

# College Board | League of Pissed Off Voters November 2020 Questionnaire

Hello candidates! Thank you for filling out the League's questionnaire. Please use THIS FORM rather than formatting it into a Word document or PDF. If you have any questions, you can contact us at [TheLeagueSF@gmail.com](mailto:TheLeagueSF@gmail.com).

Email address \*

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Candidate Info

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Where is one place in San Francisco you'll want to go celebrate when the pandemic is over?

ferry building!

Tell us about yourself.

Why are you running for this office?

CCSF is the people's college, and I will fight to keep it that way, I am running to elevate the voices of students, teachers, and to represent my community in the leadership of CCSF. I have over a decade of experience as an educator, working in schools, or on policies that impact schools. As a legislative aide on the Board of Supervisors, I drafted the "Ban the Box" legislation to prohibit the use of criminal-justice information on applications for private colleges in San Francisco. While pursuing my MA in Education Policy from Columbia University, I served as a student senator and developed a pro-diversity admissions policy. My thesis paper also focused on the burden of student debt.

As a Fulbright Scholar in North Macedonia, I served as an ESL teacher and also drafted a policy paper analyzing the failure of top-down approaches in advancing higher education reform. Currently, I oversee the Free City College Program at the Department of Children Youth and Their Families and led the successful execution of the ten-year MOU for the Free City Program.

Why do you want the League of Pissed Off Voters' endorsement?

I was born and raised in San Francisco and growing up in the city has shaped my progressive values, skills in community organizing, and dedication to activism. The SF League Of Pissed Off Voters' endorsement is important to me because your advocacy helps ensure that San Franciscans understand the political process, and how to support the most progressive candidates that will fight for our city and make sure that it is a just and diverse place to live for all of our residents. Improving our city comes with ensuring that our elected bodies represent our progressive values. I would be honored to have your endorsement.

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What are your values and how did you get them?

My commitment to public education is rooted in a devotion to creating equity, access, and agency for our students. I bring an intersectional lens to all my work as a young Muslim woman of color that was born and raised in Lakeview in a low-income family. At a young age, I fell in love with how education can transform lives. I became an educator and then a policymaker, where I've fought to achieve equity and opportunity for all students, especially low-income students and students of color. Through my training and experience as an education policymaker, I have learned how to craft and execute policies that effectively support these students. I also have an in-depth understanding of City College, overseeing the Free City College program and believe that we need to do more for our underrepresented students at CCSF. My platform includes establishing an emergency grant program for students, a jobs guarantee program with clear career pathways, and to grow Free City to expand access to undocumented students and those that have been pushed out of SF.

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What communities do you represent and how do they hold you accountable?

As a Muslim Indian women of color that was born and raised in San Francisco, I hold multiple identities, and always strive to represent and amplify the voices of my many communities. It is bittersweet to know that if elected, I would be the first Muslim elected to city office in the history of San Francisco. This offers an opportunity, and a real responsibility to be the best leader of my community I can be. As an educator, I seek to represent and elevate the voices of students and educators. If elected to the CCSF Board of Trustees, one form of accountability will be elections, but beyond that, I stay in consistent communication with students, educators, and others in my own community to ensure I am grounded in their needs and priorities. I ask anyone that I work with - from my constituents, to my collaborators, to my own team members - to hold me accountable, to "call me in," and to push me to be a better leader.

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What three endorsements are you most proud of?

American Federation of Teachers Local 2121  
Run for Something  
Jeremiah Jeffries & Karen Zapata, Teachers 4 Social Justice

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What for-profit or non-profit boards do you serve on, including political organizations?

I currently do not serve on any boards or political organizations.

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What local and state commissions and policy bodies have you served on -- currently or in the past?

During my time as a student, I served as a Student Senator as the Chair of Academic Affairs at Teachers College Columbia University as I pursued my MA in Education Policy to advocate for student needs. I have also served as an advisory committee member for the Critical Middle East/South West Asia and North Africa (SWANA) studies program at CCSF to support and encourage enrollment for these important classes.

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#### Local Issues

Do you support San Francisco Employees' Retirement System (SFERS) fully divesting from fossil fuels within three years and holding SFERS accountable at the ballot if they do not divest?

Yes

No

Do you support San Francisco purchasing PG&E assets to create public power in San Francisco?

Yes

No

Do you support the closure of 850 Bryant, jails #3 and #4?

