

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

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Board of Supervisors, District 7

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

The Ave, Bar and Lounge on Ocean

Tell us about yourself.

Why are you running for this office?

I'm running because of what's happening in the world right now. During a global pandemic, we have protests in the streets because of years of systemic police brutality and systemic racism against black people, and other people of color. I'm the only candidate with experience in criminal justice and I know how it impacts nearly every area of our lives: homelessness, housing, access to resources, education. We desperately need someone at City Hall who is an independent voice who will bring the criminal justice leadership we need.

I've dedicated my entire career to bringing communities of color together to work for systemic change and speaking truth to power. I'm proud to have been a Public Defender for over a decade; every day, we go to work and fight to uphold the rights of our vulnerable communities, we fight to keep families intact, and we fight the unjust and discriminatory systems that intentionally target low-income and communities of color.

I've spent the last 15 years working alongside District Attorneys, Police Officers, and Judges. I know this City's laws inside and out. I see how our systems are broken and I want to bring that experience to City Hall and work with our progressive Allies to get real reform to our systems. As someone who's worked in the criminal justice system, I can tell you that what's broken is that we do not have effective consequences for crime. I use the word effective carefully. We need to make sure that the goal of our criminal justice system is stopping crime from repeating, not punishing poor people and people of color.

Even though I am a Public Defender I'm a D7 Public Defender--I'm a Catholic dad who believes in family, faith, and community. I am running because I feel that San Francisco hasn't done enough to protect our local families from a broken criminal justice system, displacement, and homelessness. As Supervisor, I will be laser-focused on putting our families first.

I'm proud that my campaign has proven that I'm a viable progressive choice for the district: We are the only campaign running a real field program, we are the top fundraiser in the race, and we have strong support in the neighborhood, faith, and school communities in D7.

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

The League of Pissed Off Voters has been a consistent voice for progressive values. Not only do I almost always support the same candidates as your organization, most years I actually use your voter guides when I go to the ballot. I also know that we share the same values and when I'm Supervisor you're never going to have to wonder where I will be in a vote.

I'm also proud to have the endorsements of leaders that the League has supported: Tom Amianno, Chesa Boudin, Mano Raju, David Campos, Hillary Ronen, Matt Haney, and Dean Preston, John Avalos, Jackie Fielder, Matt Gonzalez, Tom Temprano, Honey Mahogany, Peter Gallotta, Li Miao Lovett, and Gloria Berry, and I'm excited to work in concert with these leaders.

What are your values and how did you get them?

My family fled Vietnam during the Fall of Saigon and lived in a refugee camp before emigrating to Alaska. When I was born my parents named me after the Inuit word for “Mainland.”

I was raised in a Union household with both of my parents proud members of their unions. My father was a longshoreman and a member of ILWU. My mother was a Postal Worker and a member of APWU. I’m currently a member of the Municipal Attorneys Association. You’ll never have to guess where my vote is going to be when it comes to unions.

I graduated from college with a degree in Ethnic Studies, where I served as the president of the Ethnic Studies Students Association where I began what would end up being a lifelong career of working to bring the black, brown, and API community together to fight against prejudice and discrimination.

I worked at the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs as a legislative liaison, advocating for legal protections for API families before graduating from USF’s School of Law. For the last 15 years I’ve worked as a trial attorney in the PDs office, standing up for families and protecting their civil rights.

I’ve been lucky to work alongside some of the most tenacious Public Defenders in our city’s history. My mentor, Jeff Adachi, always fought in solidarity with our low-income and communities of color and always spoke truth to power. I know that many of us at the Public Defender’s Office try to do the same, myself included.

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

As a member of the Vietnamese community, I understand how much representation matters. Even though we have a strong community in San Francisco—including the Little Saigon neighborhood—there has never been a Vietnamese person elected to higher office in this city. If elected, I would be the first Vietnamese individual elected to the Board of Supervisors in our City’s history.

As an API leader, I see it as my duty to work to bridge the gap between the black, latinx, and API communities. This has become especially true as President Trump has persistently stoked anti-Asian sentiment and tries to divide all of our communities of color. I’m dedicated to continuing the work I’ve done as a Public Defender to fight against the racist systems that are hurting all of us.

