



## Marjan Philhour Biography

My life story is **rooted in the Richmond**. I was born at French Hospital on 6th Avenue and Geary Boulevard to parents who immigrated to the US from the Philippines and Iran. Today, I'm Raising my three kids in the Richmond with my husband, Byron, while also operating a small business on Balboa Street with my sister, Sarah.

I am running because the community I love is at a **tipping point**. For too long, politicians have let the challenges facing the Richmond fester without taking action. Homelessness continues to rise, car break-ins have become commonplace, the streets are dirtier than they've ever been, beloved small businesses are closing, and rents are at an all time high. And now, the threat of the coronavirus highlights the need for **competent, skilled leadership** at all levels of government.

My background in public service began with my first political mentor, the late Congressman Tom Lantos, the only Holocaust survivor ever to serve in the US Congress. He impressed upon me this core principle: "The first responsibility of a public servant is to their constituents." In Washington, D.C., I worked with two Congresswomen, Lynn Rivers (D-Michigan) and Nita Lowey (D-New York), and with the Committee on Education and the Workforce, fighting to preserve protections for organized labor, women, educators, and the environment. I served as Senior Advisor to the California Governor's Chief of Staff and, upon returning to San Francisco, launched a career **fighting to ensure a place at the table** for women of color. Until recently, I served as Senior Advisor to Mayor London Breed.

I am a proven leader who deeply understands the issues facing the Richmond and has comprehensive plans to address them. And I have the **skills and experience** to cut through the bureaucracy at City Hall to make things happen. I believe that every one of our neighborhoods should be **clean, safe, and vibrant**. I'll fight to bring more trash cans and street cleaning to our merchant corridors. I'll introduce legislation to create more new homes so that people can afford to live here, including the **affordable housing** that we've been promised for years but hasn't been delivered. I'll fight for more Navigation Centers, permanent supportive housing, and mental health and addiction treatment beds to help people out of homelessness and off the streets.

I will advocate for **faster action to make our streets safer** and ensure that our seniors and children can live without fear. I'll push to require regular reporting and community notices on the Geary BRT project so that it is delivered on-time with as **little impact** on the community as possible. I'll demand that the City increase transparency and accountability so that we know that

our tax dollars are being spent responsibly. I am determined to make the City work for all of us, whether you're a small business owner who wants to open a new store, or a neighbor who just wants to add an in-law unit to their home so that their grandparents can age in place.

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### **Issue Areas**

- Police Reform & Racial Equity
  - Public Health / COVID-19
  - Budget Priorities
  - Homelessness
  - Clean Streets
  - Public Safety
  - Supporting Small Businesses
  - Housing
  - Education
  - Labor
  - Transportation & Pedestrian Safety
  - Campaign Finance
  - LGBTQ+ Equality
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### **Police Reform & Racial Equity**

Our police departments and our entire criminal justice system must undergo transformational systemic reform.

The images we've seen of police attacking protesters throughout the country have been horrifying and it's clear that serious changes are needed. While I'm not optimistic that we'll see action at the federal level with this President or Senate, there is plenty we can do at the local level to institute police reform. Luckily here in SF that reform roadmap has already been created, it's just a matter of leadership to hold the Department accountable for getting it done.

Sadly, our current Board of Supervisors has failed to fully pursue the serious systemic reform required by President Obama's Justice Department. The last time the Board of Supervisors held a full meeting on these reforms was over three years ago.

In 2015, following a number of high-profile shootings by police, Mayor Ed Lee and then-Chief Greg Suhr asked President Obama's Justice Department for a review of the SFPD. The Justice Department came back with 272 actionable recommendations for reform.

