

The Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club Questionnaire for November 2020

Dear Candidates and Ballot Measure Representatives,

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 2020 election.

There are a few steps in our endorsement process:

- 1. Complete and submit your questionnaire by July 23rd*
- 2. Sign up for an endorsement interview*
- 3. Interview with the club on either July 25th or 26th via Zoom*

From there, our PAC will vote on endorsement recommendations on Tuesday, August 11th, with the final endorsement vote taking place at our general membership meeting on August 18th.

Your participation in our Club's questionnaire and interviews will allow our Membership to better understand who you are, what you stand for, and what you plan to accomplish if you are elected to office.

There are three parts to our questionnaire, plus additional questions for individual offices: Part 1 is a series of short-answer questions, with a 150-word limit on answers. Part 2 is a series of Yes or No questions covering a broad set of issues. Part 3 covers whom you have endorsed for office currently and in the past.

Please return your completed questionnaire to pac@milkclub.org and to correspondent@milkclub.org no later than July 23rd.

In addition to this questionnaire, we invite you to participate in a recorded video interview on Zoom with Club leadership on either July 25th or July 26th from 10am to 5pm. This virtual interview replaces the typical in-person presentation to our Membership, and the recording will be shared with our Members ahead of our endorsement recommendation and final vote.

To schedule your interview:

- 1. Sign up for a time slot [here](#)*
- 2. Register on Zoom [here](#)*

Your questionnaire responses and interview answers will weigh heavily in our overall endorsement process, so please take both seriously.

Good luck!

-- The Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club

Required Information

Full Name: Vilaska Nguyen

Office: Board of Supervisors, District 7

Campaign Address: 3452 16th St #205, San Francisco CA 94114

Campaign Phone: 650-773-9996

Campaign Email: info@vilaska.com

Campaign Website: <https://www.vilaska.com/>

Political Party: Democrat

Are you a Member of the Harvey Milk LGBTQ Club?: Yes

If so, since when?: May 2020

Do you identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer (LGBTQ)?: No, but I do consider myself to be an ally who stands in solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community.

PART 1:

Questions for All Candidates

1. Describe your qualifications for the office you are seeking. Feel free to add anything that you would like our Members to know about you and your candidacy.

My family fled Vietnam during the Fall of Saigon and lived in a refugee camp before emigrating to Alaska. My parents named me after the Inuit word for “Mainland.” My dad was a longshoreman and my mom a postal worker. For 15 years I’ve been a Public Defender, standing up for families and protecting their civil rights.

LGBTQ+ issues are extremely important and personal to me. My younger sister is transgender and as we grew up, I saw the discrimination she received not just from classmates and our community, but from institutions like our school and government.

I’m running because San Francisco needs to do more to protect families and especially queer families on issues of displacement, homelessness, and criminal justice reform. Many of our systems are broken and I want to bring my experience to City Hall to help reform them.

2. Do you have any key endorsements that you would like to share? Why are these endorsements meaningful to you?

SF Tenants Union #1, AFT 2121 #1, Berniecrats #1, SEIU 1021 #1, DCCC #2, Tom Ammiano, David Campos, Matt Gonzalez, Mano Raju, Chesa Boudin, Matt Haney, Hillary Ronen, Dean Preston, Honey Mahogany, Tom Temprano, John Avalos, Peter Gallotta, Keith Baraka, Carolina Morales, Gloria Berry, Li Miao Lovett, Faauuga Moliga.

These individuals and organizations have greatly contributed to my wanting to run for office in the first place. I’m proud to have the support of progressive leaders and organizations that unabashedly speak truth to power and have been keeping our city afloat during these unprecedented times.

3. What do you see as the most important short-term and long-term solutions to SF’s homelessness crisis? What can you do in your office to help end homelessness?

