

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:

Njon Sanders

Office:

Commissioner, SFUSD Board

Campaign Address:

631 O'Farrell St Apt 1404 San Francisco, CA 94104

Campaign Phone:

415/539-6300

Campaign Email:

njon2020@gmail.com

Campaign Website:

www.njonsanders.org

Political Party:

Democrat

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

No

If so, since when?:

N/A

Do you identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer (LGBTQ)?:

Gay

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 vision for SFUSD is simply a system that provides educational justice and equity for our students, families, and employees.

I served as Administrative Assistant to the former Alameda County Superintendent and its board of education. I've chaired private and non-profit boards and just termed-out as President/Chair of the San Francisco Behavioral Health Commission. In my professional life, I am the head of Workplace, Facilities, and Human Resources Operations at a tech startup. My job entails conducting business in established environments but requires flexibility and the ability to quickly collaborate on solutions to address needs as they develop. A major component of my personal recovery from Substance Use Disorder for over the past decade has been public service. My background in these roles makes the School Board a logical fit. I think it's important to have black and LGBTQ commissioners to serve as role models for those communities and as advocates for our other underserved populations.

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

My first two and the ones I am most proud of are from Gloria Berry and Brandon Harami. These two individuals have set a high bar in their advocacy for Equity and Justice in our social systems. They each demonstrate the best characteristics of activism across a broad spectrum of demographics. They operate much like I do in that they can act on more granular issues while keeping the context of the big picture (long game) prioritized.

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?

The right to shelter has been one of my main focuses in recent years. Systemic economic inequities for minority and working-class residents in addition to these being exacerbated in many cases with behavioral health challenges have only become more acute in recent years. In the short term, strides have been made in developing services like Navigation Centers to serve these populations but we have to fight for more, urgently. Supervisor Hillary Ronen has led the way in increasing these facilities in her district which serve individuals and with one serving families at a school site. The School Board should be instrumental in expansion of these kinds of programs to support SF Students and families.

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?

I dedicated my last 2 years on the Behavioral Health Commission to fight proposed cuts to transitional, permanent supportive, and low-income housing as it was found to be the issue most profoundly impacting not only those seeking treatment but the practitioners and clinicians serving this population. There must be a united push from all elected officials for more housing to support our already marginalized and underserved residents. This is a

battle we are currently losing as private industry and the politicians that they support allowing developers and investors regulate the kinds of housing stock being constructed. I think the implementation of a public bank would do much to help in this area.

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

I volunteer locally via my Democratic Socialists of America chapter and serve on the AfroSocialist Caucus and the Homelessness Committee. These groups are currently focused on defunding and redirecting funds from SFPD (and Sheriff) and to our communities and on developing both emergency and long-term housing solutions respectively. I'm also actively supporting emergency support for incarcerated individuals through my employer.

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

Much of the work over my past 2 terms on the Behavioral Health Commission involved advocacy for our LGBTQ communities with an emphasis on transgender youth and seniors.

My focus as an SFUSD commissioner will be to innovate in the implementation of the programs and policies already in progress. The current board has done much to promote educational justice but there is a long way to go in incorporating and internalizing these programs into the culture. Like most large metro areas, our LGBTQ youth are more prone to issues involving housing security. My first concern is developing equity in distance learning for students who may have limited or no internet access.

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

My career in facilities has made me very conscious of our individual and collective impact on climate. I've built out and retrofit several communal spaces for companies here and in other markets. I'm very proud of the initiatives I've implemented in all phases of occupancy including responsibly sourcing building materials, fixtures, and infrastructure, designing spaces to conserve resources, and the purchase of compostable and reusable supplies.

These kinds of protocols in conjunction with investing in developing technologies like solar and alternative transportation (free muni) will help us confront climate and budgetary challenges.

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?

Most recently, I reformed the committee structure of the Behavioral Health Commission. Previously, the commission would reset all committees at our annual retreat. Many of these committees either underperformed or produced nothing. This was due to a lack of consensus regarding the importance of each as they were largely pet projects of one or more commissioners and a subsequent lack of enthusiasm from the remaining commissioners. My plan to eliminate the distributed model and to agree upon a single focus (Homelessness in this case due to its intersectionality with everything we touched) was met with much skepticism from staff and a faction of the commission that was happy with the status quo. I was able to persuade these folks and the restructure garnered immediate results. In the first half of the fiscal year, we had performed most of the necessary site visits for the year and produced a record number of resolutions. This afforded us the opportunity

to conduct further work in following-through with the Board of Supervisors and Behavioral Health Services in doing the actual work of improving conditions for San Franciscans.

Only Congressional Candidates

1. Please explain why you are running for Congress.
2. Do you support Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's *Green New Deal*? Why or why not?
3. Do you support Medicare For All? If so, how would you implement it?
4. Do you support reducing military spending, and diverting these funds towards domestic programs? If so, how would you help implement this?
5. Do you support reducing America's military presence in other countries?
6. What would you do to improve America's current immigration policy?
7. What steps will you take to ensure reproductive freedom?
8. Do you support raising the Federal Minimum wage? If so, to what amount?
9. Is your campaign accepting any corporate or PAC money? If so, please list those sources.
10. What are your main strategies for meeting potential voters during this campaign?