Yes

No

Did you support SB 50 (Senator Wiener's Zoning Bill) as written?

Yes

No

If not, are there amendments that would make you support it?

We need to go back to the drawing board completely on SB 50 and rethink how we approach housing policy and need to center our historically underrepresented populations as we develop these policies.

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Do you support congestion pricing for the downtown core?

Yes

No

Do you support creating a Public Bank in San Francisco?

Yes

No

If Costa Hawkins was repealed at the state level, would you actively support legislation enacting vacancy control in San Francisco?

Yes

No

Do you support a baseline percentage of 40% of affordable housing in developments when negotiating the number of housing units?

Yes

No

Do you support requiring 100% affordable housing on public land?

Yes

No

If not, under what circumstances would you support allowing a percentage or all market-rate housing?

N/A

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Have you previously and/or will you in the future accepted donations from any law enforcement officers or associations?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain why.

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What percentage of the SFPD budget do you think should be reallocated towards housing, homeless services, social workers, health, and education?

100

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Would you support legislation to implement the Budget Analyst's recommendation to adopt a more efficient weekly staffing schedule for the SFPD? (Recommendation 2.2 here: [https://sfbos.org/sites/default/files/BA\\_Report\\_PA\\_of\\_San\\_Francisco\\_Police\\_Department\\_061218.pdf](https://sfbos.org/sites/default/files/BA_Report_PA_of_San_Francisco_Police_Department_061218.pdf))

Yes

No

November 2020 Election

Who are you supporting for US Representative, District 12?

Nancy Pelosi

Who are you supporting for State Senate, District 11?

Jackie Fielder

Who are you supporting for District 1 Supervisor?

Connie Chan

Who are you supporting for District 3 Supervisor?

Aaron Peskin

Who are you supporting for District 5 Supervisor?

Dean Preston

Who are you supporting for District 7 Supervisor?

Myrna Melgar

Who are you supporting for District 9 Supervisor?

Hillary Ronen

Who are you supporting for District 11 Supervisor?

Ahsha Safai

Who are you supporting for Board of Education?

Jenny Lam, Mark Sanchez, Kevin Boggess

Who are you supporting for Community College Board?

Aliya Chisti, Shanell Williams, Anita Martinez

Who are you supporting for BART Board, District 9?

Bevan Dufty

Do you support the charter amendment to create a Workforce Education and Recovery Fund for City College (WERF)?

Yes

No

Do you support "Vote 16" the SF charter amendment that authorizes youths aged 16 and 17 to vote in municipal elections?

Yes

No

Do you support the charter amendment to allow non-citizens to serve on boards, commissions, and advisory bodies?

Yes

No

Do you support the charter amendment creating the Office of the Public Advocate?

Yes

No

Do you support the charter amendment creating a Public Works Commission, Sanitation and Streets Commission, and Sanitation and Streets Department?

Yes

No

Do you support the charter amendment establishing term limits for City boards, commissions and bodies?

Yes

No

Do you support the charter amendment creating the Sheriff's Department Oversight Board and Inspector General?

Yes

No

Do you support the charter amendment to remove the minimum police staffing requirement and require the Police Department to submit a report and recommendation regarding police staffing levels?

Yes

No

Do you support the ballot measure to increase the gross receipts tax on businesses with a greater than 100:1 ratio of the pay of their highest-paid employee to the median pay of their SF employees?

Yes

No

Do you support the gross receipts ballot measure proposed by the Board of Supervisors (Yee, Haney, Peskin, Fewer) [File No. 200648]?

Yes

No

Do you support the gross receipts ballot measure proposed by Mayor London Breed [File No. 200645]?

Yes

No

Do you support the ballot measure authorizing development of up to 10,000 affordable rental units in the City?

Yes

No

Do you support California Proposition 15, Tax on Commercial and Industrial Properties for Education and Local Government Funding Initiative?

Yes

No

Do you support California Proposition 21, Local Rent Control Initiative (Costa-Hawkins changes)?

Yes

No

Do you support California Proposition 22, App-Based Drivers as Contractors and Labor Policies Initiative (AB5 Referendum)?

Yes

No

Do you Support California Proposition 25, Replace Cash Bail with Risk Assessments Referendum (Cash Bail Referendum)?

Yes

No

Who did you support for Superior Court Judge?