I’m the only candidate in this race who openly supports a Navigation Center for District 7. I’m also one of the only people in the race who have direct experience working to get people out of homelessness. I’ve held legal clinics in partnership with the SF LGBT Center, Project Homeless Connect, and City College to expunge discriminatory criminal records so individuals could re-enter the workforce, get off the streets and into care, or gain access to housing. Programs like these are helpful in the short-term.

Long-term, I believe that our #1 solution to homelessness should be to build supportive and social housing. In order to build the right amount of municipal housing, we’re going to need a

long term plan. As Supervisor, I'll work with the current pro-housing Supervisors to develop a 50 year social housing plan that we can start implementing immediately.

4. What work have you done to address economic inequality and housing unaffordability in San Francisco? What will you do to address them if elected?

As a Public Defender, I've seen how our predatory and discriminatory sentencing laws have impacted the housing stability of our low-income and communities of color. I've worked closely with clients to get them into housing. That said, the term affordable has begun to lose all meaning as AMI rises to absurd levels. As a general rule, I believe that rent or mortgages shouldn't be more than ¼ of a person's income. But we can't just build housing that's affordable to the people who are left in the city after a decade of gentrification and displacement, we also need housing that is affordable to people who have been driven out and who we need to return. As Supervisor, I want to be part of changing what development is prioritized in our city, including revisiting our levels of affordability, and I'll support the development of affordable housing and municipally owned housing.

5. Describe your work addressing racial injustice, economic inequity, and police brutality in San Francisco.

As a Public Defender, I have dedicated my entire career to fighting against systemic racism, sexism, economic inequality and discrimination. I go to court and fight against broken systems on behalf of my clients every day -- as Supervisor, I am committed to doing the same. I was a leader in passing the RISE Act and I worked with Senator Mitchell, the ACLU, and the Drug Policy Alliance to repeal ineffective sentencing enhancements that would carry over from the war on drugs. I got involved in this effort because a client of mine, an elderly African American man who lived in SF his whole life, was sentenced to 14 years in prison for having a small amount of drugs on him. As Supervisor, I will work with community organizations and leaders to reform our broken systems that actively and systemically discriminate against people of color.

6. How have you supported LGBTQ San Franciscans, and how will you continue to do so if elected?

I've worked alongside the LGBTQ+ community for years. I've represented hundreds of queer and trans people in court. I've worked tirelessly to get hundreds of queer and trans people off the streets and into shelter and homes, and in my free time, I've worked to expunge the records of queer and trans people who have unjust charges due to discriminatory laws. I know that our criminal justice system mistreats our queer people of color, especially our Black trans women. Queer people of color are disproportionately more likely to be targeted by unjust and predatory laws. When you have unfair charges on your record, it limits your ability to get access to jobs, housing, and services. It has been important to me to work to expunge these records so our queer and trans people of color don't have more disadvantages in our already corrupt system.

7. Describe your work addressing the climate crisis, and what specific steps you would take if elected to confront climate change and environmental injustice.

I am proud to be a supporter of municipal power. The most important thing that San Francisco can do to further green energy projects is to become independent from PG&E and develop our own public power. I support the work of Supervisor Ronen and Mayor Breed to push for independence. We can't let the economic crisis that will follow the pandemic allow us to lose focus on building our own public power.

It should be our goal to get people out of cars and into public transit. Public transportation needs to be advanced enough that people opt into taking it because it's a faster, cheaper, environmentally cleaner option to driving. As Supervisor, I'll work with MUNI to ensure that funding is allocated to expanding transit lines into our neighborhoods that don't get regular service. I'll push for broad, structural changes, including bringing subways to the Westside.

8. Describe a time when you worked against an established power structure or entrenched authority to achieve progressive change. How was this positive change accomplished?

The legal system has been stacked against Public Defenders and their clients. I've been lucky to work alongside some of the most tenacious Public Defenders in our city's history. Every day, we go to work and fight to uphold the rights of our vulnerable communities, we fight to keep families intact, and we fight the unjust and discriminatory systems that intentionally target low-income and communities of color. Public Defenders hold police officers accountable and bring corruption to light in our system. We fight wrongful incarceration and conviction. As we see increased police brutality and corruption within the police forces across the country, we should be responding by fighting to increase funding for our Public Defenders nationwide. Public Defenders are forced to advocate for inadequate funding. Everytime we take a step closer towards adequate funding is a win for the communities who rely on us to fight alongside them.

