

BOS | 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.

Candidate Info

Name

John Avalos

Campaign Contact Person

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Office Sought

District 11 Supervisor

Website

<http://www.avalos2020.com>

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

El Rio. I can't wait to celebrate collectively with my community in a fun outdoor place, with a Lagunitas in hand, and at one of the las queer spaces left in SF.

Tell us about yourself.

Why are you running for this office?

To reunite D11 in fighting for a city that works for all in a Just Recovery centered around the economic needs of everyday people and essential workers.

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

The San Francisco League of Pissed Off Voters puts out an accessible, well-researched, and independent voter guide that deconstructs candidates and issues on the public record, offering multiple perspectives in their political analysis. The League guide does not simply tell voters how to cast their ballots but educates them with critical context on how to consider candidates and issues as they vote. I cannot think of a more trusted voter guide nor a guide that so many voters literally reach out to in their decision-making.

What are your values and how did you get them?

Everyday, I am moving towards a more revolutionary form of activism that seeks to overthrow the pathological system of capitalism for a worker controlled government and economic system that puts human need over corporate greed. I come from the working class. I am Chicano. My mother and father were born in the US during the Great Depression at a time of great Jim Crow-type discrimination against Mexicans in the U.S. Southwest. My parents first language was Spanish. My mom, a brilliant and compassionate woman, had to work to increase household income rather than pursue an education and career. My father was a longshore worker who spent 40 years working the docks of Los Angeles. We lived in Wilmington, a part of LA literally surrounded by oil refineries, power plants, waste treatment facilities, the port of LA, networks of freeways and railway tracks, and over policing. Wilmington, was not a safe place to live. My father occasionally got injured on the job and I witnessed several industrial accidents over the years that gave me a sense of how our economic system subjects working people to constant harm and our communities to poison and deprivation.

I grew up in a Catholic school run by Irish nuns who on occasion taught a strand of a compassionate, Franciscan ideology that somehow sunk in. For 5th grade, I had a radical humanist, Catholic teacher who introduced guitar masses and whose lessons somehow got past the school censors. She showed us films on the Vietnam War war protests, the impact of the Atomic bomb on the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Nazi Holocaust of the Jewish people, and many films on the Civil Rights struggle.

In 1974, my parents divorced and in 1976, my mom remarried and our entire family moved to a small, white, New England town in Massachusetts. I faced shitty discrimination and racialized treatment that ranged from "playful" putdowns to outright blatant abuse and limits on my opportunities. I grew up with anger and embarrassment in my heart.

After graduating from high school, I fled back to CA and fought for years in college, work, and social work school to build my confidence, a process that was not complete until I understood that my sense of agency comes from the people.

I have always considered myself as part of the movement for social justice.

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

I am grounded by my community ties. D11 is home to everyday working people of all ethnicities but primarily white, Latinx, API and Black. We don't have many multi-millionaires let alone any billionaires in D11. We are mostly homeowner households but at least 20% of our homes have in law units so that D11 "single family homeowners" are also landlords too. While in office, I worked to choose projects with my constituents and to build power through organizing campaigns to win on our issues. Every year, we worked on budget advocacy all across the district.

Since leaving office in 2016, I went back into direct organizing in the labor movement with the National Union of Healthcare Workers. With NUHW, I worked to build the collective power of hospital workers, neighborhood clinic workers, and mental health clinicians. I am directly accountable to these workers. As the Avalos 2020 campaign moves forward we are building a co-governance structure to choose issues and hold me accountable to my votes and good behavior. I need this structure because it is easy to lose your way and let your ego drive you in the world of cutthroat politics where the community cannot always be by your side. But we are learning and I am finding my footing every day.

What three endorsements are you most proud of?

SEIU 1021 (sole)
SF Rising Action Fund (sole)
SF Democratic Party #1 Endorsement

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

Currently, I do not serve on any boards.

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

Association of Bay Area Governments
Bay Area Air Quality Management Districts
SF Transportation Authority

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 SB50?

I don't support any amendments, not even a gut and amendment. Time for SB50 to go away.

