

Harvey Milk Democratic Club

Endorsement Questionnaire | Short Answers

1) Please describe your qualifications for the position you seek. Include any key endorsements you'd like to share plus anything else that you would like our Members to know about you and your candidacy.

As a recent alumnus of UC Berkeley, I just finished my term as the campus student association's External Affairs Vice President (EAVP), where I was responsible for advocating on behalf of the campus's 40,000 students at every level of government. Under my leadership, my office stopped a proposed tuition hike, protested a UC Regent accused of sexual harassment until he resigned, and galvanized students around the closure of the Alta Bates Medical Center. I also served as the University Affairs Chair of the UC Student Association, where I advocated on behalf of students on a number of issues, from police accountability to basic needs insecurity.

I've been endorsed by almost every member of the Berkeley City Council: Mayor Jesse Arreguin, and Councilmembers Kriss Worthington, Lori Droste, Ben Barlett, Sophie Hahn, Susan Wengraf, Linda Maio, and Kate Harrison. I've also been endorsed by the Community Power Slate for Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board — Board Commissioners John Selawsky, Paola Laverde, Maria Poblet, and James Chang, and Soli Alpert — as well as former Assembly Speaker John A. Perez.

2) What are your plans to address housing affordability and economic inequality in the region you wish to represent? What have you done to address this crisis, if anything?

Berkeley is facing an affordable housing crisis, and far too many residents — students and non-students alike — are suffering as a result. To make matters worse, increased student enrollment is pushing the gentrifying force of campus farther and farther into the surrounding community.

As UC Berkeley students' EAVP, I pushed for the More Student Housing Now resolution, which would loosen zoning requirements in the immediate vicinity of campus. As Councilmember, I'll push for zoning requirements that allow for taller, denser buildings around campus — while fighting for more units that are affordable.

I'm also a strong supporter of repealing the Costa Hawkins Rental Housing Act so that we can protect tenants and small businesses with rent control and vacancy control; I

endorsed Proposition 10, and traveled to Sacramento earlier this year to speak in favor of Assembly Bill 1506 (Bloom).

3) The anti-black racial biases of both the police and the criminal justice system is well-documented. What are the most important actions that you can take in your office to stabilize and support the African American community against these threats?

Keeping our residents safe means ensuring that local police are more accountable to the community they serve — especially when the Center for Policing Equity found that Black people are six times more likely than white people to be subjected to use of force by a police officer in Berkeley. As EAVP, I supported efforts to pull the city's police department out of Urban Shield while strengthening the city's Police Review Commission; as Councilmember, I'll do the same.

4) What would you describe as your most important actions or plans to support the LGBTQ community?

I view uplifting the LGBTQ community as one of my most important responsibilities as a Councilmember. When I was serving in the student senate of my campus' student association, members of the Queer Alliance Resource Center (QARC) launched a campaign to secure a physical space in our student union. My senate class met that demand and passed a resolution to reallocate space so that QARC would have a physical community space to meet and organize in. I have worked to be an ally to LGBTQ advocacy wherever I can, including voting for a resolution in the student association to urge the campus to allow for students to self-identify their gender on academic records. I hope to bring that same commitment of allyship to my work in City Hall. It is important to recognize too that a disproportionately high share of homeless individuals are estimated to be LGBTQ. Protecting vulnerable LGBTQ youth from ending up on the streets must be a priority of any city official.