

# Santa Clara County Democratic Club Endorsement Questionnaire

## San Jose City Council District 6 Candidates

Endorsement Meeting Date: March 28, 2016

**NOTE: Your completed Questionnaire is due by 7:00PM on Monday, March 21, 2016.**

Please e-mail to Tom Pyke at [REDACTED]

Candidates must timely turn in their responses to be eligible for endorsement.

**Name:** Peter Allen

**Campaign Office Address:**

1434 Settle Ave.  
San José, CA 95125

**Office sought:** San José City Councilmember (District 6)

**Personal Information**

Day Phone: [REDACTED]

Alternate Phone: (408) 673-8371

Email: peter@peterforsanjose.com

Current Occupation: Owner/Principal

Employer: Peter Allen Media

How long a member of Democratic Party: Since birth (Registered since turning 18 in 1995)

Previous government positions held: City of San José Arts Commissioner (2012-Present)

Campaign Website: www.peterforsanjose.com

Have you been endorsed by the Santa Clara County Democratic Party?

SCCDP is scheduled to make its formal endorsement decision at the Central Committee meeting on April 7<sup>th</sup>. I have been recommended for endorsement by the Endorsements Committee.

Endorsements you've received (List a **MAXIMUM of 10**):

- Tom McEnery, Former Mayor of San José
- Rich Gordon, California State Assembly
- Jim Griffith, Councilmember & Former Mayor of Sunnyvale
- Jason Baker, Mayor of Campbell

- Teresa Castellanos, President, San Jose Unified School District Board of Trustees
- Sandy Engel, Trustee, San José Unified School District
- Paymon Zarghami, Trustee, San José Unified School District
- Kalen Gallagher, Trustee, Campbell Union High School District
- Thelma Boac, Trustee, Berryessa Union School District
- Silicon Valley Young Democrats (Early endorsement)

Full list available at: [www.peterforsan jose.com/endorsements](http://www.peterforsan jose.com/endorsements)

**NOTE: Some questions may be about issues not within the jurisdiction of the office you seek, but we're interested in your position anyway.**

<b>Selected Issues</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Explain or qualify (use additional pages if needed)</b>
<b>CRIMINAL JUSTICE</b>			
Continued use of the death penalty		X	
Treating crimes against protected classes as "hate crimes"	X		
Use of solitary confinement		X	
<b>ENERGY &amp; THE ENVIRONMENT</b>			
"Fracking" to harvest oil and natural gas		X	
Efforts to replace coal with natural gas	X		I would prefer renewable alternatives, but anything is better than burning coal.
Tax on carbon emissions	X		
Pursuit of nuclear power		X	
<b>HEALTH</b>			
Require parental notification for minors to have abortion		X	
Restore federal funding of abortion services	X		
<b>GOVERNMENT &amp; TAX REFORM</b>			
Increase income taxes for the wealthy	X		
Enact tax on total assets of the wealthy (separate from income tax)	X		
Estate Taxes	X		
Non-partisan redistricting	X		
Constitutional amendment saying "money is not speech" and "corporations are not people"	X		
<b>IMMIGRATION</b>			
Programs that expand pathways to citizenship	X		
DREAM Act (higher education funding for children of undocumented immigrants)	X		
Expansion of H-1B visa program	X		
Reduce immigration to help stabilize population		X	
<b>WORKPLACE</b>			
\$15 federal min. wage indexed to CPI	X		
Making employment a government responsibility	X		I do not believe gov't has a responsibility to provide jobs for all, but gov't should do all it can to encourage job creation.

If you have questions or need clarification on any of these issues, please feel free to contact Craig Dunkerley, [REDACTED].

Please answer each of the following questions in **200 words or less**. Be aware that some questions have more than one part. Some questions may be about issues not within the jurisdiction of the office you seek, but we're interested in your position anyway. We also understand and expect that thoughtful, concerned Democrats may disagree. (Note: The space under the question is not intended to limit your answer.)

