

## **Green Party Questionnaire for State Assembly, 15th District**

### GREEN PARTY OF ALAMEDA COUNTY 2018 ENDORSEMENT DECISION

Please email your responses to: [GPAC-VoterGuide@yahoo.com](mailto:GPAC-VoterGuide@yahoo.com). In the subject line, please include "State Assembly, 15th District".

We prefer that you convert your answered questionnaire into a .pdf document, so we can post it directly to our website. Or simply include your responses in the body of an email, and we will do the conversion.

If it is not possible for you to email, please snail mail your responses so we receive them by 3/25, to:

State Assembly, 15th District  
c/o Green Party of Alameda County,  
[2022A Blake Street \\* Berkeley, CA 94704](https://www.google.com/maps/place/2022A+Blake+Street,+Berkeley,+CA+94704)

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Current line of work: **Mental Health Specialist and Richmond 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?**

Working as a mental health counselor for underserved youth in Contra Costa County for almost two decades, I've seen how the lives of our kids and their families can be transformed by policies that support their well being. In my position as a two-term Richmond City Council member, I've seen how neighbors can organize a city and take it from one in which hopelessness, violence, and systemic corruption are the norm, to one in which community members come together in hope to fight for safe and healthy neighborhoods, government representation and accountability, and more. I am one of those community members who has initiated and participated in the transformation of our city. Now I am running for the California State Assembly to help transform our state.

As a corporate free Richmond City Council candidate and council member, as well as in a leadership role in the Richmond Progressive Alliance, I've worked with diverse communities from a variety of backgrounds including: Progressive Democrats, Independents, Greens, Democratic Socialists and even some Libertarians. With our people power, together we accomplished the following in the last 8 years. We:

- Banned the Box - removing the question of whether an individual has been incarcerated - from all City of Richmond employment applications, that of contractors working with the City, and our Public Housing Applications.
- Stood up to big real estate interests and helped Richmond become the first new rent control city in over 30 years.
- Initiated a minimum wage increase in Richmond, the first city in Contra Costa County to do so.
- Opposed to the expansion of a Jail in Contra Costa County, that would also expand the incarceration of immigrants.
- Joined the Richmond City Council in voting to sue Donald Trump for withholding funds from sanctuary cities.
- Joined the Richmond City Council - the first City Council in the Nation - to vote to impeach Donald Trump.
- Led the successful movement to sue Big Oil giant Chevron.
- Worked with the community and law enforcement to create the *Richmond Municipal ID Program* - a program that allows immigrants and all community members, to safely identify themselves to the police.
- Pushed for “community policing” in Richmond, a city plagued by extreme distrust between police and communities of color and repeated allegations of police brutality. Richmond is now celebrated as both reformed and a model of one of the country’s most effective police departments.
- Fought for a bold strategy to resolve our city’s foreclosure crisis. The city threatened to use eminent domain to take possession of the loans and the homes if the banks didn’t accept the city’s offer to buy homes that were underwater.
- Participated in the creation of a workplace bullying policy.
- Advocated for LGBTQ pride and acceptance. I am the first openly lesbian City Council Member in Richmond’s history.
- Co-sponsored a resolution supporting Single-Payer Healthcare in California. During my first year on the City Council we supported SB 810 in 2011 known as Single-Payer Healthcare, before 2017’s SB 562.

Election after election, we keep choosing good people with good platforms who disappoint us once they get into office. My campaign is different. I’m not just another “good guy” progressive. I’m the only candidate endorsed by Bernie Sanders’ Our Revolution, because they see and understand that. Bernie Sanders visited us in Richmond because he recognized that we are committed to the movement individually and collectively. My main job is to help build an organized movement that truly represents the 99%, with elected officials responsible and accountable to that movement because they’re corporate-donation free.

Uniting diverse communities will further my people-powered campaign, which relies on volunteers and individual contributions. Since I have never, nor will I ever, accept corporate donations, we need your support to reach out to our community.

