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Current line of work: Environmental Lawyer and Berkeley City Councilmember

1) Why are you running for State Assembly? What are your qualifications? What have you accomplished in any offices that you now hold or have recently held?

I am running for the California State Assembly because everyone in the East Bay deserves a home. As a fifth generation Berkeley native, I grew up in a labor family steeped in activism and community organizing. After watching my mom be displaced from her apartment with nowhere to go, I decided to run for Berkeley City Council to address this type of unjust displacement head-on. Since being elected I have focused my policy work on 21st century economic development with job opportunities for all Californians: creating public Wi-Fi to conquer the digital divide and reduce the achievement gap; solving homelessness and eliminating poverty; partnering with labor to deliver green infrastructure; expanding mass transit; and the large-scale deployment of affordable housing.

I'm running for State Assembly District 15 to take what we have accomplished here in Berkeley and translate that to the state level. It is essential that we enact effective California state policy to create the changes East Bay communities need.

In addition to being an East Bay native with a deep understanding of and connection to this community and the issues it currently faces, the legislative advancements and policy initiatives I have achieved during my time on Berkeley City Council best capture both my commitment and capability to deliver innovation, expand opportunity, and protect the environment. In Berkeley I led or actively supported the following initiatives:

- ≡ Divestment from companies involved with Trump's border wall and ICE contractors
- ≡ Paid family leave ordinance
- ≡ Tenant protection ordinance
- ≡ Tenant opportunity to purchase act
- ≡ Streamlined affordable housing
- ≡ Socially responsible banking policies
- ≡ Non-citizens of Berkeley right to vote in location elections
- ≡ First in the nation anti-displacement public legal advocate
- ≡ Developed a community benefits ordinance, a mechanism to ensure that local communities receive the benefits of housing development in their neighborhoods
- ≡

2) Where are you getting the money to run your campaign? Are there any sources of financial contributions for your campaign that you refuse to accept? Do you accept money from developers or corporations, or their PACs?"

Our fundraising efforts have been a mix of small-amount donors, larger pledges, and fundraising events. I refuse to accept any contributions from the oil, gas, and coal industry. I have or will accept contributions from PACs such as the Turkish Coalition PAC and NAACP PAC.

3) Are you interested in the contributions and the opinions of individual constituents in your district? What must a constituent do in order to meet with you?

I have made it a priority as a Berkeley City Councilmember to have an open-door policy. We take pride in our responsiveness to our constituents. During my tenure, we have held bi-monthly office hours, town halls on issues of community interest, and I have personally met or talked to hundreds of our constituents who have reached out to us via our office phone and emails, Facebook page, or website. We are blessed with a highly engaged citizenry who are experts in some many diverse fields and we actively seek out and incorporate their input into our policies and ordinances.

4) Please give us your position on the following issues. Indicate your sponsorship and/or votes on any previous relevant legislation, and plans for future legislation:

-- Budget deficits - I have worked to develop innovative financing mechanisms in order to meet my City's needs while being cognizant of our ballooning pension obligations and other budgetary concerns. For instance, I have worked to develop new, lower cost financing models for affordable housing development. I have also worked to innovate and democratize the municipal bond market, in order to increase savings and produce investment returns for local residents. I look forward to bringing these innovations to Sacramento.

-- Income, wealth, and tax inequality – I have passed legislation banning the use of salary history questions in job applications

-- Controlling the corrupting influence of profit-driven prescription drug and vaccine manufacturers - Support

-- Fracking, and other environmental regulations – I am opposed to fracking and support environmental regulations. The last few years have shown that we have the momentum in California to achieve clean energy goals. I support SB 100 and efforts to dramatically accelerate these goals to get to 100% clean energy.

-- Income, wealth, and tax inequality – I have passed legislation banning the use of salary history questions in job applications in order to reduce gender and racial pay disparities.

-- Minority rights – Support. I drafted and unanimously passed the first piece of legislation divesting from Trump’s border wall and companies that contract with ICE and/or create religious and ethnic registries, which was then adopted by the State. I passed legislation giving non-citizens of Berkeley the right to vote in local elections.

-- Police and prison reform – I have drafted and passed legislation that decriminalized fines and fees as well as funding for body cameras for the Berkeley Police Department.

-- Proportional representation/ Ranked choice voting - Support

-- Rent control – Support. I am in full support of repealing Costa-Hawkins and have circulated petitions within my campaign to do so.

-- Single payer healthcare - Support

-- Tuition-free higher education - Support

5) An unanticipated consequence of the passage of 2010's Prop. 14 is that candidates from small political parties now need to gather vastly more signatures-in-lieu of the filing fee -- for example, 7,000 valid signatures for statewide candidates instead of the previous 150. Will you help us lower this number?

