

SF DCCC Candidate Questionnaire

Citywide Office – November 2018

Interview on August 18, 2018

Contact Adam Mehis (415) 626-1161

Email Questionnaire to [info@SFDemocrats.org](mailto:info@SFDemocrats.org) by 5PM August 13, 2018

Can provide 45 copies of up to 4 pages of supplemental information attached to your questionnaire for distribution to SF DCCC members – may not be passed out at the meeting

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What office are you running for? City & County of San Francisco Assessor-Recorder

Are you running for re-election? YES

What other elected positions have you held previously? City & County of San Francisco Supervisor

Part I. General Questions (200 words or less)

Are you a registered member of the Democratic Party? **Yes, I am a lifelong Democrat.**

Please describe your contributions to the Democratic Party and/or increasing civic engagement in the democratic process at the local, state and or/national level in the most recent years.

**As public leaders, I believe it is our responsibility to ensure our government is open, inclusive and protects and provides opportunities for all our residents. As a daughter of immigrants, I have seen, first-hand, the challenges and barriers many face when it comes to civic participation. Throughout my public service and before becoming an elected official, I have worked to encourage voter participation, especially within our immigrant communities. In my current role, I prioritize language access to encourage San Franciscans to access our City services and was amongst the first departments in the City to require office-wide implicit bias training so that we can better serve our constituents. Recently I have engaged with OCEIA and non-profit organizations to encourage traditionally undercounted communities to participate in the upcoming 2020 Census because it matters for representation and for funding. And, I am proud to have initiated the W Challenge, an effort to encourage women's voter participation. The goal of the W Challenge is to channel women's authentic voices to show that women, across interests and the political spectrum, are united with it comes to pushing for voter participation. See [wchallenge.org](http://wchallenge.org) for more information.**

Are there any other civic causes or organizations that you are involved with? Please describe.

**In addition to the civic causes mentioned above, I am very involved with volunteering at and supporting non-profit community organizations across the City. I volunteer at foodbanks, at senior meal programs, at neighborhood clean-up days and beautification events and enjoy working hand-in-hand with community volunteers to strengthen our neighborhoods. Currently I chair standards for the California Assessors' Association, a statewide non-profit professional organization for the 58 elected county Assessors. Previously I served as the President of the Bay Area Assessors Association. I am also involved with the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association and the SF Employee Retirement System.**

Please summarize your qualifications and experience for the office you are seeking.

In my first term as Assessor, I've also focused on providing effective and ethical leadership for San Francisco in an area that is critical for our City's success - the strengthening of our financial - to deliver nearly \$3 billion in annual revenue for vital city services including public education, housing, public safety, senior services, and street cleaning.

#### **Raising Bar on Accountability**

- **Eliminating backlogs and resolving appeals; generated over half a billion dollars above expectations to fund our most pressing challenges like affordable housing, safety, street maintenance, homeless navigation centers.**
- **Closed loopholes to hold the largest corporations responsible for paying their fair share – \$38 million in underreported transfer taxes identified.**
- **Implemented performance tools and streamlined processes to remove barriers to building more housing.**

#### **Office Modernization**

- **Launched online filing and recording; redesigned website for better customer service.**
- **2.6 million historical records transitioned from paper to searchable digital files; data safeguarded for disaster recovery.**
- **Overhauling dated tax system for greater transparency and efficiency.**

#### **Serving Community**

- **Helped over 800, mostly monolingual families, access free counseling from financial and legal professionals.**
- **Connected low and middle-income families to foreclosure prevention services.**
- **Introduced legislation extending tax benefits for locally registered domestic partners who previously didn't have the opportunity to marry.**

Please list any organizations or elected officials who have endorsed you.

**I am humbled to have the endorsement of leaders across the City including: Senators Kamala Harris, Dianne Feinstein, Congresswomen Jackie Speier, Minority Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senator Scott Wiener, Assemblymembers David Chiu, Phil Ting, Controller Betty Yee, Board of Equalization Fiona Ma, Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom, Mayor London Breed, Fmr Mayor Mark Farrell, Supervisors Vallie Brown, Sandra Lee Fewer, Rafael Mandelman, Aaron Peskin, Hillary Ronen, Ahsha Safai, Catherine Stefani, Katy Tang, Norman Yee; Former Supervisors John Avalos, David Campos, Leslie Katz, Eric Mar, Sophie Maxwell, Jeff Sheehy, Carol Ruth Silver and many more. Please visit [carmenchu.org](http://carmenchu.org) for more information.**

Will you fight for the California Democratic Platform and for the implementation of its policies?