Maria Evangelista

Who did you support for DCCC?

Social Justice Democrats

Did you support March 2020's Prop D, a tax on vacant storefronts?

Yes

No

Did you support March 2020's Prop E, limits on office development?

Yes

No

November 2019 Election

Who did you support for District Attorney?

Suzy Loftus

Who did you support for District 5 Supervisor?

Vallie Brown in 2019, but Dean Preston in 2020.

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November 2018 Election

Did you support November 2018's Prop C "Our City Our Home" tax on gross receipts of businesses to fund homeless services?

Yes

No

June 2018 Election

Did you support June 2018's Prop F "Tenant's Right to Counsel"?

Yes

No

Did you support June 2018's Prop H "Arm Police With Tasers"?

Yes

No

Past Elections

Did you support 2016's Prop D "Let's Elect Our Elected Officials" to have special elections to fill vacancies on the Board of Supervisors?

Yes

No

Did you support 2014's Prop G, the anti-speculation tax?

Yes

No

## Community College Board

What are the top three issues you will work on and how will you implement solutions in a timely manner?

The top three issues facing City College of San Francisco are: a lack of adequate funding, a lack of transparency in decision-making processes, and a stubborn opportunity gap for historically underrepresented student populations.

In addition to advocating for additional revenue streams through a wealth tax, I will also work to address the budget crisis by prioritizing a strong strategy to grow enrollment at the college to 32,000 Full-Time Equivalent Status, which will then lead to a baseline funding level by the state. I will advocate for greater transparency in the budget process so that we can develop a stronger understanding of how resources are used to support teachers and students. This can be accomplished through a financial controller that can support stronger internal controls, town halls, and delivery of budget information using user-friendly platforms.

Third, based on data collected in 2014, 49% of CCSF students said that their greatest barrier to student success was financial resources. That is why my platform includes implementing an emergency grant program for students. We need to re-double CCSF's efforts to close the opportunity gap by: recruiting and retaining Black and Brown faculty, collaborating with the Office of Student Equity at CCSF, and gathering data to identify the greatest challenges staff and students of color face and develop concrete strategies.

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Describe your current engagement with the Community College Board. Do you attend meetings (online or in person)? What are the most important items that have been on agendas recently?

I have spent the last two years regularly attending Board meetings. As the first person to hold the role as the Senior Analyst for the Free City College Program at DCYF, my goal was to better understand the college and the landscape of higher education at CCSF and to also cultivate the relationship between these two agencies. Free City is nested within CCSF and it was important to better understand how other factors impact the Free City Program. Through this experience, the most pressing issues have centered around the many budgetary challenges at CCSF and a lack of transparency in the decision-making process by Chancellor Rocha, such as class cuts and the administrator salary increases.

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With a structural budget deficit, how do you envision balancing the budget and keeping vocational and continuing education classes not supported by state funding?

We need to take a multi-pronged approach to responding to this budget deficit. We must identify ways to increase revenue and ensure we are using our existing budget in the most efficient ways possible. My plans for increasing revenue and transparency are outlined above. When it comes to vocational and continuing education, I am committed to advocating for the preservation of critical vocational and continuing education classes, as they serve the broad mission of City College. Additionally, I am committed to building partnerships with public and private industries to build job placement pipelines, and encourage a sense of social responsibility among our private partners in particular, to invest resources into CCSF. These resources can come in the form of philanthropic partnerships.

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What work have you done to support additional funding from the City or State for City College?

In my role as the Lead Analyst, I supported the college's assertion that the original amount for the Free City program for \$5.4million was not an adequate amount and also affirmed that changing the program design would help low-income students in accessing additional dollars. During the pandemic, I advocated to support an emergency grant program for CCSF Students. I also connected a nonprofit agency, Moms Against Poverty, with CCSF students to disseminate gift cards to students. I also personally have reached out to my personal networks to donate laptops to students during the pandemic.

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There is a proposed housing project on City-owned land along Balboa Reservoir, adjacent to campus. How do you envision working with the City, the SFPUC who owns the land, the developers, and your colleagues on the Community College Board to support the development of maximum affordable housing for staff and faculty?

