organize
- Enforcement of the minimum wage ordinance with a push to increase to a living wage
- Support of demands for full healthcare benefits, including paid sick leave and vacation
- Passage of the Times Up Initiative
- Whistleblower Protection Policies