

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.

Email address *

[REDACTED]

Candidate Info

Name

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Office Sought

Community College Board

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

A packed dancefloor on the patio at El Rio on a sunny weekend afternoon

Tell us about yourself.

Why are you running for this office?

As the son of a public school teacher and as a public school student from elementary school through college, I know just how important it is to have access to quality well-funded public education. Community college classes helped me get back on track when I was sick as a teenager and had to drop out of school, ultimately allowing me to finish high school and move to San Francisco to enroll in San Francisco State University. In San Francisco, like so many others, I was inspired by people like Harvey Milk and Tom Ammiano to jump into activism and became President of the Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club where I made sure that the club was the first LGBT organization to join the Save City College Coalition and fight alongside faculty to keep our accreditation.

These experiences inspired me to run for the Board of Trustees in 2015 and again in 2016 when, with the League's support, I was elected to a 4-year term and became San Francisco's youngest elected official. During my time on the Board, we have had a number of successes, including securing full funding for the Free City program for the next 10 years, negotiating contracts that raised faculty and classified staff salaries, having our accreditation rightly reaffirmed for 7 years, passing an \$845 million bond to rebuild our dilapidated classrooms and crafting the Workforce Education and Recovery Fund (WERF) to provide stable funding from the City to retain important classes for the College and the community are among my proudest moments as a Trustee.

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

Because I love the League. The first time I remember handing out League guides was in 2011 during John Avalos' Mayor's race and I've handed out thousands, probably tens of thousands, of guides at Hard French, at BART stops (24th and Mission in particular) and at Bar Crawls for pretty much every election since. So many of the closest and most enduring friends I've met in politics I met through the League and it's been incredible watching all of us grow together in the movement over the last decade. Seeing my name on the League guide when I ran in 2015 and 2016 was a really special full circle moment and it would be really meaningful to see my name in the guide again in 2020.

What are your values and how did you get them?

I'm proud to be a strong progressive strong progressive values and am committed to supporting communities of color, the queer community and all marginalized communities in San Francisco. While I was still a student at SFSU, I interned in Chris Daly's office and met John Avalos who was his legislative aide and his Supervisors race was the first campaign I ever volunteered on. That began a journey that lead me to the Harvey Milk Club, the League and to a network of amazing progressive activists and leaders who I've proudly fought with since that time.

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

In my role as a Trustee I represent the interests of the people of San Francisco at City College. Painful cuts to funding for the College at the State level have lead to many tough decisions over these last four years and I've always tried to center what is best for our students in these decisions by keeping cuts as far away from the classroom as possible. These students hold me accountable with regular meetings – I just met earlier today with Students Making A Change (SMAC) and continue to seek out the input of students on what needs to improve for them at the College.

As a queer elected official, and as someone who feels like my being queer is what helped shape me into the person and leader I am today, I feel a particular responsibility to support LGBTQ students and staff at City College. I believe that the success of our queer community must be measured by the rights and resources available our most vulnerable members, particularly trans people and trans people of color. That is why I worked closely with our Trans Inclusion Task Force on the creation of the College's Gender Inclusion Policy, which was passed by the Board in December of 2019. This created new rules to protect transgender and gender non-conforming students and staff including requirements on use of chosen names in all College processes, the expansion of gender neutral restrooms and other facilities and the prohibition of deliberately misgendering students or staff.

I was also able to work with LGBTQ students and staff to secure a new permanent home for the College's Queer Resource Center so that students could have a safe clean space to study and access support services. Additionally we were able to create a new Full-Time position to staff the Queer Resource Center so that it would be able to operate year-round.

What three endorsements are you most proud of?

While I'm proud to have the endorsement of a number of current and former members of the Board of Supervisors (including Supervisors Preston, Haney, Fewer, Peskin, Walton and Mandelman and former Supervisor John Avalos), I'm especially proud to have the endorsement of the two Supervisors who I've worked most closely with to support City College – Supervisor Gordon Mar and former Supervisor Jane Kim. I worked with Supervisor Kim to pass Prop W in 2016 and to roll out the pilot Free City program, serving with her on the Free City Oversight Committee. I then worked closely with Supervisor Mar to negotiate the 10 year, \$200m MOU between City College and the City to fully fund the Free City Program and have worked with him for the past year to craft the Workforce Education and Recovery Fund.