(<https://sfgov.org/policecommission/us-department-justice-collaborative-reform-initiative>)

With Trump's election the Administration pulled out of this process in 2017, but the State Justice Department stepped in to continue monitoring the reforms. In March 2020, the State found **SFPD in full compliance with only 40 of the recommendations.**

(<https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/attachments/press-docs/Final%20Hillard%20Heintze%20Phase%20II%20Report%20for%20the%20San%20Francisco%20Police%20Department-1.pdf>)

This is not to say that nothing has been done. SFPD has prioritized reforms relating to use of force and the progress is clear. In the past year, use of force by the SFPD is down 27%. Since 2016, use of force is down 47%. However, force is still disproportionately used against Black and brown people.

There is no shortage of elected officials speaking out at this moment, and that is a good thing. There are going to be a number of difficult decisions to make in the upcoming budget, with the City facing a budget deficit of upwards of \$1.5 billion. Funding for police, and every department, will see cuts.

As a member of the Board of Supervisors I will make it my priority to keep up the political pressure on the Department to finalize the full list of reforms, and then look beyond to the next steps SFPD can take to ensure not one more life is taken. Three years without a full hearing is unacceptable. We cannot wait for the attention to shift away from this issue, we need to use this moment to continue pushing for these reforms to happen faster, because they're needed today.

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### **Public Health / COVID-19**

The coronavirus is impacting every aspect of our lives. We owe a debt of gratitude to so many: from our first responders — our firefighters and health care professionals — to the neighbors who go to work each day to keep the shelves stacked at the grocery store.

This is going to be a challenge unlike any we can remember. The City has taken encouraging steps so far in an effort to stop the spread of disease, as well as enacting a moratorium on evictions of residents and small businesses unable to pay rent due to coronavirus, and stepping up to support merchants and the workers they employ who are being hit hard by this economic turmoil. We should all be concerned about what will happen when people who are responsible for property taxes and mortgages find themselves without income. The limited, even chaotic response of the federal government has been discouraging: we still do not have on-demand testing nationwide or a coherent national plan for how we are going to meet this challenge at the scale required.

We will get through this. The steps that we take now to slow the spread of transmission are necessary and will pay off in the long run. In the meantime, we need continued action from the City and the state, since the federal government is not coming to the rescue any time soon. This means funds to support businesses, extended unemployment and supportive food benefits, delayed City tax and fee collection, public-private partnerships, and philanthropic investments.

We need to provide rent relief for our renters and mortgage relief for our homeowners. We can't be afraid to try anything that will make an immediate difference in people's lives.

We all need to do our part too. That includes the basics like washing hands frequently and sheltering in place for non-essential activities. It also means calling our isolated neighbors and supporting your local small businesses that are struggling to get by. Even little things like buying an online gift card to your favorite local restaurant will make a big difference. Our local merchants on Clement, Balboa, Geary, and all over the Richmond and our City as a whole need our support.

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### **Budget Priorities**

Because of COVID-19, we are facing a recession and an economy that will be changed forever. Businesses are realizing they don't have to stay in San Francisco and their employees are realizing they don't have to live in San Francisco. Our tax base is going to be hit like it's never been hit before. We are facing a \$1.7 billion deficit over the next two years and 10% cuts have been ordered across all City departments by the Mayor. As Supervisor, I will fight to make sure that access to City services used by our most vulnerable populations are not disrupted. That means ensuring funding for homelessness, mental health services, and affordable housing. We must also ensure that SFMTA has proper funding to limit the amount of MUNI lines it needs to cut. Cuts to MUNI will disproportionately affect our lower income and disadvantaged residents. I also support the Mayor's proposal to increase funding for racial equity.

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### **Homelessness**

#### **More Navigation Centers**

San Francisco is on pace to add 1,000 new shelter beds by the end of the year, the largest expansion in 30 years. This has resulted in the nightly waitlist for shelter dropping, though it still sits at around 1,000 people every night who want a place to sleep and don't have one. We need to continue to expand our shelter system and open more Navigation Centers wherever we can. People are safer, healthier, and better able to exit homelessness when they have a place to sleep, and our entire community is better served when people are provided with shelter and services.