1. Is endless, perpetual economic growth possible or sustainable? In light of your answer, what steps should be taken to achieve a prosperous and **sustainable** economy?

I am not a trained economist, but I have never understood the need or feasibility for perpetual economic growth, other than to keep pace with population growth and the commensurate need for jobs, housing, and other services. In my humble opinion, at its most basic level, our economy should provide equal opportunity for all.

Ensuring San José's long-term fiscal sustainability will require foresight, vision, and creative leadership. An imbalance in our "jobs fit" (an analysis of jobs, housing, wages, and cost of living) leaves the City short of the revenue needed to provide world-class services to all of its million residents. Improving the tax base means growing our jobs base. In order to do that, we need to embrace one of San José's greatest strengths: our culture of innovation. The global tech giants that are driving our economy today were once daydreams that came alive through all-night strategy sessions. We must continue to foster that innovation in our small businesses and start-up economy.

2. What steps should be taken to address income inequality?

The City of San José should require any business licensed to operate within our city limits to commit to equal pay for equal work on the basis of age, gender, race, ethnicity, and/or sexual identity — and it should enact an identical policy with regards to its own staffing. Additionally, we should encourage surrounding cities and jurisdictions to do the same, and work with local chambers of commerce and other business groups to ensure that local businesses of all shapes and sizes receive adequate support and guidance in implementing such a policy. This would require additional human resources, but our investment would be paid back as more residents receive better pay and thereby contribute more taxes to city coffers and spend more money in our local economy.

Beyond city policy, state and federal governments can and should do more to ensure that every resident of our country has access to a high quality education, job training and re-training in emerging industries, and opportunities to engage in lifelong learning and skills development. As a nation, we must engage in difficult conversations around racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice, which have created institutional barriers to opportunity and success for marginalized and underrepresented populations. If our elected leaders continue to duck these tough issues, we will never live up to the words of our Constitution that call on Americans to build "a more perfect union."

### 3. What steps should be taken to ensure a comfortable and secure retirement for all?

The federal government must protect and strengthen the Social Security system to ensure that it is solvent into the foreseeable future. This presents a challenge as the life expectancy of our nation continues to rise, and more people receive retirement benefits for longer periods of time. Many working people in my generation and the generations to follow no longer expect to receive the full benefit of the payments we make into the SS system, and retirement for us is no longer a given. Even if we were to collect at some point, the monthly payments would be nowhere near what is needed to cover the rising cost of living, particularly in our region.

With that in mind, we must also do more to control the cost of living for our retired and senior populations. That means investments in affordable housing and protections for renters and mobile home owners. It means developing a transit system that takes the people who need it where they need to go, which would reduce the cost of relying on cars for every trip. And it means partnerships with the nonprofit and private sectors to provide free or low-cost food, medicine, and other basic necessities to seniors and others who are no longer physically capable of working full time to afford them.

### 4. Many companies continue to employ undocumented workers. What would you do about this?

There are currently regulations that prohibit companies from employing undocumented workers, so many such instances are occurring “under the table” and outside standard business reporting practices. With limited staffing at the city level to enforce these regulations — and labor laws in general — it is exceedingly difficult for San José to prevent violations from occurring. Consequently, enforcement is a reactive, complaint-driven process. I would seek to identify additional revenue to increase staffing in the Code Enforcement Division of the Planning Department in order to more proactively address these issues through outreach, education, and enforcement.

All that being said, it is critical to understand that the overwhelming majority of jobs performed by undocumented workers are at the lower end of the economic spectrum, and that many undocumented workers are paying taxes and contributing to the fabric of our community. We must provide a path to citizenship that allows these workers and their families to come “out of the shadows” and fully integrate into our society.