**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?"**

My contributions so far have come from 567 individuals, nearly two-thirds of whom are within Assembly District 15; unions, and community organizations.

I have been a corporate-free elected official since 2010, and now I am a corporate-free State Assembly candidate. I refuse money from corporations, developers and their PACs.

**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?**

Absolutely. Typically a constituent simply needs to contact me and an arrangement to meet is made. I've worked with many constituents from diverse communities to advocate policy changes from 'ban the box' to holding corporations accountable to implementing rent control. During my campaign, I connect with constituents at house parties and other campaign events. I do my best to be as accessible as time allows.

**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**

We must prevent budget deficits from occurring that would result in cuts to critical services. There are a number of ways this can be done. For example, reforming Proposition 13 to make large corporations pay their fair share, and passing a natural resources oil severance tax. If California's crude-oil taxes were at the same level as those of Texas, California would collect about \$2.8 billion annually.

Industries and businesses are prospering as California continues to be a highly desirable place to live, work and visit. They must be held accountable to pay their fair share to help the regions in which they work and have their businesses, function for all community members. Companies that are currently loosely regulated, e.g., Airbnb and VRBO, must have oversight. They must be required to pay their fair share in taxes within the communities they impact. Commercial rent taxes should reflect the benefit of doing business in this highly productive and lucrative region.

We also need to introduce a annual .05% Financial Transactions Tax for those that buy and/or sell every stock, bond or derivative sold in this state. Senator Bernie Sanders proposed this in 2016 to help pay for free tuition at public colleges and universities, to pay down student debt and to fund other programs. The Tax Policy Center analyzed Sanders' plan and found it

would raise \$50 billion/yr. The US used to have such a tax until 1966. Other countries benefit from similar taxes today. I will introduce legislation to implement this tax to help the state become financially solvent, pay for its services and its outstanding obligations.

I will join the State Assembly Budget Committee and the Appropriations Committee to advocate for fair and beneficial legislation to be voted upon in the Assembly. I will also find creative ways to cut waste, such as cutting state executive pay and the high costs in the CA Department of Prisons to ensure taxpayer dollars go towards supporting public education, mental health services, social services, and other critical services that positively impact our communities.

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

- I will introduce and support legislation on campaign finance reform. We need to find ways to ban corporations from donating money to political action committees. Big Pharma's undue influence has no place in Sacramento.
- Previous legislation such as AB 463 Pharmaceutical Cost Transparency Act of 2016. This legislation is necessary due to the lack of transparency surrounding the pricing of prescription drugs. The public and policymakers should know more about the pricing of drugs in order to determine if the value is worth exorbitant costs. Unfortunately this bill did not pass the Health Committee in 2016. I plan to request this legislation be brought back for reconsideration.

**-- Fracking, and other environmental regulations:**

We must:

- Stop expanding fossil fuel polluters and their development and expansion. I support enacting a moratorium on new fossil fuel production or expansion.
- Give strong tools to cities and communities (giving power back to the people) to stop issuing permits to polluting and toxic projects that harm the people.
- Introduce an oil and gas extraction tax to pay for *green* programs, a school to union apprenticeship pipeline, green-collar union jobs and investment in renewables.
- Stop refinery expansions, cement plant projects, and other toxic industries from being built next to communities - especially low-income communities and communities of color.

We need to repeal the vote on AB 398, known as Cap and Trade. A majority of Assembly members and Senators voted for it as a result of major oil industry lobbying. It has turned pollution into a commodity, where corporations get to buy and sell pollution credits. This allows corporations like Chevron and Phillips 66 to continue to pollute our neighborhoods of color and low-income residents while trading away credits.

The fossil fuel industry is stealing our jobs, wealth and our health. There are more jobs in cleaner alternatives. We need to elect corporate donation-free Assembly members like myself to move us beyond failed cap and-trade policies that protect fossil fuel profits and infrastructure, and craft a massive public investment program that underwrites our transition to a just and sustainable economy.

