

Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club

Endorsement: Sun, Aug 11th at 10am-1pm, SFPL Koret Auditorium

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Carmen Chu, San Francisco Assessor-Recorder

August 10, 2018

President Glendon Anna Conda Hyde and the Harvey Milk LGBTQ Club members,

Thank you for providing me with an opportunity to share my core values, and accomplishments. I believe the results of my work have earned me the endorsements of colleagues from across the city, including Mayor London Breed, Senator Scott Wiener, Assemblymembers David Chiu and Phil Ting, Supervisors Vallie Brown, Malia Cohen, Sandra Lee Fewer, Rafael Mandelman, Aaron Peskin, Hillary Ronen, Ahsha Safai, Catherine Stefani, Katy Tang, Norman Yee, and others.

Underpinning my public service are core values shaped as a daughter of immigrants. My parents first came to the United States with little. They could not speak English and supported our family by sewing and working in kitchens. Growing up I saw how much they struggled to provide. My family taught me the importance of hard work, of providing a helping hand when you can and of valuing, respecting and uplifting the contributions of diverse communities. As a public leader, I believe it is my responsibility to ensure our City is open, inclusive and protects opportunities for all our residents – new and old, neighborhood to neighborhood.

As Assessor, I am committed to providing effective and ethical leadership for San Francisco in an area that is critical for our City's success in tackling this issue - the strengthening of our financial foundation.

The reality is that property taxes is the single largest funding source for local general services. In my first term, I have been proud to lead the implementation of new technology and smarter business practices that have made a difference for the City. For example, our prioritization and process changes in capturing the value of new construction activity added roughly \$11 billion in new assessments last year alone – a twenty-fold increase compared to when I first started. And, over the last five years, my office exceeded expectations on revenue growth by over half a billion dollars! This means more resources to address equity concerns when it comes to quality education for all students and affordable housing.

Part of creating an equitable place to live includes ensuring fair taxation and holding all taxpayers accountable, including our largest corporations. As Assessor, I've spearheaded legislation to close loopholes and strengthen our transfer tax laws. Combined with our new transfer tax audit program, we discovered close to \$40 million in underreported transfer tax and penalties!

In addition, we continue to work closely with our partners to ensure we help in the City's goals of preserving and creating affordable housing. We've worked with our non-profit partners to proactively connect residents to foreclosure prevention services, are helping to identify unusual eviction patterns and we've streamlined our mapping and assessment processes to remove barriers to the development of housing, especially public-private partnerships with large affordable housing components. At the State level, in my role as Chair of Standards for the California Assessor's Association, I work with the State Board of Equalization to fairly apply affordable housing exemptions and valuations for local community land trusts – all strategies aimed towards reducing the cost of housing.

I've invested in new technology to alleviate our burden on residents and to create more transparency. We launched electronic recordings and filing, brought our information and services online and built a new website that is easier to navigate and understand. We've safeguarded our data and systems for disaster recovery and have converted and consolidated over 2.6 million vital records from paper to searchable digital files. Partnering with the Controller, and Tax Collector, we've already begun the process for overhauling our dated tax and collections system to improve efficiency and protect our revenue.

As San Franciscans we face many pressures. We face pressures to our immigrant communities from the federal government, challenges to public safety and top of mind are pressures from high housing costs and income insecurity. That's why I also initiated and effort to connect communities to vital resources across the City. To-date, we've helped over 800 families access free one-on-one counseling from pro-bono estate and tax attorneys, certified financial planners, property tax professionals, financial aid non-profits and affordable housing providers. Events such as these affirm my commitment to an inclusive government that cares about the success of all its residents.

Thank you for your consideration.

Carmen Chu
San Francisco Assessor
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