**I am a lifelong Democrat and have supported policies consistent with Democratic party values around inclusion, opportunity and investments in public infrastructure, education and health care.**

Part II. Yes/No Questions

Economic Justice

- Do you support the separation of retail and investment banking to safeguard Californians from speculative investment activities? **Yes, I support reforms to prevent banks from gambling with taxpayers' deposits and to review leveraging by financial institutions.**
- Do you believe that the government should provide foreclosure relief for borrowers who were victims of unethical financial service practices? **I support government enacting guidelines to prevent unethical financial services practices to minimize foreclosure relief.**

#### Criminal Justice/Police Reform

- Do you support overhauling the bail system? **Yes**
- Do you support reducing prison overcrowding by decreasing penalties for minor drug offenses and other victimless crimes, making the punishment fit the crime? **Yes**
- Do you believe in ending mass incarceration and supporting the abolishment of capital punishment? **I would like to end mass incarceration.**
- Will you support the full restoration of funding for the Courts? **Yes**
- Will you commit to “ban the box” legislation to ensure that the formerly incarcerated are given an equal opportunity for housing and employment? **Yes**
- Do you support using jails as mental health facilities and substance abuse treatment programs? **No**

#### Education

- Do you believe in a “debt-free college” and free community college? **Yes**
- Would you support the idea of school districts using local accountability plans to grant funds to reach students with the greatest needs? **I believe we need to help raise outcomes for students with greatest needs, and would like more information on how a local accountability plan works.**
- Do you support that teachers and professional staff deserve commensurate wages? **Yes**
- Do you believe that charter schools should be subject to oversight and the same credentialing and qualification standards as those at public schools? **Yes**
- Do you believe in parental leave for teachers? **Yes**

#### Environment

- Do you oppose new fossil fuel infrastructure projects? **Yes**
- Do you believe in curtailing and phasing out pesticide that pose threat to farm workers, consumers and pollinators? **Yes**
- Would you support divestment of public funds in the fossil fuel industry? **Yes**
- Would you ban fracking? **Yes**

#### Healthcare

- Do you endorse Bill 562, the Healthy California Act (Lara) in 2017? **I support universal health care, believe single payer is a means to provide more transparency to health care delivery costs/care and would like to better understand specific provisions of Bill 562.**
- Will you fight to enforce the Patient’s Bill of Rights? **Yes**
- Do you support a requirement that all HMOs and insurers obtain prior approval from the state before rates can be increased? **Yes**
- Do you support the idea that women have access to safe, affordable, and reliable access to a full spectrum of reproductive services including contraceptives without their spouse, judicial, parental, or guardian consent? **Yes**

#### Civil Rights and Immigrant Justice Issues

- Do you believe in supporting fundamental rights guaranteed by the US constitution are applied to everyone within the US borders? **Yes**

- Will you support Sanctuary policies and Due Process for All, limiting the ability for local authorities to collaborate with Federal government on immigration enforcement which incites fear in immigrant communities? **Yes**
- Do you support State funding deportation defense funds to ensure that all detained immigrants are provided representation and due process? **I believe in due process and representation for immigrants and would want to understand how this process would work for individuals who have committed violent crimes.**
- Do you support speaking out in public against all forms of racism, discrimination, hatred and violence and support standing in solidarity with movements that promote equity, including Black Lives Matter? **Yes I am against all forms of racism, discrimination, hatred and violence.**
- Will you protect the right of all people to use facilities and participate in all aspects of society regardless of their gender identity and the gender assigned at birth and ensure equal access to all public facilities? **Yes**

#### Labor

- Do you support employee rights to organize and collective bargaining and support enforceable organizing agreements? **Yes**
- Will you support the push for a statewide minimum wage for at least \$15 per hour and living wages for areas that have a high cost of living? **Yes with a phase in period.**
- Do you support the privatization of essential governments services and outsourcing of public sector jobs? **In general I do not and think, as we currently have in the City, that there are some instances where jobs are not lost and contracts may make sense.**