Until we repeal Cap and Trade, I would advocate that when climate resource allocations are given, they must go to communities that have been most adversely affected: communities with high asthma rates, lung disease and other pollution driven consequences.

### **-- Income, wealth, and tax inequality**

California is the 6th largest economy in the world. Yet according to the Public Policy Institute of California, income inequality especially in the Bay Area continues to grow. The rich are becoming richer while the middle- and low-income are becoming poorer .

The current state minimum wage is \$11.00/hr. In Richmond I worked with my colleagues on legislation that raised the minimum wage to \$15 by 2019. While the state minimum wage will go to \$15/hr by 2022, we need to raise the state minimum wage to a *living wage* soon. With my past track record of raising the minimum wage before the state, I will introduce legislation to raise the state minimum wage to a living wage.

I will introduce legislation to implement Universal Basic Income (UBI). Cities such as Stockton created a SEED program by providing residents economic security and to counter the destabilizing forces of automation and globalization that lead to job loss and stagnating wages. Countries such as Canada have implemented UBI.

### **-- Minority rights**

I have introduced and supported a variety of policies that support the underrepresented - people of color, the poor and the homeless, the formerly incarcerated, immigrants, seniors and the LGBTQ in our community. These include policies such as maintaining Richmond's commitment to protect immigrants by implementing a municipal ID program and upholding our sanctuary city policies; advocating for community policing that serves all community members; ensuring fair hiring practices among line staff and management; honoring union workers; fighting for fair housing; and much more.

### **-- Police and prison reform**

We need Bail Bond reform now. I support AB 42 Bail Bond reform; however, it was voted down by the majority of the Assembly at the 3rd reading. I plan to request the legislation be brought back for reconsideration.

In Richmond I supported introducing community policing, were for the last 10 years crime decrease. I supported having a police review commission

We must stop giving taxpayer money to private prisons.

I've supported AB 1008, now law, the statewide "ban the box" on employment applications, which removes questions about previous convictions. We need to go further, to ban the ban box in other applications.

I've supported AB 1578, to create a sanctuary status for cannabis users and businesses and protect them from the US Department of Justice.

I've also supported AB 535 to improve eligibility of trial jurors.

### **-- Proportional representation/ Ranked choice voting**

I support ranked choice voting. I will introduce legislation to implement ranked choice voting and proportional representation, along with campaign finance reform.

### **-- Rent control**

I am proud of my record of support for tenants and helping establish rent control in Richmond, CA. We need to expand rent control by repealing the unjust Costa-Hawkins Act. I've supported AB 1506 to repeal Costa-Hawkins and return power back to the people and our cities, in order to allow them the ability to fully implement rent control measures to prevent more people from being displaced. We also need to repeal the Ellis Act, another state law that gives wealthy landlords the unconditional right to evict working people from rental units and convert those units into higher priced rental units only affordable to the wealthy.

We also need to expand access for people of color to become homeowners.

### **-- Single payer healthcare**

Yes, I am proud to have been one of the early endorsers of SB562, the Healthy California Act, and authored a supporting resolution that the Richmond City Council passed unanimously.

During my first year on the City Council we supported SB 810 in 2011 known as Single-Payer Healthcare, before today's SB 562.

Health care is a human right, and the United States continually outspends other wealthy nations on per capita health care costs—some by more than double—while the quality of care and national health outcomes continue to fall behind. Californians as individuals, workers, families, businesses, and taxpayers are driven past their breaking point because of soaring health costs

and lack of access. The experience of Medicare and of nearly every other industrialized country shows a single payer system is the most cost-effective and equitable way to provide quality health care as all residents are covered, and the system can eliminate wasteful spending and rein in skyrocketing prices. The Healthy California Act would provide the comprehensive and quality health care coverage that all Californians deserve and would ensure that insurance companies and the corporate ledger no longer determines the health and well-being of our state.