Only Supervisorial Candidates

1. What are your top three legislative priorities if elected.

Reforming Our Broken Criminal Justice System

As someone who's worked in the criminal justice system, I know that the effects of crime hurt our entire community. What we're missing in City Hall is leadership who has my level of experience and can bring everyone together for reform.

Building Affordable & Municipal Housing

We have a responsibility to house the students who are attending City College, SF State, and UCSF. We need supportive housing and elderly care for the aging Chinese population. As Supervisor, I'll support the development of affordable and municipally owned housing.

Addressing Our Homelessness Crisis

I've seen where the criminal justice system is broken and how it leads to a cycle of homelessness. I'll work with anybody who is willing to examine our broken homelessness system and make the changes that we need. I am the only candidate in this race who supports a navigation center in District 7.

2. Should SFPD be reformed, transformed, reimagined, defunded, or abolished? And why?

I have worked in the criminal justice system for the majority of my career. I have worked directly with SFPD and I think it's time that we reform the system. I support defunding the police, but more importantly, I think that we have a unique opportunity to actually see some criminal justice reform in action. The over-policing and disproportionate prosecution and sentencing of our communities of color has eroded stability and destroyed any hope of moving forward with our current police system. In order to address these predatory and unjust policing practices, we need to dismantle the blatant and systemic racism that our police system was built on and we need to get serious about demilitarizing our police force.

3. How exactly will San Francisco balance its budget during this current economic crisis?

As Supervisor, I'll work with our communities, labor partners, and constituents to prioritize revenue measures that will allow us to support the budget.

I'm proud to have been an early supporter of the Overpaid Executive Tax put forward by Supervisors Haney and Ronen to tax pay inequality in major companies. I support Supervisor Preston's Housing Transfer Tax which taxes the sale of corporate and residential luxury real estate and creates a fund to build affordable housing and protect renters. I support reforms to our gross receipts tax and the Supervisors pushing for the bond to be used for recovery-based projects that serve our communities during and after COVID.

Now is the time for the city to use all of its reserve and rainy day funds. If this isn't the time to use the City's "rainy day" fund, I don't know that there ever will be a time.

4. How best should the Board of Supervisors handle the current COVID-19 health crisis and the shelter-in-place orders for both individuals and for businesses?

I think that so far, the Board of Supervisors has done a great job at keeping our families safe during these unprecedented times. I think that as we start to see the number of cases spike

again, the Board needs to remain unwavering on the measures that are keeping people safe and in their homes, especially rent forgiveness and cancellation.

Many small businesses have been hit hard by the months of shelter-in-place and even prior to COVID, mom-and-pop shops were closing their doors due to high rents. Small business recovery after COVID is going to be very important. Whether that's issuing more grants or delivering Personal Protective Equipment, it's important that our small businesses' needs are being addressed. As Supervisor, I will work with small businesses to ensure that they have the resources needed to stay afloat and hopefully flourish as our city begins to open back up.

5. Do you support expanding transit-only lanes in your district?

Yes, if SFMTA is committed to expanding MUNI services on the Westside. For decades, the Westside of the city has been left out of public transportation plans and our transportation needs have been ignored by City Hall. A modern city like San Francisco in 2020 should not have a transportation system at its beginning stages. As Supervisor, I will work with MUNI to ensure that funding is allocated to expanding transit lines to our neighborhoods that don't get regular service. And I will also be pushing for the big, broad, structural transportation changes that our city needs, including bringing subways to the Westside. If transit service is expanded into the Westside, I would support also expanding transit-only lanes.

