

Name: Keith Carson

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Line of work: Alameda County Supervisor

1) A. Why are you running for a seat on the Alameda County Board of Supervisors?

I am running to continue my work to bring together people who have a wealth of talent and creative resources to address our shared problems in our communities including access to health care, ending poverty, homelessness, crime, improving business retention, and employment.

B. What do you believe are the main priorities to be addressed by the County Board of Supervisors?

If I am fortunate enough to be re-elected to this office I will continue my focus on Housing, Mental Health, Workforce Development and Re-Entry.

C. What are the most critical problems facing the county?

Housing affordability & scarcity, Mental Health, and Work Force Development. For all three of these challenges it is crucial that as we work to address them we do it with a special eye to meeting the needs of those re-entering our community from incarceration.

This year I will be co-championing the passage of a countywide housing bond to help meet some of the funding needs in order to develop truly affordable housing.

In the area of Mental Health I will be working to make sure that the County's school based services are in every school that needs and wants them as well as work with our County departments to redesign our Crisis Intervention System to meet the needs of our community members by serving them more appropriately.

We know that unemployment rate in Alameda County is below the state and national average at 4.3% but we also know that doesn't apply to all members of our community, it is critical that even though the economy is in good shape now, we don't forget the historically unemployed in our community who need specialized and intensive workforce development services in order to enter the work force. This must be a partnership with the County, our educational institutions, businesses and organized labor to train those who have been the hardest to serve in the careers that are available today.

2) Please give a brief summary of your background and qualifications for the office of Alameda County Supervisor.

I was elected to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors in 1992 and since that time I have not only served the residents of District 5 and Alameda County I have also had the opportunity to serve in the leadership of the California State Association of Counties and the National Association of Counties helping to bring a large, urban, progressive voice to the table. A few of the programs and initiatives I have developed and implemented are:

- In March 2007 Alameda County “banned the box”. Now self-disclosure of criminal history information does not occur until the last step of the examination process and fingerprinting for background checks is performed after conditional offer. In addition, to protect against potential discrimination, a special unit in the Human Resources Department performs an analysis to determine if the conviction is, in fact, related to the specific functions of the job.
- Green Building Ordinance – County Buildings in 2003 the Board of Supervisors recognized that buildings consume 40% of the world’s energy; construction debris is 21% of material in local landfills. The Board of Supervisors adopted this ordinance that requires that all County municipal projects be built to a minimum U.S. Green Building Council LEED Silver standard. The ordinance also requires recycling of construction and demolition debris.
- Safe Sharps Disposal Ordinance – after 10+ years of working toward a statewide solution to home generated sharps disposal, Alameda County decided to just pass a local ordinance in November 2015 that requires pharmaceutical companies that manufacture medication distributed through a needle and to be injected at home must also provide for a safe disposal option.
- Boomerang Fund Housing Policy – In 2015 the Board of Supervisors implemented a policy to allocation all of the former Redevelopment Agency Low-Mod Housing Funds countywide into the County’s Affordable Housing Trust Fund, dedicated for the development of affordable housing countywide. This policy also provides 20% of the County’s residual from its share of contributions to the former Redevelopment be allocated to the Affordable Housing Trust for the entire County as well as 20% of the County’s share of ongoing, one-time funds into the Trust Fund.
- AC Impact – In 2013 my office developed a program to provide permanent supportive housing and services to chronically homeless adults in Alameda County, specifically those who camp at Alameda County building. The program’s goal is to help clients increase stability in health, housing, finances, social supports, and other daily living areas, and decrease use of emergency services. This program couples federally funded permanent housing with guided connections to community-based support services including mental and physical health care, move-in support, and legal advocacy. AC Impact is a Housing First approach that emphasizes permanent housing solutions for participants but also

provides guidance on the basics of maintaining a household: how to be a good tenant/neighbor, how to budget and pay bills on time, etc.