#### **More Affordable Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing**

While shelters solve for sleep, housing is how we ultimately solve homelessness. The recent \$600 million affordable housing bond is a good start that will help us build hundreds of affordable units and supportive housing units for people exiting homeless, which also then frees up spaces in our shelter system. But we know that's not enough. We need continued investment

from the City, as well as from our state and federal partners, to make sure that we create the homes we need.

### **Treating Mental Health and Addiction Issues**

It is important to recognize that not everyone experiencing homelessness is also experiencing mental health and addiction issues. However, we know from the City's Director of Mental Health Reform that 4,000 people in San Francisco are suffering from a combination of homelessness, mental illness, and addiction.

These are the most challenging individuals to help and there's no one answer that will solve the problem. We need to be willing to try whatever is necessary to get them the help they need.

That includes:

- More mental health and substance use treatment beds.
- Sensible harm-reduction plans.
- Protecting board and care facilities that care for long-term clients.
- Continuing to audit our system of care to ensure that all of our resources are being used effectively and ensuring that there are no gaps in the system.

### **Conservatorship**

For a very small subset of this population who suffer from the most severe combination of mental illness and addiction, we need stronger conservatorship laws to compel them into treatment when they are unable to care for themselves. [We saw recently in The Chronicle that these laws have not been used yet.](#) These are the folks whose condition is deteriorating on our streets every day and the City is unable to do anything about it as they continue to get sicker and sicker while cycling in and out of our hospitals and the criminal justice system without ever getting sustained treatment.

While the City is on pace to begin the conservatorship process for up to 100 people, the restrictions on this process remain too severe. Right now, a person has to be subject to eight separate '5150' holds in one year, which are 72 hour holds instituted for their own safety. This is too high of a standard - we must heed the Governor's call to lower this standard while maintaining strict safeguards to protect the rights of patients.

It is not progressive to allow people to die on our streets when we have the ability to help them. It is our duty to get them the care and treatment they so clearly need.

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## **Clean Streets**

### **Increase frequency of street cleaning, BigBelly trash cans, and Pit Stops**

There is simply no excuse for the state of our streets. All of our neighborhoods should be clean, no matter where in the Richmond you live. As Supervisor, I will prioritize:

#### **Regular Street Cleaning**

Many streets in the Richmond receive street cleaning less frequently than in other parts of the City. We need more frequent cleanings, especially in our high-traffic corridors such as Geary, Balboa, and Clement.

#### **More Secure Public Trash Cans**

BigBelly trash cans, which are secure and hold more trash than a standard can to eliminate overflows, have become commonplace in other parts of the City. There's no reason the Richmond shouldn't have more of these types of bins throughout our District.

This is a simple concept--if we want to prevent littering, we should make it as easy as possible to throw away their trash. And once that trash has been thrown away, we need to ensure that it stays in the trash can until it is picked up.

#### **More Staffed Public Restrooms**

The staffed Pit Stop at Ocean Beach has been a big success. We should explore opening more Pit Stops in highly-trafficked areas that currently lack easy access to restrooms.

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## **Supporting Small Businesses**

We have all seen the increase in vacant storefronts in the Richmond and throughout San Francisco. Some of this is a result of a change in consumer trends, such as an increase in online shopping. But a lot of it also has to do with San Francisco's broken bureaucracy, which I experienced first hand when I opened my small business on Balboa Street. It is something I hear about constantly from small business owners in the Richmond, and it is part of the reason I helped to form the Balboa Village Merchants Association, to support our small businesses as they work through the process at City Hall. And in the wake of COVID-19, our small businesses will be hurting more than ever and will face economic hardships unseen since the Great Recession. Our small businesses are such an important part of our vibrant neighborhoods. We must be willing to try everything to support them and keep them open.

#### **Making it Easier for Small Businesses to Open**

San Francisco makes it too difficult, too time-consuming, and too expensive to open a new small business. Currently, a prospective store owner must sign a lease before they can apply for

a permit at City Hall. This process can take anywhere from four months to a year, meaning the business owner has to pay rent while the City bureaucracy takes its time. This can mean tens of thousands in dollars in costs before a business even opens.