6. What strategies will you use to preserve and expand affordable housing in your district?

We need to build more housing that is affordable to the families of District 7. That means focusing on affordability for students and youth, young families, and the low-wage workers that the city needs to function, as well as housing that is affordable to essential city workers like teachers, nurses, fire fighters, etc.

I 100% support municipally owned housing, especially on public land. For decades, landlord lobbyist groups have used racist tropes to convince even liberals that public housing is ineffective and dangerous. I know from my work as a Public Defender that stable housing is the first step to bettering anyone's life. Cities need to learn from past mistakes on public housing and invest in funding and building social housing. As Supervisor, I'll be unabashedly pro-public housing, fight for policies to help public housing tenants and secure land, and fight for state and federal dollars to build social housing.

7. Do you support a navigation center in your district?

Yes. I am the only candidate in this race who has supported a navigation center.

8. How would you characterize the relationship between the executive and legislative branches of government in San Francisco?

I believe firmly in checks and balances. Our City Charter is written in a way that gives the Board of Supervisors auditing and oversight over the executive branch. I think that right now, our government is in a crisis with four department heads and counting indicted by the federal government for corruption. I think now more than ever is the time for the Board of Supervisors to exercise the authorities that they have been given but are not using to investigate corruption. I was very disappointed that the Board of Supervisors, including some progressive members, voted against Supervisor Mar's Public Advocate legislation. If elected Supervisor, I would vote to support in the future.

9. Who do you currently see as your closest allies on the Board of Supervisors?

Supervisor Matt Haney, Supervisor Hillary Ronen, Supervisor Dean Preston

10. If district add-back funds are available in the future, where and how would you allocate them in your district?

Board President Yee's participatory budget process, created for District 7, was a huge success. The whole city should move forward with a participatory budget process; I'd advocate for more participatory budget funds to be added for each district.

This year's add-back process will be one of the most difficult in recent memory as we've struggled to allocate funds during a \$2 billion deficit. Top priorities for me will be maintaining our basic health services.

I share a deep concern for what can only be called a decimation of our small businesses. I hope that federal funds will allow us to provide much needed support for struggling small businesses.

Lastly, as a Public Defender, I see how some of our most marginalized communities could be helped with very little investment from our budget. I'll prioritize keeping our black and brown communities healthy and safe, in particular black and brown trans communities.

11. Which of San Francisco's governmental bureaucracies is in most need of an audit and why?

I believe that San Francisco is definitely in a crisis. It's the worst kept secret in political government that corruption has been allowed to go unchecked at City Hall for decades. I think that the FBI indictments that we're now seeing are shameful and over the next year as we discuss cuts to our budget, we cannot with good conscience fail to look at every department for possible waste and corruption. In particular, I would focus on: The Department of Public Health, Public Works, SFMTA, Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development, and the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing.

PART 2:

Yes or No Questions

(Please check Yes or No for each question.)

GENERAL

YES NO

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| Are you registered to vote as a Democrat? | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Have you ever sought elected office before? | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Do you have a campaign consultant or other main point of contact? If so, who? _Nate Allbee_____ | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Have you ever sought a Milk Club endorsement in the past? | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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LGBTQ ISSUES & SEXUAL LIBERATION

YES NO

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| Do you support codifying various relationship structures as a protected class? (For example, a law that would prohibit discrimination against people in consensual nonmonogamous relationships in employment, housing, education, and healthcare.) | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Do you support public funding for workforce programs, specifically for transgender job-seekers? | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Do you support public funding to expand access to PrEP? | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Do you support decriminalizing sex work? | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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TENANTS, HOUSING, AND HOMELESSNESS