Though most organizational endorsements haven't happened yet, it's also meaningful to have the support of progressive organizations that I've worked closely with including the San Francisco Tenants Union, the Rose Pau Democratic Club and the Sierra Club.

The endorsements that mean most to me are the ones from the people who work at City College and have worked with me over these past four years to support our students including former AFT 2121 President Jenny Worley, AFT 2121 Board Member Adele Failes-Carpenter, City College faculty member Sue Englander, and City College counselor (and DCCC member) Li Miao Lovett.

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

Currently the only board I serve on is the City College Board of Trustees. I previously served for six years on the Executive Board of the Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club, including two years as President and co-President and one year as PAC Chair, where I got to work closely with the League to support our many shared endorsements. I was also a board member of the SF LGBT Community Center.

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

The City College Board of Trustees since 2016. I also served almost eight years on the SoMA Community Stabilization Fund CAC and feel incredibly lucky to have invested millions of dollars to communities in SoMA to help stabilize those most at risk of displacement.

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?

I fully agree with making wealthy suburbs that reap huge benefits by being home to large corporations while not building the housing necessary to accommodate their workers need to build their fair share of housing. Their refusal to do so has turned San Francisco into a bedroom community and fueled our displacement crisis. I do not agree with not allowing cities like San Francisco, which has actually built a significant amount of new housing – both affordable and market rate – to plan for development in a way that involves local communities and discourages the displacement of communities of color.

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?

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.

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

20

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

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?

Scott Wiener

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?

Vilaska Nguyen

Who are you supporting for District 9 Supervisor?

Hillary Ronen

Who are you supporting for District 11 Supervisor?

John Avalos

Who are you supporting for Board of Education?

Mark Sanchez, Kevine Boggess, Jenny Lam

Who are you supporting for Community College Board?

Shanell Williams, Alan Wong, Han Zhou

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

March 2020 Election

Who did you support for Superior Court Judge?

.....
Maria Evangelista, Michelle Tong, Cary Gold

Who did you support for DCCC?

.....
The Social Justice Democrats Slate

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?

No Endorsement

Who did you support for District 5 Supervisor?

Dean Preston

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 single biggest issue facing City College is the severe funding cuts we have experienced, and continue to experience, from the State. A combination of an end to the State's \$40m in annual stabilization funding, and the pressure created by the State's Student Success Funding Formula had stretched our budget to its breaking point. And now COVID-19 and the ensuing economic crisis has the State poised to repeat the mistakes of the great recession and further cut funding for public education at the time our community needs us the most. For the past year I have been working closely with our faculty union, AFT, to create a ballot initiative to provide stable funding to City College to preserve many of our core offerings including non-credit programs, ESL, diversity studies and workforce training. I have also been actively lobbying our local, state and Federal officials, who freely bail out and support private corporations, to actively fund our community colleges.

Another major issue facing City College is the need to continue to put in place support services and policies that protect and lift up our most marginalized students. In 2017, I worked with students and advocates to secure \$700,000 to support undocumented students, paving the way for the creation of City DREAM, a resource center for undocumented students, students from mixed status families, and all students affected by immigration or citizenship issues. City DREAM is just getting started but I will continue to fight for additional resources at City College for undocumented students and against efforts to exclude them from financial aid at the Federal Level. I also championed the creation of the College's Gender Inclusion Policy, which was passed in December of 2019. This created new rules to protect transgender and gender non-conforming students and staff including requirements on use of chosen names in all College processes, the expansion of gender-neutral restrooms and the prohibition of deliberately misgendering students or staff. I also worked to finally secure year-round staffing and a new much improved location for City College's Queer Resource Center. These initiatives supporting undocumented and queer students are two examples of the work I've done and will continue to do to support our marginalized students.