Yes, no one should be able to buy an election and no one should be locked out of running due to funding. 7,000 is a steep increase from 150 and can and should be lowered.

6) Will you introduce and sponsor, or co-sponsor if already introduced, legislation creating a public Bank of California, similar to the state-owned Bank of North Dakota? Such an entity would hold the State's money instead of depositing it in Wall Street banks, and make infrastructure loans, loans in partnership with community banks, and other loans based on the best interests of the people of California, not banker profits.

Yes! In fact, I have spent the last few years on a committee that seeks to do just that. Within my campaign platform, I call for the creation of a new, public, California State Bank. Rather than depositing the hundreds of billions of dollars of California’s annual local and state tax revenues in private banks, California would create its own bank and put those funds to work for Californians by financing socially responsible projects and partnering with private lenders to drive down the cost of borrowing. More about my platform can be read in detail here: www.benbartlettca.com/new-vision-housing-california

7) Are there any other important challenges facing California? What will you do to address them? Anything else you would like us to know about the goals of your candidacy?

In addition to repealing Costa-Hawkins and other rent-control measures, I believe one of the biggest challenges facing California is the overall housing and homelessness crisis. Addressing the housing crisis is the bedrock of my platform. Skyrocketing property values and the demand for housing have brought forth record-breaking rents and rates of displacement, altering the economic and cultural landscapes of the East Bay as we know it. It is clear that we have a severe housing shortage and, as history attests, whenever there is a shortage of a critical commodity, poor people receive less than their fair share. When people lose access to land and homes due to unaffordability, they lose power, wealth, and freedom. [The median worth for families of color is projected to drop to zero within the next 55 years.](#) creating a treacherous foundation for poverty, instability, and loss of freedom.

Currently, California is in need of 3.5 million new housing units to stem the state's housing problems. To solve this crisis, my housing plan calls for the 3 P's—Production, Preservation, and Protection—which addresses how to fund the production of more affordable housing, preserving structures and housing units that are already built, and ensure stronger protections for tenants. California has seen a trifecta of population explosion, severe underproduction, and racist housing policies - and the solution is to radically address all three.

My housing plan calls for a cap and trade style mechanism, a carbon tax, and the creation of a state bank to fund affordable housing. The cap and trade mechanism would require counties and cities that are under-producing affordable housing to pay into a regional housing trust fund that would be used to fund housing production in areas that are willing to meet their affordable housing obligations. Furthermore, a carbon tax would be placed on land zoned for single family homes. Single-family homes contribute to a car-centric culture that increases sprawl and pollution and removes land that would otherwise be available for denser affordable development. Cities can choose to keep their R1 and R2 neighborhoods, but they would be obligated to pay a carbon tax and the revenue generated would be used for affordable housing initiatives. The carbon tax proposed would provide exemptions and other safeguards to prevent putting an undue burden on seniors, low-income families, and those living on fixed incomes.

In addition, I also plan to prioritize the creation of a Seniors' Bill of Rights. I first ran for City Council after my mom was subjected to elder abuse and displaced from her housing along with 20 other seniors. I will work to further protections and rights for the older adults in our community.

8) What endorsements have you received?

- ≡ Jesse Arreguín, Mayor of Berkeley
- ≡ Ron Dellums, Former Mayor of Oakland and Member of Congress
- ≡ Elihu Harris, Former Mayor of Oakland
- ≡ Dr. Wes Bellamy, Vice-Mayor, City of Charlottesville
- ≡ Leslie Katz, Former San Francisco Supervisor
- ≡ Karen Hemphill, Member of the Berkeley Unified School District Board

of Education

- ≡ Christina Murphy, Commissioner, Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board
- ≡ Juanita Jones Abernathy, Civil Rights Freedom Fighter
- ≡ Emilio Camacho, California Energy Commission
- ≡ Andrew Houston, President, Charles Houston Bar Association
- ≡ Mansour Id-Deen, President, Berkeley NAACP
- ≡ Raymond Lankford, Pastor, Center of Hope Community Church and
Executive Director of Healthy Oakland
- ≡ Kwixuan H. Maloof, Esq., President, California Association of Black
Lawyers
- ≡ Cheryl Perry Logue, President, 100 Black Women
- ≡ Michael Parenti, Political Scientist & Historian
- ≡ Michael Smith, Pastor, McGee Ave. Baptist Church
- ≡ James W. Sweeney, Former Berkeley City Councilmember
- ≡ Jim Wunderman, President and CEO, Bay Area Council
- ≡ Orson Aguilar, President of the Greenlining Institute

9) Anything you would like to add?

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be honored by your endorsement.