YES NO

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| Do you support immediate rent cancellation and mortgage forbearance for all tenants and homeowners impacted by COVID-19? | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Do you support the creation of an independent commission to oversee the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Services? | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Do you support the split-role repeal of Proposition 13? | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Do you support the repeal of the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act? | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Do you support the repeal of the Ellis Act? | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Have you ever evicted a tenant? | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO |
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| Do you support the sweeps of homeless encampments by the Department of Public Works or SFPD? | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO |
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| Do you support the public acquisition of hotel rooms for permanent shelter and/or supportive housing for the homeless? | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Did you support Measure D, the vacant property tax, this year? | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Would you support a licensing system for landlords in San Francisco? | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Do you support a public municipal bank in San Francisco? | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Do you support this year's proposed real estate transfer tax for properties valued at or over \$10 million? | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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IMMIGRATION JUSTICE ISSUES

YES NO

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| Should U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement be abolished? | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Do you support San Francisco's Sanctuary City status? | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Do you support due process protections for immigrant youth accused of crimes? | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Do you support allowing undocumented San Franciscans to serve on City boards and commissions? | YES | |
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| Do you support increased funds for immigrant defense services? | YES | |
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RACIAL & SOCIAL JUSTICE

YES NO

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| Do you support the death penalty? | | NO |
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| Do you support the use of tasers by law enforcement? | | NO |
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| Do you support requiring an independent investigation of all police officer-related shootings? | YES | |
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| Does your campaign accept contributions from law-enforcement associations, unions, or organizations? | | NO |
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| Do you support disbanding the SFPD and requiring officers to reapply to a newly constructed, less violent police force? | | |
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| Should the San Francisco Police Officers Association be disbanded or at least have its political influence in the City severely curtailed? | YES | |
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| Do you support qualified immunity for police officers? | | NO |
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| Do you support reparations for Black San Franciscans? | YES | |
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| Do you support the implementation of supervised injection/consumption sites? | YES | |
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| Do you support extending voting rights in local elections to currently and formerly incarcerated people? | YES | |
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| Have you ever crossed a union picket line or ignored a union boycott? | | NO |
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| Do you support the right for public sector employees to go on strike? | YES | |
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| Do support repealing California's Proposition 209? | YES | |
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| Do you support the California App-Based Drivers Regulations Initiative? | | NO |
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| Do you support rebuilding the county jail at 850 Bryant? | | NO |
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ENVIRONMENTAL AND TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

YES NO

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| Do you support dissolving Pacific, Gas, & Electric and replacing it with a publicly-owned utility agency? | YES | |
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| Do you support expanding the CleanPower SF program? | YES | |
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| Do you support a plan to provide free transportation citywide? | YES | |
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| Should the mayor continue to appoint all commissioners to the SFMTA? | | NO |
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PUBLIC CORRUPTION & POLITICAL TRANSPARENCY

YES NO

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| Did you support the <i>Sunlight on Dark Money (Prop. F)</i> measure on the November 2019 ballot? | YES | |
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| Do you support expanding SF's public financing program to all City and County elected offices? | YES | |
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| Do you support Supervisor Matt Haney's ballot measure to split Public Works into two departments, each with its own oversight commission? | YES | |
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| Do you support Supervisor Gordon Mar's ballot measure to create an Office of the Public Advocate? | YES | |
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PART 3:

Support of Other Candidates

(Please answer whom you support or supported in each race. If you made a ranked endorsement or voted for more than one candidate using IRV, please indicate the rankings.)

2020

Candidate

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| Democratic Presidential Primary | Bernie Sanders |
| CA State Senate, District 11 | Jackie Fielder |
| District 1 Supervisor | Connie Chan |
| District 3 Supervisor | Aaron Peskin |
| District 5 Supervisor | Dean Preston |
| District 7 Supervisor | Self, Vilaska Nguyen |
| District 11 Supervisor | John Avalos |

2019

Candidate

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| District 5 Supervisor | Dean Preston |
| San Francisco District Attorney | Chesa Boudin |

2018

Candidate

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| Mayor | Jane Kim, Mark Leno |
| District 4 Supervisor | Gordon Mar |

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| District 6 Supervisor | Matt Haney |
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| District 8 Supervisor | Rafael Mandelman |
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| District 10 Supervisor | Shamann Walton |
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