I support 100% affordable housing at the Reservoir. I grew up in Lakeview and have seen my neighborhood change and my neighbors get pushed out. We need to make sure that any agreement that is put in place must be in the best interest of our college community. I have on the job experience navigating various agencies, bureaucracies, and stakeholder groups to implement goals. Second, I am an advocate. I will work alongside our educator and labor partners, build a coalition with my fellow Trustees and other elected officials, and use my platform to elevate the need for the maximum affordable housing.

What qualities and experience would you look for in a new permanent chancellor?

A new City College Chancellor must have the ability to build trust with the CCSF community, is committed to addressing the opportunity gap, is transparent and holds the administration accountable, and also has the institutional knowledge needed to understand the mission of CCSF as the people's college. The right Chancellor will have the trust and support of CCSF faculty and students. Looking within the institution for a candidate will allow us to identify someone with vast expertise and commitment to the CCSF community. Chancellor Rocha, the previous Chancellor of CCSF, eroded trust by failing to have a transparent decision-making process.

What is your opinion of the City College Campus Police, and would you propose any reforms to them?

We should reallocate funds from the SF Community College District Police to support educational priorities and other social services. As COVID-19 continues to ravage state and local budgets, our budget priorities must center on education, mental health support and services, and meeting peoples' basic needs. Short of this reinvestment of resources, reforms must include the creation of clear systems of accountability and data collection for all interactions with campus police.

Do you support maintaining a campus in the Tenderloin? Please explain your answer.

Yes. As the daughter of immigrants and ESL students, I understand first-hand the essential nature of keeping our community serving campuses alive. My mother used to work in retail in the day and take ESL classes at CCSF at night. CCSF centers ensure access and provide important opportunities for our community. Civic Center serves an already marginalized population in the Tenderloin. There is a large Yemeni Muslim population in the Tenderloin and these classes are an important resource for this underserved community. As a Trustee, I would work with our labor partners, faculty, and student leadership to develop an extensive community engagement process to ensure those campuses are most welcoming, responsive and relevant to what the community and neighborhood need. I will also make sure that these spaces are not underutilized and used to serve CCSF's mission.

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If you're elected, what racial justice policies will you push for?

Growing up as a low-income, Muslim woman of color, I've experienced firsthand the impacts of racial injustice, economic hardship, and the feeling of criminalization. These experiences shape my priorities and commitments. I am committed to racial and economic justice, and bring an intersectional lens to my advocacy and policy work. I drafted the ban the box legislation, which removed questions about criminal justice information on private college applications. Additionally, I've worked on efforts to mobilize 'No on H,' a ballot measure that was passed to prevent loosened restrictions on use of tasers by police officers. I have also attended meetings with the Street Violence Intervention Program (SVIP) to learn how to reduce street violence and homicides in SF.

If elected, I will fight for policies that address the broader systemic problems facing students of color. This includes addressing the total cost of attendance for CCSF by providing direct financial resources to the most marginalized students, supporting the recruitment and retention of faculty of color, and expanding the reach of Free City to include undocumented. I will also fight to have a more robust Second Chance program at CCSF and also work to implement a program to advise and support students through understanding the Clean Slate program.

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Last Question

Is there anything else you want to tell us?

I was born and raised in San Francisco, a proud graduate of San Francisco public schools. I was raised by a single mother in an Indian-American, Muslim family.

My family grew up poor in San Francisco. I remember days where I'd open up the fridge only to see empty shelves, confused at the grocery store when my mom paid the cashier with food stamps instead of money.

Education has always been a focal point in my life, a path to success. It is why I became a Lead Teacher at Aim High, a non-profit for low-income middle school students. It's why I taught as a substitute teacher in San Francisco, Daly City, Brisbane, and San Bruno; and why I pursued a Master's of Education from Columbia University. It's why I worked as a Fulbright Scholar in North Macedonia, modeling technology-enriched teaching practices to help teachers improve student engagement and retention rates. It is why I served as a legislative aide as a key education advisor.

CCSF's core function in the San Francisco community is an unwavering commitment to helping people succeed. It's a place where they can get a second chance, find their true passion, or find their community. In every CCSF student, I see my mom who took ESL classes at night to learn English so that she could better her life. In every CCSF student, I see my brother walking up the stairs to his class and then working a part-time job at night to help our family make ends meet. In every CCSF student, I see my father who came to the US knowing nobody but found community at CCSF. In every CCSF student, I see an Aliya that was taught to not express her thoughts but is now finally finding her voice. In every CCSF student, I see hope for a new and better San Francisco.

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