#### Campaign Finance Reform

- Would you sponsor and/or endorse the idea of implementing legislation for Clean Money (full public financing of election campaigns at the local, state and federal levels? **With safeguards put in place to prevent abuse and with thresholds for qualification to use public funds.**
- Did you support California Disclose Act (AB 249) in 2017? **I support AB 249.**

#### Housing, Tenant & Land Use Issues

- Do you support a split roll for Proposition 13 that treats taxes for commercial and residential property differently? **Yes, I believe we need to create a fairer property tax system that allows for commercial properties to be reassessed with changes in ownership and also believe proposers should work with State Assessors to ensure specific proposals can be implemented and Assessors have the tools and resources they need to implement changes.**
- Would you support overturning Costa Hawkins to support the right for localities to pass rent control laws? **I support prevention of predatory rental pricing/practices and am concerned with impact on future housing development and current single family home/condo owners.**
- Do you support the repeal of the Ellis Act? **I believe abuse of the Ellis Act should be addressed and that property owners should also have the ability to live in the property they purchase.**
- Do you support housing “by right”? **I believe people should have access to housing.**

#### Short-Answer (250 words or less)

If you are elected, what are your top priorities? How do you intend on addressing these?

**As Assessor, one of the most important roles I play is in the ethical and effective financial stewardship of San Francisco. Property taxes is the largest funding source for general local services and funds**

**California's public education programs. If I am re-elected, my focus will be on ensuring our administration of property taxes is strong and fair, modernizing and leading the transition of our City's outdated property tax system to a platform that supports transparency and that reduces revenue at risk, implementing process improvements that removes barriers to building more housing especially on public-private partnerships, and ensuring our direct services reach the community.**

**Already we are well on our way towards modernizing the City's property tax platform. Over the last year, my office, along with the Controller and Tax Collector have been working side-by-side to ensure that the replacement of our financial systems are in sync and aligned. We've completed the development of requirements, mapping to-be business processes, issued and completed the RFP process and are getting ahead of future data conversion challenges by beginning work to clean and standardize our information now.**

**This year we are also on track to reverse a decades old backlog! This is a significant accomplishment given our backlog history and the results of our production goals has meant that San Francisco realizes revenues from reassessments quicker and taxpayers have more certainty around tax obligations faster. Over the past year we've also been working with Public Works and our City agency partners to streamline our collective workflows. By creating clear processes for parcel management/subdivisions and assessments we can help speed up the development of housing especially for large public-private projects. In addition, there are close to 30 additional active small and large initiatives that we are pursuing to deliver more accountability in our operations.**

What do you believe should be the budget priorities for California? How will you ensure policies are equitable to protect low-income and middle-income communities?

**According to the SacBee, California is now the world's fifth-largest economy with gross state product of \$2.747 trillion in 2017. In general, I would like to see California invest more in public education (including higher education), in sustainable infrastructure to help California continue to have a leading edge in our economy and in healthcare. California's per pupil spending is amongst the lowest and investments in higher education has not kept pace with the population. The result is poorer educational outcomes for our students and a higher education system that is increasingly hard to access. I believe strongly in the power of education to uplift communities, especially low and middle-income communities and would like to see California invest more in our public education. On healthcare, our current system of providing healthcare is fragmented and provides little transparency in terms of health outcomes and costs. Meanwhile families and local governments are shouldering the cost of rising health care costs. I would like to see California lead the way when it comes to delivering a framework for transparent affordable care. Finally, on a sustainable infrastructure that helps California continue to succeed... California needs to be a leader when it comes to addressing the realities of climate change and a growing population head on. Investments in sustainable mass transportation, water reclamation and conservation, housing is part of the need when planning for California's growth. Part of this priority is also recognizing how our economy is changing and being proactive to address needs of the new economy with our current and future workforce. Addressing education, healthcare and being forward thinking on the investments in human capital and physical infrastructure needed to sustain the economy and population of the future will go a long way towards promoting positive outcomes low and middle-income communities.**

The California Democratic Party Platform mentions building health, livable and sustainable communities. What does this mean to you?

**I am a lifelong Democrat and have supported policies consistent with Democratic party values around inclusion, opportunity and investments in public infrastructure, education and health care. Building health, livable and sustainable communities means supporting policies that are inclusive and that protects all families, including low and middle-income families, to have opportunities to do well and thrive in California. This includes access to education and employment opportunities and access to health care and housing.**