### 5. What is your position on "Free Trade" agreements in general and the TPP in particular?

We live in a global economy. If we are to solve the greatest challenges of our time, such as climate change and income inequality, we need to work together as citizens of the world. As such, we should embrace free and open trade between nations. However, any such agreements should bear equitable benefits for every nation involved and avoid incentives for corporate businesses to devastate local economies by shifting their workforces to other nations in order to take advantage of tax breaks, lower wages, and weaker labor protections. For these reasons, I am opposed to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) as currently conceived.

6. We have significant budget challenges, but we also have a myriad of unmet societal needs. What if any budget cuts do you favor and what if any new revenue sources would you seek or support?

Rather than think of city services in silos, I prefer to take a more holistic approach to budgeting. Based on my experience managing a nonprofit and working on local public policy, I know that changes to one area naturally affect others. In the event that cuts were needed to balance the city budget, I would seek to spread the burden of those cuts throughout the organization to avoid severe and sudden reductions to vital services. But regardless of circumstances, I would always advocate for the preservation of public safety and other essential services such as roads and transportation infrastructure, sewage and other public utilities, libraries, parks, and PBCE (Planning, Building & Code Enforcement).

After more than a decade of cuts, the City is currently operating beyond the bandwidth it should be expected to provide. Staff and resources are stretched to their limits, and services are still nowhere near the levels our residents expect and deserve. Until long-term economic development fundamentally changes the City's revenue picture, we must come together as a community to pay our fair share toward making San José a safe, vibrant, healthy, and equitable community. That is why I am in favor of the ¼-cent sales tax measure recently placed on the June 7<sup>th</sup> ballot with the support of 9 out of 11 councilmembers, in addition to the San José Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce and the South Bay Labor Council.

7. The Homeless face many challenges, especially with El Niño weather closing in and various unofficial homeless encampments being closed down. What short term and long term solutions would you propose and/or support to help our homeless families and veterans?

First and foremost, we must avoid dehumanizing our homeless residents by referring to them as "The Homeless". With the cost of living raging out of control and average wages stuck in limbo, San José has become a city with two faces, where many of our hardworking neighbors struggle to make ends meet in the shadows of sparkling new high rises and gleaming freeway overpasses, and where a woman is still paid three quarters of what a man makes for doing the same job.

Meanwhile, a recent study showed that Santa Clara County spends [more than half a billion dollars](#) a year providing services to homeless residents, the overwhelming majority of whom reside in our city. It is both our moral and a fiscal imperative to come together as a community to address the affordability of San José. If we embrace a spirit of working together towards innovative solutions, we can create a city that gives everyone a fair shot at stability and success. The City should build on existing partnerships and develop new relationships with the nonprofit and private sectors to increase supply and control costs, and continue to explore and implement innovative projects like transitional housing, hotel/motel conversions, micro apartments, and regulated urban camping. Additionally, I am proud to support the "All the Way Home" initiative, a collaboration between the City of San José, Santa Clara County, and the local nonprofit community to ensure every veteran in our county is guaranteed housing.

I would also advocate for additional funding to augment the hard-working staff of the City's Housing Department, who are already overburdened with worthy initiatives and programs that may take years to implement without a significant investment in staff capacity. This could be accomplished with a simple shift in resources. There are currently more than 200 budgeted, unfilled positions in San José's Police Department alone. At current academy graduation rates, it will take many years to come close to filling those positions. By re-appropriating funding for even 10 of those positions to the Housing Department, we could dramatically increase the City's ability to house our homeless neighbors – which would contribute to improving public safety, thus reducing the burden on our shorthanded police force.

8. Many scientists explain that over-population is the "mother of all environmental problems" and the one that drives all the others. What is your position on this issue and what if anything should be done to address it?

I do not believe that government has any right to regulate parenthood. Furthermore, recent studies show that birth rates have plateaued in the United States. While this may not be the case in China, India, and other large industrialized nations, I do not believe that human over-population is the primary driver of negative environmental impacts. Humans must re-learn how to live in concert with the world around us, no matter how many of "us" there are on this planet.