A third major issue facing City College is the need to upgrade our dilapidated classrooms and student services buildings and reinvest in campuses in the parts of San Francisco where communities need City College the most. As Vice-President of the Board I was a core part of the campaign team for Proposition A, which was passed this past March and will give us \$845 million to begin rebuilding the college's critical infrastructure. I have pushed for us to quickly get to work the construction of new educational facilities including a childcare and student success center, Performing Arts Education Center and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) building. As part of this effort we have also begun a major upgrade to our Evans Center in the Bayview to provide a world-class facility for job training programs for residents of the neighborhood. I have also been an advocate for accelerating the construction on the property that we own at 750 Eddy Street in the Tenderloin. I believe that we should be investigating ways to expand our footprint at that site and have been working with community members in the Tenderloin to explore expanding our offerings to the community at that campus.

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?

As a Board member I LOVE this question since I think that many people run for this, and other bodies, without actually getting to know the issues they'll be dealing with. As a Board Member I, of course, attend all of our meetings.

The most important items on our last agenda were a discussion on the College's budget for the coming year, an MOU between the Balboa Reservoir Developers and the College that would ensure that City College's very important construction projects weren't negatively impacted and that affordable housing for the College's faculty and staff would be included in the deal, and an administrative reorganization that is reducing the number of administrators and spending on salaries while building out capacity in our business and financial offices.

In recent meetings we have also voted on hiring a new chancellor, moving forward several critical bond projects and received updates on the distribution of CARES Act Funding to students in need.

One item which did not receive a ton of fanfare, but of which I'm incredibly proud, was the creation of the Cannabis Studies Program at City College, which I've championed since before I joined the Board San Francisco is where cannabis and social justice intersect and it's only fitting that City College is now the first community college in the country to offer an interdisciplinary degree in Cannabis Studies!

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

This exact issue, and what I feel is the best solution, is exactly why I have been meeting with AFT, City College students and Supervisor Gordon Mar since last year to conceive of and bring forward WERF.

The City of San Francisco depends on City College to provide many critical services to residents – everything from ESL, to older-adult courses, to our many workforce programs training everyone from construction workers to nurses to early childhood educators. Unfortunately the State's new Student Success Funding Formula, and the College's budget issues that have arisen from the ACCJC's attack on the college and the resulting loss in both enrollment and State funding, have jeopardized our ability to offer many of these critical classes that San Franciscans want and need. I believe that it is incumbent upon the City to help fund our college to continue to offer these classes to our residents in the midst of devastating cuts to our funding at the State level.

COVID-19, and the ensuing record unemployment and economic recession, has made the need for a fully-funded City College all the more important. City College, and the classes and programs we offer, will be absolutely critical to the City's economic recovery efforts and we cannot repeat the failed mistake of cutting community college funding at the same time the need for us is the greatest. WERF will allow us to retain and hopefully expand many of the classes that San Franciscans will rely on in their time of need and I have been doing, and will continue to do, everything that I can to make sure that it is passed.

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

The last few years have been very painful for City College's faculty and students. A combination of an end to the State's \$40m in annual stabilization funding, our inability to quickly regrow our enrollment following the accreditation crisis, a depletion of the College's reserves and the pressure created by the Student Success Funding Formula have stretched our budget to its breaking point.

As I have said many times in Board Meetings, and in conversations with faculty, College stakeholders and elected officials, the solution to City College's budget issues are not to cut our way to a balanced budget but to fight for revenue to help us preserve our classes and programs. That is why I've been actively engaged in planning and lobbying for WERF (which I mention above), why I've been enthusiastic in my support of Schools and Communities First and the 10s of millions of dollars it would bring to City College and why I've worked alongside AFT to secure full and stable funding for Free City College as I believe it's the single most important tool we have to grow our enrollment and our budget. I have also routinely lobbied our local, state and federal officials for additional resources and support.

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?