I will push to create an over-the-counter permitting system, meaning if a new business follows all the rules and meets the requirements set forth by the City, they receive their permit in a matter of weeks, not years.

### **Making it Easier for Small Businesses to Operate**

Once a small business does manage to open, the City needs to offer more support. This means ensuring that our streets are clean, transportation improvements are completed on-time with as little disruption as possible, and regular promotions are run to encourage shopping in our merchant corridors.

It also means making it easier for businesses to change their business model without having to go through a series of hoops at City Hall. There's no reason a bookstore that wants to serve coffee at night should need to wait months for a permit, or that Orson's Belly should have to wait 14 months to receive a permit to serve vermouth, only for one anonymous complaint to delay them for months when they want to simply extend their hours.

### **Update Zoning and Permitting Laws**

Studies show that the retail market is splitting - the only successful brick and mortar retail is low end (think Big Lots, Ross, etc.) and high end or experiential retail (luxury boutiques). This is a symptom of bigger economic trends of the declining middle class. What we see being financially viable in storefronts are experiences: restaurants, bars, cafes, gyms, hair and nail salons, boutique fitness - all things that can't go online. So with fewer options on what is financially viable to fill storefronts, we as a City, have to be more welcoming of innovative ways to activate our streets. We need to change zoning and permitting laws to allow businesses to easily adapt to their changing consumers. Allow bookstores to also sell coffee or wine; Let a pottery store also give pottery and art classes. In the wake of COVID-19, we need to empower our store owners by allowing flexibility to adapt to a changing retail landscape.

We all support our local businesses. I will fight so that City Hall does too.

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## **Housing**

We simply do not have enough housing, and enough affordable housing, for Richmond residents. The housing shortage is forcing longtime residents out of their homes, preventing children who grew up in San Francisco from being able to return here as adults, and making our City less diverse and less equitable.

I understand that we need strong tenant protections to support existing residents, as well as policies to create more housing, and more affordable housing both in the Richmond and throughout the City.

We need to look at policies that streamlines the creation of new 100% affordable housing and housing projects that include more affordable housing units than currently required by the City. If a project complies within existing zoning rules and has more affordable housing than required, we shouldn't be subjecting it to unnecessary delays simply because of the City's broken bureaucracy.

I support building more housing of all types, whether it is 100% affordable housing, in-law units, or new apartment buildings on top of retail along transit corridors like Geary Boulevard. I've shared my thoughts on how to build 100% affordable housing [here](#).

This is not just a problem in San Francisco. We do not have enough housing in the Bay Area or throughout California, which is why I support regional and statewide reform to allow for more housing to be built, especially near transit and near jobs.

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## Education

As the wife of a life-long educator, Marjan knows well the complex intersection of responsibilities schools have in the lives of San Francisco families. These responsibilities were made all the more apparent as the COVID pandemic raced through our country, closing campuses that kids relied on for education, yes, but also, for some, for food and shelter.

Here are some priorities Marjan has identified as actionable next steps that she can take as your Richmond District Supervisor:

- Fight hard to address **cost of living concerns** for San Francisco teachers, both by increasing salary (which can be [tricky](#)) and decreasing cost of living, particularly around [housing](#). Marjan supports the [upcoming ballot initiative](#) that will unlock money for teachers promised by a voter-approved 2018 parcel tax that fell just under the  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority required to avoid a lengthy lawsuit.
- Return focus to the abysmally **inequitable literacy outcomes**, particularly for students of color. Too many students across the city – including *right here in the Richmond* – are not successfully learning to read. Far too few elected officials are talking about this.
- Revisit [abandoned plans](#) to create **free, municipal broadband wifi** for the City and County of San Francisco to support distance learning efforts, while continuing to bear in mind that the best learning will happen when students can meet safely, in person.



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## Labor

I support the right for all workers to organize as unions have advanced and continue to advance worker protections, benefits, and wages. I believe all workers should have the right to a livable wage, especially as the cost of living has continued to grow in San Francisco. This includes the support of prevailing wage and project labor agreements to ensure workers are treated fairly.