### **-- Tuition-free higher education**

Yes. We must:

- Support free tuition for community college, CSU and UC.
- Repeal Proposition 13 and close loopholes to support our public education system.

I've also supported legislation such as AB 204 (Medina) Community colleges: waiver of enrollment fees, and SB-68 Public postsecondary education: exemption from nonresident tuition.

**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. As it stands now, this absolutely and unfairly puts small political parties at a further disadvantage.

**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, I am very interested in seeing how we can make this work in California. In addition to North Dakota, Alaska, Michigan and New Jersey are also working to establish Public Banks.

In Richmond we directed city staff to partner with other cities such as Oakland and San Francisco to find ways to create a public bank. Richmond is currently part of a feasibility study being conducted by Oakland and Berkeley to look into public banking in our region.

In 2011, AB 750 passed both the state Assembly and Senate to study the feasibility of establishing a state-owned bank. Unfortunately, Governor Brown vetoed the bill.

I will introduce legislation to create a state own bank and join the Assembly Banking and Finance committee to ensure its passage. A public bank can have investment priorities that focus on the creation of jobs that spur local economic growth by providing affordable credit to small and medium-sized businesses that have been historically ignored by the larger, more established banks. It also have investment priorities that center on providing loans for low and moderate income housing to help relieve the current housing crisis.

**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?**

Issues not yet directly addressed in this questionnaire and that are important to me, include but are not limited to the following:

- Human trafficking
- Equal pay for equal work

**8) What endorsements have you received?**

**National Political Action organizations**

Our Revolution

Working Families Party

**Labor Unions**

Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 192

Berkeley Council of Classified Employees (BCCE), Local 6192

Service Employees International Union, SEIU-CA

Teamsters Joint Council 7

**LGBTQ organizations**

Equality California

Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club

**Environmental organizations**

Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN) Action

Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) Action

California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) Action

California League of Conservation Voters (CLCV)

Sunflower Alliance

**Student organizations**

Cal Berkeley Democrats

Cal Students for Equal Rights and a Valid Education - CalSERVE

UC Berkeley Progressive Student Association

**Local, regional, statewide political action organizations**

Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE) Action

Berkeley Citizens Action

Berkeley Progressive Alliance

Berkeley Tenants Union

Democratic Socialists of America, East Bay

Our Revolution Contra Costa

Our Revolution East Bay

Pinole Progressive Alliance

Richmond Progressive Alliance

San Francisco Berniecrats

Women for Justice - Pacific Region

**Local and regional political parties**

Contra Costa County Green Party

Solano County Green Party

**Greater Bay Area Leaders**

Tom Ammiano, former CA State Assemblymember and LGBTQ advocate

Jane Kim, San Francisco Supervisor\*

Bobby Seale, Co-Founder and Chairman of the Black Panther Party

David Campos, former San Francisco Supervisor; Santa Clara County Deputy County Executive

Harry Britt, LGBTQ champion, former San Francisco Supervisor

Ken Jones, Community Organizer, former member BART Citizen Review Board

Cecilia Chung, LGBTQ champion; former Chair, San Francisco Human Rights Commission

Alex Shantz, Former St. Helena School Board Trustee

Peter Gallota, former President, Harvey Milk Democratic Club

Nate Albee, Former Harvey Milk Club President

Stephany Ashley, Former Harvey Milk Club President

Brian Basinger, Former Harvey Milk Club President

Jerry Threet, Former Harvey Milk Club President

Laura Thomas, Former Harvey Milk Club President

Greg Shaw, Former Harvey Milk Club President

Ruscal Cayangyang, Trustee, Vallejo School Board\*

Marianne Kearney-Brown, Vice President, Vallejo School Board\*

Hosam Haggag, Northern Vice Chair, Arab American Caucus, California Democratic Party

Ken "Kacey" Carpenter, AD 24 delegate and community activist; author, "My Journey With Bernie"