9. What kinds of education reform do you support? And what is your position regarding free public education from pre-school up through graduate school?

I agree with Senator and Presidential Candidate Bernie Sanders that public education should be free from pre-school through undergraduate school in order to create equity across all demographics and give every person in our country an opportunity to receive a high-quality education. I also believe we should invest in recruiting, developing, and supporting a new generation of teachers, and that we should compensate them at a level commensurate with the most respected occupations in our society, such as doctors, lawyers, and elected officials. I do NOT believe that charter schools are the answer to our education woes, and I would prefer to see our public school districts focus their attention on improving traditional public schools. And I am adamantly opposed to private school vouchers, which would only exacerbate the polarizing caste system in our current education environment.

10. The average scholastic test scores of Asian and Caucasians are higher than those of Latinos and African-Americans.

a) Why is this? Two words: Institutional racism.

b) What should be done about it?

We can start by redistributing education funding to prioritize low-income Latino and African-American communities. Many of the students in these schools come from households that lack adequate time and financial resources to invest in supporting their children's education. So we can also help by providing more support services to single

parents and caregivers. Local government can do its part by enhancing the “third space” between school and the home with expanded hours and programs in our libraries, parks, and community centers. This would not only develop lifelong learning habits, but also keep kids off the street and free from the influence of gangs.

11. It is widely recognized that the current political system in America has been corrupted by the influence of private money. What specific steps would you support to help rectify this situation?

I would advocate for a Constitutional Amendment to overturn the Supreme Court’s ruling in the Citizens United case, which dictates that corporations are people and money equates to free speech. Short of that, I believe sunshine in the best medicine. That’s why I support the California Disclose Act, which would require independent expenditure campaigns to clearly list their top donors in direct mail and other campaign messaging. In an ideal world, I support equal public funding for candidates and the elimination of independent expenditures, but that may be a bridge too far in our current political climate.

12. How should government deal with the widespread use of the drugs that are currently illegal?

After more than 30 years, it is time to admit that America’s “War On Drugs” has been an abject failure. The federal government should immediately take cannabis off the list of “Schedule 1” narcotics, allowing states to legalize and regulate its cultivation, distribution, and use in the same manner as alcohol and tobacco. This would free up billions of dollars spent to prosecute and imprison non-violent cannabis users and distributors and allow those vital funds to be invested in drug prevention and treatment programs as well as raise revenue for other public services. It would also ease the burden on our overcrowded prison system. I would NOT advocate for the legalization of highly addictive controlled substances such as cocaine, heroin, or methamphetamine, but I do believe that treatment should be prioritized over prosecution.

13. What are your thoughts on race-based affirmative action as opposed to class-based affirmative action?

No matter how far we have come in confronting this issue, racism still pervades even our most progressive institutions, and it would be naïve of us to think otherwise. As such, I support race-based affirmative action as a means of ensuring that everyone in our country has equal access to a high-quality education. However, I do not believe this is an either/or question. Socio-economic status should also be taken into consideration in college admissions.

14. What specific steps, if any, should be taken to improve the quality and delivery of health care?

Lower the minimum age for Medicare to 0 and create a single-payer public health care system in the mold of every other major industrialized western nation. Medicare is the most successful public program ever devised by American government. Expanding it to the entire population makes dollars and sense.

15. What additional steps should be taken to deal with California's ongoing water shortage?

I support the reuse of recycled water, which is already proving to be a vital resource for irrigation and other uses. But it can and should also be used to supplement existing sources of drinking water as well. The City should continue to invest in new technologies and delivery methods to improve and expand our recycled water usage. We should also work with the Santa Clara Valley Water District and our retail water providers like San José Water Company to encourage the adoption of smart water meters and other tools that are proven to help residents and businesses reduce their water consumption. By coming together around a shared vision of water as a finite resource, we can prepare for future droughts and other impacts of climate change.