- Place Matters – In 2006 my office launched the Place Matters initiative which is a project with the Alameda County Public Health Department that is designed to improve the health of our community by addressing the social conditions that lead to poor health. Place Matters works collaboratively with multiple sectors to advance health equity through community-centered local policy focused on economics, education, housing, criminal justice, land use and transportation policy areas. Place Matters frames key policy issues through the lens health equity, and provides analysis to emerging policy areas where this perspective is overtly absent. In order to advance this work we have developed a Local Policy Agenda through a collaborative community process. The Agenda focuses on those policy issues that most effectively reduce health inequities in our community.
- Employee Mortgage Program – In January 2015 Alameda County implemented a program that would provide housing benefits to our employees in a way that does not burden our budget in any way but accommodates all employees equally. The program provides flexible and cost efficient mortgage products to county employees as a way for the County to attract higher skilled workers and encourage employees to live within the county where they are employed, where the cost of housing is usually very high.
- Year of the African American Male - In 2015 we launched this focus on creating opportunities for information sharing and the planning of solution-oriented activities, as well as publishing a free resources guide specifically geared toward assisting Black men in key areas. 2015 was focused on the community's collective efforts to assemble all existing resources to maximize positive outcomes in the lives of all Black Men in Alameda County.
- Community Capacity Fund – In 2014 the Board passes a policy to set aside \$2 million from AB 109 funds to help CBOs develop their capacity to deliver community based re-entry services through a structured training program and capacity building grant opportunities.
- 50% to CBOs – In 2015 the Board implemented a policy to set aside 50% of the AB 109 funds to be allocated directly to CBOs for community based re-entry programs.

3) Are there any strategies to reduce Green House Gases (GHG) that you are working to advance? If so, please describe.

At the county, we have committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050. We chose this as our goal based on international scientific consensus on climate change and state targets.

The Alameda County Climate Action Plan for Government Services and Operations was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on May 4, 2010. The Board adopted 16 Commitments to Climate Protection that provide overarching vision, a goal of 15% GHG reductions by 2020, and the Climate Action Plan, which includes 80 recommended actions that will enable us to reach our goals.

[Our Climate Action Plan:](#)

- Creates a structure for the County to lead by example by taking actions to reduce our own emissions.
- Identifies and prioritizes actions to reduce GHG emissions from multiple action areas, such as building energy use, transportation and employee commutes, and waste disposal.
- Recommends that the County promote energy efficiency in our facilities and vehicle fleet, use clean alternative energy sources, reduce waste, make environmentally preferable purchases, and develop forward-thinking land use and transportation planning.
- Estimates each action's effect on GHG emissions, upfront costs, long-term savings, impacts on service delivery, public health, and other key factors.
- Builds on the County's greenhouse gas emissions inventories, which established baseline greenhouse gas emissions levels.
- Contains performance targets that will be tracked and reported on.

4) What is your position on the funding levels for general assistance, and what can be done to increase benefits to our most vulnerable residents?

A grant of \$336 per month is not enough for anyone to live on. I voted against implementing time limits on General Assistance and I continue to not be supportive of time limits. In 2011 the County ended the Share Housing and Medical Deductions and eliminated vehicle value as part of eligibility consideration to make sure people could have as much cash as possible. In addition we've expanded our SSI advocacy work to help those that are unemployable access SSI benefits that they are entitled to if they qualify.

4A) Will you introduce, or co-sponsor if already introduced, legislation creating a Public Bank of Alameda County, similar in spirit to the state-owned Bank of North Dakota and similar to proposals for public banks being considered by the cities of Philadelphia, PA and Santa Fe, NM?

I have had conversations with advocates about this and have raised the issue with Alameda County's Treasurer Don White, since Mr. White, by virtue of his elected office, decides how

the County's treasury is managed and where it is held. I presented Mr. White with all of the information advocates brought to me but he has to be the one to make the change.

5) A Restorative Justice Plan has now been implemented in Alameda County. What is your assessment of how it is working, and what can be done to improve it?

I need some more clarification on this question. We have a Juvenile Restorative Justice Program operating out of Camp Wilmont Sweeney once per week. The program is very successful and something we're very proud to have operating there.

In the past couple of months I have had conversations with community members about how to offer the same type of program to other youth in our Juvenile Justice system.

6) What part of County services do you feel is doing a good job and should be an example of how we should be working?