Carolina Morales, Harvey Milk Club Co-President

Stephen Jaffe, Civil rights attorney, Democratic candidate for Congress, 12th Cong. District;

President and co-founder, South Beach District 6 Democratic Club\*

Demetrio Gonzales, President, Richmond Teachers Union\*

Richard Tamm, Co-chair, Voting Rights Task Force\*; Treasurer, Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club\*

**Contra Costa County Endorsements**

Gayle McLaughlin, Former Richmond Mayor

Ada Recinos, Richmond City Councilmember\*

Melvin Willis, Richmond City Councilmember\*

Eduardo Martinez, Richmond City Councilmember\*

Ben Choi, Richmond City Councilmember\*

Mister Phillips, Trustee, WCCUSD Board\*  
Madeline Kronenberg, Trustee WCCUSD Board\*  
Andrés Soto, Communities for a Better Environment\*  
Reverend Phil Lawson, Pastor Emeritus of Easter Hill United Methodist Church  
Michael Davenport, Richmond civic leader; Founder, DP Security  
Dr. Desmond Carson, MD  
Jonathan White, Martinez School Board Vice President\*  
Claudia Jimenez, Contra Costa Racial Justice Coalition \*  
Whitney Dotson, East Bay Board Parks Board member\*  
Carolyn Wysinger, Queer Author & West Contra Costa educator  
Otheree Christian, former president, Iron Triangle Neighborhood Council  
Steve Early, labor activist; author, "Refinery Town: Big Oil, Big Money and the Remaking of an American City"  
Robin Reed Poindexter, Richmond Fire Department\* Deputy Fire Marshall

### **Alameda County Endorsements**

Kate Harrison, Berkeley City Council\*  
Gus Newport, Former Berkeley Mayor  
Mark Williams, AC Transit Board Director, Ward 4\*  
Lateefah Simon, BART Board Director, District 7\*  
Kriss Worthington, Berkeley City Councilmember\*  
Leah Simon-Weisberg, Commissioner, Berkeley Rent Board\*  
Alejandro Soto-Vigil, Commissioner, Berkeley Rent Board\*  
Jess Dervin-Ackerman, Environmental and Political Organizer; former Director, San Francisco Chapter, Sierra Club  
Dr. Vicki Alexander, AD 15 woman of the year 2017  
Shanhti Gonzales, Trustee, Oakland School Board\*  
Carroll Fife, Community Activist  
Sheila Jordan, Alameda County Superintendent of Schools Emerita  
Sharon Maldonado, former Berkeley Rent Board Commissioner  
Tracy Baxter, former SF Democratic County Central Committee Member (AD 13)\* and playwright  
Victor Aguilar, Jr., Trustee, San Leandro USD School Board\*  
Michael Eisenscher, labor, peace, environmental and social justice activist  
(partial list)

### **9) Anything you would like to add?**

I am a radical progressive activist and an elected official who is not a conventional *party first* person. Rather than embrace them, I challenge corporate party politics and create alliances with those who put people and communities first. I believe in practicing participatory, grassroots, bottom up democracy. The 29 local, regional, and national groups that have endorsed my candidacy testify to that, including the Solano Green Party.

In Sacramento, I will work to dismantle the prison industrial complex; pass Medicare for All; protect renters, the LGBTQ community, retirees, and homeowners against banks; promote unions; enact campaign finance reform; ban fracking; promote free college and childcare; and eliminate corporate tax loopholes in Proposition 13.

I recognize that as aware as I am of many critical issues facing the people of AD 15 and beyond, there are still others of which I have no or little knowledge. I believe in fighting for justice for all because typically injustice to one is injustice to all. I am open to listening and learning about what else the people may want and need.

My campaign promises a change from the status quo, from corporate party politics to people-powered government, an approach under-represented in Sacramento. That's why AD15 would benefit from sending me there. I would be honored with your endorsement.