I feel very accountable to the social justice and Public Defender communities that I have been a part of in San Francisco for decades. There is a strong culture of ‘calling in’ in these communities and I will welcome that feedback and accountability as Supervisor.

What three endorsements are you most proud of?

SF Tenants Union #1

AFT 2121 #1

SEIU 1021 #1

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

N/A

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

Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs.

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 SB50?

No amendments. SB50 creates a false choice that building more affordable housing means removing oversight and community involvement. I reject that idea.

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

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.

N/A

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?

Abstain

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?

Self, 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 Boggess, Alida Fischer, Mark Sanchez, Jenny Lam, Matt Alexander

Who are you supporting for Community College Board?

Han Zou, Tom Temprano, Shanell Williams, Alan Wong

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?

I supported the entire Social Justice Dems 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?

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?

The recent arrest or incrimination of now 5 department heads shows that we have a serious corruption problem in San Francisco. Every major department in San Francisco should have a citizen commission that oversees their department, and that includes the Mayor's Office of Housing.

I also believe that during a time when the FBI has indicted multiple department heads for corruption, that appointing Department Heads outside of the so-called "City Family" is a way for us to change the culture of the backroom dealing that has embarrassed our city for the last decade.

Most importantly our elected officials need to stop acting as if this is business as usual. Supporting the status quo and a Mayoral Administration with this level of corruption is turning a blind eye and allowing the corruption to continue.

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?

As a Public Defender, I've seen where the criminal justice system is broken and how it leads to a cycle of homelessness. I've had clients that I've fought to get help who were just abandoned back on the streets. I've worked to get people off the street and change their lives. I will work with anybody who is willing to examine our broken homelessness system and make the big, structural changes that we need.

I am the only candidate in this race who openly supports a Navigation Center for District 7. I'm also one of the only people in the race who have direct experience working to get people out of homelessness, off the streets, and into housing. I'm also proud to have held legal clinics in partnership with the SF LGBT Center, Project Homeless Connect, and City College to help expunge discriminatory or unfair criminal records of San Franciscans so they could re-enter the workforce, get off the streets and into care, and have access to housing.

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

The strong Mayor system has led to a corrupt City Hall that is failing to provide basic city services. I'm the only candidate in the District 7 race that when asked in a debate if they would support a charter amendment limiting the Mayor's powers and creating more checks and balances answered yes. I will join Supervisors Haney, Preston, and Ronen in their push to create split appointments for all commissions.

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

I 100% support municipally owned housing, especially on public land. For decades, landlord lobbyist groups have used racist tropes to convince even liberals that public housing is ineffective and dangerous. I know from my work as a Public Defender that stable housing is the first step to bettering anyone's life. Cities need to learn from past mistakes on public housing and invest in funding and building social housing. As Supervisor, I will be unabashedly pro-public housing and will fight for policies to help public housing tenants and to secure land and fight for state and federal dollars to build social housing.

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

The biggest barrier we have to change is people who say that they want to address racism and inequality but don't want to rock the boat or speak truth to power. If you want to change our broken system, you CANNOT support the status quo.

I've dedicated my entire career to fighting against systemic racism, sexism, economic inequality and discrimination. As a Public Defender, I go to court and fight against broken systems on behalf of my clients every day -- as Supervisor, I will continue to do the same. I have seen how our broken criminal justice system perpetuates injustice against the Black community in countless public policy areas including housing, healthcare, and education, and I'll be ready and willing from day one to put forward legislation that will make real change. I will work with community organizations, my fellow Supervisors, and community leaders to reform our broken systems that actively and systemically discriminate against our Black community.

The over-policing and disproportionate prosecution and sentencing of our Black community has eroded stability and destroyed any hope of moving forward with our current police system. In order to address these predatory and unjust policing practices, we need to dismantle the blatant and systemic racism that our police system was built on and we need to get serious about demilitarizing our police force.

Last Question

Is there anything else you want to tell us?

I think your guide is brilliant and is maybe the best summary of local politics out there. I'd be proud to hand out a Pissed of Voter Guide with my name in it :)

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