In Alameda County we were on the forefront of providing health care services to anyone in our community regardless of their ability to pay, including those in our community who are undocumented. I am very proud that we have maintained our commitment to that throughout the years with the help of the voters who have twice, very generously, support Measure A and Measure AA the 1/2 cent sales tax for essential health care services. Even though the Affordable Care Act provided coverage for a huge number of people it left out the undocumented and so we've continued to serve them through our Health Plan of Alameda County (HealthPAC) which is funded entirely by County General Fund resources derived from Measure AA. HealthPAC provides coverage for primary, specialty and emergency services with little to no co-pay depending on income.

7) What part of County services do you feel is not doing an acceptable job and what would you do about it?

I welcome your feedback on this topic and would be happy to work with you on addressing County issues that you have identified.

8) The Board of Supervisors appoints the County's Registrar of Voters. How would you assess the current RoV's job performance?

A. What is your position on Ranked Choice Voting / Instant Runoff Voting for county use?

This is something I am willing to look into. For many years most County races haven't typically gone past the June Primary so it hasn't been something I've looked seriously at. I was very supportive of its implementation in cities within my district.

B. What are your thoughts on hand-counted ballots, or other solutions that ensure properly tallied elections?

I believe that elections should be properly tallied by whatever method is deemed to be the most effective to ensure that.

9) What role, if any, should the county have in coordinating various local jurisdictions (especially between cities) regarding such issues as emergency planning (including for earthquakes), poverty, or crime, which crosses city borders. For example, is the county the responsible body for getting the radio systems of local police to be inter-exchangeable, and if not, who is the responsible body?

Counties have a constitutionally mandated role to provide emergency service coordination, and specifically the Sheriff of each county holds that responsibility.

In Alameda County we work with our 14 cities to coordinate responses to poverty and crime through the Alameda County Mayor's Association and the Alameda County City Manager's Association. In addition the County convenes our health care safety-net on a monthly basis to address issues as they pertain to our population's health care needs.

The County and all 14 cities participate in the East Bay Regional Communications System Authority along with Contra Costa County and the cities within it. This is a Joint Powers Authority and was established to build, own and operate a P25 compliant communicationssystem for the public agencies that are participating.

10) Will you support the effort to prevent Alameda County from again hosting the Urban Shield war games and weapons show? What actions will you take?

Urban Shield is hosted by the Sheriff's Office using non-County General fund resources. As an independently elected official, the Sheriff can host the event without Board of Supervisors approval. I will continue to ask questions of the Sheriff's Office to ensure that no County General Fund resources are used in hosting the event.

11) Besides the Board of Supervisors, for each of the other agencies and commissions that you serve on, please provide a summary of your accomplishments and future plans with that body

- The East Bay Economic Development Alliance (East Bay EDA), Chair
- The Alameda County Employees' Retirement Association (ACERA), Board Member
- The National Association of Counties (NACO) - the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States, Board Member
- The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) - a 58-county statewide supervisors organization, Board Member
- Worked to ensure that Alameda County received a fair share of AB 109 Realignment funds in the creation of the funding formula.
- The Alameda County Transportation Commission, Board Member

- Successfully fought to include increased resources for transit and bicycle pedestrian program as well as a Youth Transit Pass in the Countywide Transportation Expenditure Plan.
- The Alameda County Waste Management Authority, Board Member
- Worked to pass a countywide plastic bag ban and continue to work towards strengthening it.
- The Bay Area Council Economic Institute, Vice-Chair

12) A. Where will you get (have you already received) the money to run your campaign?

I do not have an opponent this election cycle so I do not anticipate needing to raise or spend very much money.

B. Describe sources of financial contributions for your campaign that you would refuse to accept (if any).

I do not accept contributions from groups that have current financial dealings with the County or the County's retirement board ACERA.

13) Concretely and specifically, how will you make yourself available to those who elect you? That is, how can we participate in holding you accountable if you are elected?

I typically try to hold monthly "Coffee with Keith" meetings that rotate throughout the district. I will continue to do that to make myself available to constituents.

Constituents are also always welcome to contact my office by phone, email or stop by in person - I insist that there is someone in the office during business hours to make sure that any constituents that contact can speak to a person rather than having to leave a message.

14) What endorsements have you received thus far?
East Bay Young Democrats

15) What is your political party affiliation and how committed are you to that affiliation?

I am a Democrat and am committed to that affiliation.