Only Supervisorial Candidates

1. What are your top three legislative priorities if elected.
2. Should SFPD be reformed, transformed, reimagined, defunded, or abolished? And why?
3. How exactly will San Francisco balance its budget during this current economic crisis?
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?
5. Do you support expanding transit-only lanes in your district?
6. What strategies will you use to preserve and expand affordable housing in your district?
7. Do you support a navigation center in your district?
8. How would you characterize the relationship between the executive and legislative branches of government in San Francisco?
9. Who do you currently see as your closest allies on the Board of Supervisors?
10. If district add-back funds are available in the future, where and how would you allocate them in your district?
11. Which of San Francisco's governmental bureaucracies is in most need of an audit and why?

Only School Board Candidates

1. Do you support charter schools in San Francisco? Why or why not?

In their current state, these schools do much in the way of destabilizing our public systems. They are not required to meet the requirements of students with any kind of disability and routinely label academic challenges and “behavior issues” resulting in the students’ removal from their schools. They also act in a predatory manner in recruiting talent from our public systems. If there were some intense reform that deprioritized their status as private businesses and if they performed like the assets to our public systems in the ways that they were intended to be, I might feel differently.

2. Do you support Common Core education standards?

Common Core is a big step in innovation and equity. Our students are held to the same standards as their peers regardless of socioeconomic disparities. It also teaches the critical thinking necessary to not just memorize enough information to pass a test but to use their cognitive abilities to better understand the effect these processes have on their lives and that of others.

3. What is your plan to address the bullying of LGBTQ students, as well as students of traditionally marginalized communities?

SF’s LGBTQ youth are fortunate to have programs like Lyric which has, for decades, provided safe spaces and mutual support/. This does little to address bullying however. My hope is that a large percentage of the funds recovered by removing SFPD from the schools will go to preventative measures and restorative justice programs that will help end this kind of behavior as opposed to exacerbating it. It’s embarrassing to admit but I was least familiar with the bullying issues API students have been encountering until recently. These same measures of restorative justice as well as additional celebration of our students’ diverse cultures will do much to reduce the othering each group encounters.

4. How will you address the needs of homeless students?

Students who are either homeless or in foster care face increased levels of stress which can impact academic achievement, attendance, engagement, and also prevent completion and reduce GPA. Where systems are successful in helping these students overcome these obstacles is generally at the site level. Providing students access to neighborhood schools that provide the necessary support by way of acting as a community as opposed to an institution has been shown to be effective. These students must be prioritized in this manner.

5. What are your plans to protect undocumented students and their families?

Immigrant and indigenous families and students share many of the same obstacles in achieving educational equity but our families with undocumented members face an additional level of threat that compounds every other. Our status as a sanctuary city was

hard fought and is, I feel, well maintained despite the opposition. We've done much in helping these families participate and have a voice but much more needs to be done to promote the equitable treatment of parents and guardians in our district processes. Access to information is, to me, the biggest deficits, these families encounter. Many are either not provided with what they need to participate on a deeper level and others are reluctant to participate for fear of being denounced. I think it is not unimaginable to develop better tools to help families have a voice.

6. What are the most important actions that you can take in your office to stabilize and support African American students?

Historically, there has been a lack of trust in school districts by black families. While the *Life of Washington* murals serves as a prime example of the omission and dismissal of their voices from the process, it's representative of SOP in matters directly impacting them. With all of the current energy behind inclusionary practices, it is imperative that we act quickly while there is space for a shift in this paradigm. Creating specific protocols and policies to mandate inclusion and explicitly soliciting the input of these families is the first step in enacting these kinds of reforms and reestablishing trust and participation. Only then, with the support of this cohesive community, will black students have the necessary support to get a sense of ownership of their education.

7. Do you support alternatives to a student's suspension in instances of disruption or *willful defiance*?

Absolutely! We're just now realizing the benefits of restorative justice when it is an option. Similar supportive, non-punitive modalities can produce similar positive results. My hope is that with the money diverted from SFPD presence, we can further integrate these practices into our common practices.

8. Do you support the removal of the *Life of Washington* mural at George Washington High School? Why or why not? If yes, what form of removal do you support?

#paintitdown These murals should have been painted over years ago. My personal take on it is below.

<https://medium.com/@njonsanders/meet-me-at-the-dead-indian-df014f1e10de>

Only City College Board Candidates

1. What specific experience do you have with the City College of San Francisco?
1. What is your plan to address the bullying of LGBTQ students, as well as students of traditionally marginalized communities?
2. How would you address the needs of homeless students?
3. What are your plans to protect undocumented students and their families?
4. Did you support or oppose the hiring of former Chancellor Mark Rocha? How would you describe his tenure as chancellor?
5. Do you support the Workforce Education and Recovery Fund to dedicate permanent funding for non-credit classes at City College?

