

Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club

Questionnaire for Candidates for November 2018

Dear Candidate,

Congratulations on declaring your candidacy! The Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club invites you to get to know us a little better as we plan our endorsements for the November 2018 election cycle. Your participation in our Club's questionnaire will allow our Membership to better understand who you are, what you stand for, and what you plan to accomplish if you get elected to office.

*There are two parts to our questionnaire. **Part 1 is a series of short-answer questions, less than 150 words. Part 2 is a simple set of Yes/No questions** covering a broad set of issues. If necessary, please expand upon your responses in Part 2 separately.*

E-mail all questionnaires to Political Action Committee (PAC) Chair Tom Temprano at pac@milkclub.org and to our Correspondent at correspondent@milkclub.org.

Good Luck,
The Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club

Required Information

Full Name: Sheng Thao

Office Sought: Oakland City Council District 4

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Are you a member of the Harvey Milk Club? Since when? No

Do you identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ)? No

PART 1: Short-Answer Questionnaire
(Please limit responses to 5 sentences or 150 words)

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.

I'm a daughter of refugees, a single mother to my talented 11 year old son, a domestic violence survivor and I co-founded the Bear Pantry at Cal (a food access program). For the past 5 years, I've worked on the Oakland City Council as senior staff to Councilmember At-Large, Rebecca Kaplan. During these past 5 years I've work on resolving community issues, written progressive legislation, policies and ballot measures, including Oakland's Measure JJ (renter protection). The District 4 seat is an open seat, and Oakland is faced with many serious issues, including homelessness and housing insecurity, I'm the only candidate that can be an effective and experience leader who can start on day one. As an effective representative, I will use the strong, working relationships that I have cultivated with the other Councilmembers, City Administration and Mayor's office to bridge the gaps and build consensus to get good policy and legislation passed. Moreover, one of the Council's most important responsibility is to pass a transparent and balanced budget, a tough task as the city only has minimal resources. For the past two budget cycles, I led the charge for the At-Large office, leading for a progressive budget. As the District 4 representative, I will continue to work with the community and fight for a progressive, transparent and balanced budget.

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?

We need to get the unhoused off the streets immediately. Recently, the city purchased an older, vacant hotel to house some of the people living on the streets and bring in wrap around services, including social services, mental health services and substance abuse services. The city just received \$9 million from the State for homeless solutions/implementation, we should purchase another building for transitional housing and continue to work with the County and our local non-profits for wrap around services. Moreover, we need to build a lot more, here's my plan:

- Rezone for transit-oriented development. People are moving to Oakland, and if we truly care about not displacing Oaklanders, we need to expand our housing stock. Part of expanding our housing stock is rezoning to encourage building vertically and denser. We must build at all income levels, including affordable and deeply affordable housing.*
- Amend Oakland's requirement of minimum parking spaces that must be built when developing housing. For developers, developing TOD's, we can create incentives, such as lowering the parking requirements to increase the number of units. We can then build more units, use this as an incentive for private developers to build affordable housing.*
- Streamlining the permitting process. Currently, the permitting process is clogged, we must make the process easier by addressing the low-hanging issues, such as requiring creation of inspectors who can inspect for both building and fire standards - so that developers/contractors are not given contradicting information.*
- Encouraging homeowners to put in accessory dwelling units. I've worked on legislation that will ease the permitting process for ADU's in Oakland.*

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?

Addressing anti-black racial biases is extremely to me. I'm a strong supporter of bail reform, bias2 training and hiring locally for our law enforcement officers. One of the most important actions that I can take as District 4 City Councilmember, is to continue my work to hold the City Administration accountable for where we solicit for new hires for our officers. It's important that we have a diverse force and work with our partners to ensure we are adequately requiring bias training – for different areas, including towards our African American and LGBTQ communities. It is also important that we encourage and support restorative justice programs, such as the Barbara Shop Series, in our communities and immediately stop the criminalization of our unhoused community (who is made of 85% African American men), and our black and brown youth. It's also important that we support our state legislations, such as bail reform. As Councilmember, I will support such measures and work with my colleagues to pass a City Resolution to put Oakland on the record as supporting measures that will help stabilize and support the African American community against these threats.

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

I will continue to work with you, other organizations, and community members to advance legislation/policy and projects that will strengthen support for the LGBTQ community. As Chief of Staff to Oakland's first out lesbian public official, I have worked on policy and legislation such as gender neutral restrooms, supporting our LGBTQ small business owners, and have started the conversation around a possible partnership with a local theatre to play LGBTQ films. Oakland is celebrating its one-year anniversary of the LGBTQ Community Center and I will continue to support the center. It's imperative that our LGBTQ youth and community have access to a safe space and resources.

PART 2: Yes/No Questionnaire

Please check **Yes** or **No** for each question.

GENERAL	YES	NO
1. Are you registered to vote as a Democrat?	X	
2. Have you ever run for elected office before?		X
3. Do you have a campaign consultant or other main point of contact? If so, who? _____ TargetSmart Communications	X	
4. Have you ever sought the Harvey Milk Club endorsement in the past?		X

LGBTQ ISSUES

YES NO

5. Do you support public funding for employment development specifically for transgender individuals?	X	
6. Do you support expanding LGBTQ curriculum in our public schools?	X	

TENANT, HOUSING, AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

YES NO

7. Do you support the expansion of rent control for buildings constructed after 1979?	X	
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8. Have you ever been involved as homeowner, buyer or agent in the eviction of a tenant? If so, please explain at the end of the questionnaire.		X
9. Do you support requiring Short Term Rental platforms (e.g. AirBnB, VRBO) to publish registration numbers for properly-registered short-term rentals on their respective websites; handing over booking data to the Planning Department; and increasing funding for enforcement capacity?	X	
12. Do you support the statewide ballot initiative Prop 10 to repeal Costa-Hawkins?	X	

IMMIGRATION JUSTICE ISSUES

YES NO

13. Do you support Sanctuary City?	X	
14. Do you support due process protections for immigrant youth accused of crimes?	X	
15. Do you support localities allowing noncitizens to vote in local elections, including but not limited to School Board?	X	
16. Do you support expanding funding for immigrant defense services?	X	

SOCIAL JUSTICE, PUBLIC HEALTH, AND LABOR ISSUES

YES NO

20. Do you support the implementation of supervised injection sites?	X	
21. Did you support allowing localities to allow some bars to serve liquor until 4 AM?	X	
22. Do you support the decriminalization of sex work?	X	
23. Have you ever crossed a union picket line or violated a union boycott? If so, explain below. <i>I've never crossed a picket line – as a matter of fact, I stood next to my union brothers and sisters during our 7 day strike at Oakland City Hall. I'm a IFPTE Local 21 member.</i>		X
24. Do you support efforts to allow employees of Uber, Lyft and other ridesharing services to unionize?	X	
25. Do you support requiring an independent investigation of all police officer-related shootings?	X	
26. Do you support the use of tasers by law enforcement?		X
27. Do you support the death penalty?		X

EDUCATION AND YOUTH**YES NO**

28. Do you support lowering the voting age to 16 for local elections?	X	
29. Do you support Common Core education standards?		X
30. Do you support teacher training to implement alternatives to suspension in instances of disruption or willful defiance?	X	

ENVIRONMENTAL AND TRANSPORTATION ISSUES**YES NO**

31. Do you ride public transit on a regular basis? More than once a week?	X	
32. Do you support community choice aggregation?	X	
33. Do you support expanding free access to public transit for seniors and disabled persons?	X	
34. Do you support requiring ridesharing companies (e.g. Uber, Lyft) to provide trip data to local government order to operate in your locality?	X	