From City College's perspective the most important priorities for this project are to ensure that it does not disrupt construction of much-needed City College projects on the Upper Reservoir like our Diego Rivera Theater and our new STEAM Building, that it includes sufficient parking replacement so that students who need to drive to campus because they are balancing many priorities including full time jobs and families can do so and that the on-site affordable housing, of which there should be as much as possible, includes units for City College faculty and staff. As a Board, we have already been holding firm on these issues and are currently working toward an MOU that would codify them and protect the College's interests. I have spoken many times with City staff, College staff and even the developers to tell them that without affordable housing for our workers, there will be no support for this project from the College. I helped push for a study of our faculty and classified staff to determine the need for affordable housing for our workforce and the results showed that we would need at least 125 housing units to meet demand. It's critical that at least that many units be created as part of this project.

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

The most important criteria for me in hiring our recently hired Interim Chancellor, Dr. Rajen Vuriden, and the same criteria I will apply when the Board hires a new permanent Chancellor next year are a desire to improve the College climate, a strong background and experience in dealing with Community College budgets and funding, a commitment to shared governance and involving all stakeholders in decision making and a shared vision to ensure that City College remains the comprehensive community college that San Franciscans deserve and need.

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

City College's campus police are fairly unique among colleges as they do not have guns or tasers (SFSU's campus police for instance have assault rifles, regular guns and tasers!!!). I successfully pushed for our police to remain unarmed when I first joined the Board and a previous Chancellor recommended arming them. This allows us to not rely on the SFPD, who are armed and are not familiar with our students, workers or campuses, for basic safety functions at the College. That said, the State has proposed additional cuts to critical student services funding at the time our students need these resources the most. If there are ways to shift responsibilities from our Police Department, especially given the high number of current vacancies in that department, to other departments to allow for increased funding for student support services I will work with college stakeholders, including SEIU 1021, to do this.

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

Yes, absolutely. The Tenderloin is one of San Francisco's most underserved neighborhoods and one whose residents, including recent immigrants and formerly and currently homeless people, need and deserve access to the life-changing courses that City College provides. As a queer person, I would like to see the Civic Center campus find new ways to work with the TL's trans community and have had conversations with the Compton's Transgender Cultural District about creating classes or programs specifically to meet the educational needs of trans folks in the neighborhood.

I am deeply committed to retaining our presence in the Tenderloin and believe we need to finally begin construction on the property that we own at 750 Eddy Street. I also believe that we should be investigating ways to expand our footprint at that site and in the Tenderloin so that we can expand our offerings to the community. While that construction is underway, we need to search for temporary space to continue to offer courses which is why last month I joined Civic Center faculty and students in a meeting with Supervisor Matt Haney's office to discuss financial support from the City to remain at 1170 Market Street or help identifying alternative temporary sites in the neighborhood.

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

City College is an agent of change in the lives of our students but for far too long our Black and Brown students faced significant achievement gaps when they came to us looking to transform their lives.

When I first began serving on the Board it would take years longer for black and brown students to complete their degrees than it would for other student populations, oftentimes because they would get caught in the trap of required remedial education in math and English. In 2017, California passed AB 705, which I strongly supported, and required community college's to maximize the probability that a student will enter and complete transfer-level coursework in English and math within a one-year timeframe. As a Trustee I pushed for the swift and successful implementation of AB 705, which has increased support services for students of color to help them complete these classes within a year and has significantly reduced the time it takes our students to complete their degrees. I will continue to push for more resources to support these efforts and additional reforms at the State level to remove structural barriers to the success of students of color.

One of the most important things that we can do to ensure Black and Brown students at City College are successful is to make sure that they have teachers who look like them and share their lived experience. Unfortunately, City College has historically had a faculty that does not represent the diversity of our students and only 6% of faculty members are African-American and only 10% are Latinx. During my time on the Board we have invested heavily in reversing this unacceptable trend and are funding increased recruitment and targeting of faculty of color. I also strongly supported our labor contract that raised faculty salaries to and above the median of the Bay 10 community colleges so that we could offer a living wage to our faculty and better recruit new and diverse faculty to the College.

Last Question

Is there anything else you want to tell us?

I'm bummed that I won't be able to join League members for a discussion about this race, but also the many other important races on the ballot in November, in person! I welcome members reaching out with any more questions! Call or text me at 415-622-5301!

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