Only BART Board Candidates

1. What are your plans to keep BART safe from viral spread during this COVID-19 crisis?
2. What are your plans to keep BART financially solvent during this COVID-19 crisis?
3. Will you vote or have you voted for fare increases? Should BART parking fees be increased across the East Bay and/or elsewhere?
4. Should BART police be defunded, disarmed, or banned entirely? Why or why not?
5. Do you support a regional sales tax to fund transit? Why or why not?

Only Ballot Measures

1. Please include any and all contact information for your ballot measure position.
2. Briefly explain your position on this ballot initiative and why it should pass or fail this election cycle.
3. What would be the fiscal impact of this ballot measure if it passes?
4. Who crafted this ballot measure, and how was it placed on the ballot?
5. Who are your ballot measure position's principal consultants, and what are your main funding sources?
6. Who are some of your ballot measure position's individual and organizational supporters?
7. Why do you think the Harvey Milk LGBTQ Club should support your ballot measure's position?

PART 2:

Yes or No Questions

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

GENERAL

YES NO

Are you registered to vote as a Democrat?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Have you ever sought elected office before?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Do you have a campaign consultant or other main point of contact? If so, who? _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Have you ever sought a Milk Club endorsement in the past?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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LGBTQ ISSUES & SEXUAL LIBERATION

YES NO

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.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Do you support public funding for workforce programs, specifically for transgender job-seekers?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Do you support public funding to expand access to PrEP?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Do you support decriminalizing sex work?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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TENANTS, HOUSING, AND HOMELESSNESS

YES NO

Do you support immediate rent cancellation and mortgage forbearance for all tenants and homeowners impacted by COVID-19?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<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?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Do you support the split-role repeal of Proposition 13?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Do you support the repeal of the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act?	✓	
Do you support the repeal of the Ellis Act?	✓	
Have you ever evicted a tenant?		✓
Do you support the sweeps of homeless encampments by the Department of Public Works or SFPD?		✓
Do you support the public acquisition of hotel rooms for permanent shelter and/or supportive housing for the homeless?	✓	
Did you support Measure D, the vacant property tax, this year?	✓	
Would you support a licensing system for landlords in San Francisco?	✓	
Do you support a public municipal bank in San Francisco?	✓	
Do you support this year's proposed real estate transfer tax for properties valued at or over \$10 million?	✓	

IMMIGRATION JUSTICE ISSUES

YES NO

Should U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement be abolished?	✓	
Do you support San Francisco's Sanctuary City status?	✓	
Do you support due process protections for immigrant youth accused of crimes?	✓	
Do you support allowing undocumented San Franciscans to serve on City boards and commissions?	✓	
Do you support increased funds for immigrant defense services?	✓	

RACIAL & SOCIAL JUSTICE

YES NO

Do you support the death penalty?		✓
Do you support the use of tasers by law enforcement?		✓
Do you support requiring an independent investigation of all police officer-related shootings?	✓	
Does your campaign accept contributions from law-enforcement associations, unions, or organizations?		✓
Do you support disbanding the SFPD and requiring officers to reapply to a newly constructed, less violent police force?	✓	
Should the San Francisco Police Officers Association be disbanded or at least have its political influence in the City severely curtailed?	✓	
Do you support qualified immunity for police officers?		✓
Do you support reparations for Black San Franciscans?	✓	
Do you support the implementation of supervised injection/consumption sites?	✓	
Do you support extending voting rights in local elections to currently and formerly incarcerated people?	✓	
Have you ever crossed a union picket line or ignored a union boycott?		✓
Do you support the right for public sector employees to go on strike?	✓	
Do support repealing California's Proposition 209?	✓	
Do you support the California App-Based Drivers Regulations Initiative?		✓
Do you support rebuilding the county jail at 850 Bryant?		✓

ENVIRONMENTAL AND TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

YES NO

Do you support dissolving Pacific, Gas, & Electric and replacing it with a publicly-owned utility agency?	✓	
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Do you support expanding the CleanPower SF program?	✓	
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Do you support a plan to provide free transportation citywide?	✓	
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Should the mayor continue to appoint all commissioners to the SFMTA?		✓
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PUBLIC CORRUPTION & POLITICAL TRANSPARENCY

YES NO

Did you support the <i>Sunlight on Dark Money (Prop. F)</i> measure on the November 2019 ballot?	✓	
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Do you support expanding SF’s public financing program to all City and County elected offices?	✓	
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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?	✓	
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Do you support Supervisor Gordon Mar’s ballot measure to create an Office of the Public Advocate?	✓	
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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

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	Vilaska Nguyen
District 11 Supervisor	John Avalos

2019

Candidate

District 5 Supervisor	Dean Preston
San Francisco District Attorney	Chesa Boudin

2018

Candidate

Mayor	Kim/Leno
District 4 Supervisor	Mar
District 6 Supervisor	Haney
District 8 Supervisor	Mandelman

District 10 Supervisor	Kelly/Pease-Green
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