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## Transportation & Pedestrian Safety

### **Increased pedestrian safety and holding SFMTA accountable.**

Richmond residents depend on Muni as much as any neighborhood in the City. The 38-Geary serves over 55,000 residents every day, which is the highest bus ridership west of the Mississippi. We need fast, reliable, and affordable public transportation.

We also need to make it safe for all of our residents, whether you choose to walk, bike, scooter, or drive, which means redesigning our dangerous transportation corridors to put people first and ensure that everyone from our kids to our seniors are safe. It also means more pedestrian safety improvements, increased daylighting at dangerous intersections, and more traffic lights on dangerous, high-speed corridors like Fulton Street. A safe and welcoming pedestrian experience where there are wide sidewalks, benches, planters and streetscape design also helps our small businesses. These improvements create a sense of place where people are more likely to linger and spend their money.

Finally, we need to make sure that City Hall is living up to the promises made to our community. As Supervisor, Marjan will hold the SFMTA accountable to ensure that the Geary BRT project is delivered on-time, on-budget, and with as minimal impact as possible to residents and businesses.

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## Campaign Finance

**I denounce any and all outside spending in this campaign.** This race should be about which candidate will best serve our neighborhood over the coming years. We should be looking at each candidate's qualifications, their policy platforms, and how they plan to enact those policies once they're in office.

What unfortunately happens all too often is that we get distracted by issues that have nothing to do with the future of our district. This happened when I ran in 2016, when Independent

Expenditures, Slate Mail Organizations, and other forms of outside money supported candidates in the race. This served as a distraction for all of us.

Even though none of the candidates were legally allowed to coordinate in any way with these groups, voters often do not distinguish where the source of support comes from, and way too much time was spent focusing on outside groups than on what the future of the Richmond should look like. It's frustrating as a candidate to have other people purporting to speak on your behalf, when you have no ability to control the message.

**I'm calling on every other candidate in this race to join me in denouncing outside spending, because this campaign should be a conversation between the candidates and Richmond residents about the issues that matter to us. Anything else is a distraction from what really matters.**

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## **LGBTQ+ Equality**

### **Supporting Trans Rights**

While there have been strides in advancing the rights of gay and lesbian individuals, transgender people continue to be disproportionately discriminated against, especially transgender people of color. The Trump administration has continuously attacked transgender people's rights and it is imperative that we as a City fight back to protect their civil liberties. This means addressing the stigma, harassment, and discrimination many face in obtaining healthcare, identity documents, jobs and in everyday life, while simultaneously funding strong supportive programs.

### **LGBTQ+ Youth Navigation Center**

Nearly half of San Francisco's unhoused population under the age of 25 identifies as LGBTQ. LGBTQ youth face the same barriers to shelters as other individuals experiencing homelessness, while also facing homophobia and transphobia in existing shelters and navigation centers. That is why I support opening a LGBTQ focused navigation center to provide culturally responsive services for LGBTQ youth, especially for our LGBTQ youth of color. These centers can provide the needed case management and supportive services for our LGBTQ youth who are more likely to have experienced domestic violence or test positive for HIV/AIDS compared to non-LGBTQ unhoused individuals per the July 2019 Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing Point-in-Time Count. We cannot commit to solving homelessness without first committing to provide support and services to one of our most vulnerable homeless populations.

### **Policing and the LGBTQ Community**

The modern gay rights movement was born out of the LGBTQ community defending themselves against hostile police practices. Recent events have driven the national zeitgeist and conversation around reforming the way our police departments interact with our communities, and we have the chance to enact real change. The San Francisco Police Department formally

apologized to the LGBTQ community last August for years of mistreatment. While that was a step in the right direction, actions will always speak louder than words. As a member of the Board of Supervisors, I will hold the San Francisco Police Department accountable to not only implement all of the 272 Obama era reform recommendations, but also ensure they continually make progress in bridging the gap between the LGBTQ community and themselves.

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