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?

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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.

I have never sought the SF Police Officers' Association endorsement nor have I ever taken SF Police Officers' Association donations.

I have taken from the Deputy Sheriffs Association in 2011 when I ran for Mayor.

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

50

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?

Tom Ammiano, write in

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?

nobody

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?

Kevine Bogess, Matt Alexander, Alida Fisher, and Mark Sanchez

Who are you supporting for Community College Board?

Not sure yet: Alan Wong, Shanell Williams, Han Zhou, Tom Temprano, Anita Martinez, Aliya Chisti

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?

Michelle Tong, Maria Evangelista, Cary Gold

Who did you support for DCCC?

Social Justice Slate, Gloria Berry, and Kevin Ortiz

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?

Chesa Boudin

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

Short Answer (You don't have to write a novel.)

What do you think is the best way to address San Francisco's culture of political corruption?

San Francisco has a serious problem with pay to play politics and the politicization of City services and resources. I had hoped that the Public Advocate would make it to the ballot. It didn't and allowing the existing watchdog, whistleblower, and investigatory functions in the City Attorney, District Attorney, Controller, HR, and other departments to continue to play these functions when they have failed so miserably is tantamount to looking the other way. I will continue to push for the Public Advocate. In the meantime, I will use the power of inquiry of the Board of Supervisors to hold hearings and to examine how our city is working to identify and ferret out corruption. I will use my office as a bully pulpit to exhort the City to do more with greater rigor to identify and root out corruption and pay to play politics. I am interested in creating oversight bodies over the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development, the Office of Economic and Workforce Development, and as needed with all City departments. We have to put the people of the City and County of San Francisco first.

In the midst of a homelessness crisis, how can the City and County of San Francisco improve the effectiveness of our city's homelessness and supportive housing services?

The City has essentially created containment zones for unhoused people in parts of D10, the D9 and D6. These concentrations of homeless people come from the City's main modus operandi of shuffling people from sidewalk to sidewalk and block to block. I have been a proponent of the continuum of care to provide a range of services along a spectrum that ranges from supportive housing, rental subsidies, employment services, family unification services, healthcare, and behavioral healthcare, etc.

The pandemic has exacerbated homelessness in D11. As Supervisor, I will work to create a drop in center with nutrition, medical care, mental healthcare and behavioral health services, and showers. Before going on leave, I represented workers at a drop in center in the Mission. I support the use of state funds to repurpose hotels and housing facilities in my District for housing homeless people. I support a navigation center in D11, navigation centers are much more preferable to people sleeping on the sidewalks, in doorways and in the parking lots.

Lastly, I do not support the forced removal of people encamped on our sidewalks without there being a place for them to be moved to that offers access to nutrition, shelter, and showers for their dignity and selfcare.

How would you expand checks and balances in regard to mayoral appointments?

I support the Board of Supervisors, vetting each and every candidate for boards and commissions and in fact believe appointments should be split evenly between the Mayor and Board of Supervisors. I wrote "Let's Elect Our Elected Officials" to take away the Mayor's ability to fill vacancies on the SF Board of Supervisors. The appointments actually taint our elections and rarely work in the Mayor's favor but end up dividing voters along lines that limit substantive discourse in elections.

Would you propose any rezoning or other policy changes to increase housing -- particularly affordable housing -- while protecting against the displacement of current residents?

Yes, only for 100% affordable housing.

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

I am counting on Proposition 16 passing on the California ballot. Prop 16 would repeal the state's ban on affirmative action programs and the use of information related to race and gender in hiring, access and admission to public institutions. If Prop 16 passes, I would rigorously pursue the hiring of people of color and women in our public services and examine the barriers to hiring that exist in our HR department and city departments.

I would work closely with the Office of Racial Equity and work to put stronger standards in place for ensuring equitable investment for parks, transit, health and human services, housing in San Francisco's communities of color.

Last Question

Is there anything else you want to tell us?

Buster Posey is a hero for not playing baseball this year. We need more people like Buster to show us all what's most important in life -- life itself.

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