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Current occupation: Student advocate

1. Motivation

Why did you choose to run for this office?

Berkeley needs bold progressive leadership, committed to social and environmental justice. Our planet's and our city's resources are finite, and we must prepare for the challenges of the future. I have been a progressive leader, pushing for policies that promote economic, social, and environmental wellbeing at the city, state, and national level. I'm running for City Council in a district that is supermajority students, and I have represented those students before as their liaison to City Hall. I'm here because my dad taught me the power of an education and my mom taught me that there's nothing more important than helping others. I'm here out of love for my friends, my neighbors, and the City of Berkeley. I've been doing the work, but I'm not done yet.

2. Priorities

What do you believe are the major issues facing your district? The City?

- 1) Berkeley has a long tradition of environmental leadership, but we have a long way to go to be truly environmentally sustainable. My generation will face the impacts of climate change, and we must be ready for it. On City Council, I will work to incentivize renewable energy use in Southside residences and apartments — including requiring the installation of rooftop solar panels on new buildings — and ensure that the businesses and residents of Southside are doing their part to move the city toward our Zero Waste goals.
- 2) Berkeley is facing an affordable housing crisis, and District 7 is uniquely burdened by the student housing crisis. To make matters worse, increased student enrollment is pushing the gentrifying force of campus farther and farther into the surrounding community. We need to build more housing, for all students, right next to campus, right now. As a City Councilmember, I'll push for zoning requirements that allow for taller, denser buildings around campus — while fighting for more units that are affordable.
- 3) Telegraph Avenue has been a center of activity for Southside and the campus community for generations — but it can, and should, be better. Too many small businesses go into bankruptcy, and too many commercial spaces are left vacant. I will push for local ordinances that would incentivize worker-owned cooperatives, recruit more small businesses to open shop on Telegraph, and protect our small businesses from being threatened by large corporations.

What are some specific tasks (e.g. specific legislation, policies, et.) you intend to accomplish while in office?

- Increase housing density around the campus while improving our affordable housing requirements throughout the city.
- Mandate rooftop solar in new construction.
- Create sanctioned/safe encampment for Berkeley's homeless.
- Appoint more students to boards and commissions.

3. Qualifications

Please give a brief summary of your background and qualifications for being a City Council member.

As a sophomore, I co-founded UC Berkeley Students for Bernie, which went on to become the largest and most active campus chapter in the country. At the end of my sophomore year, I was elected to serve as a senator with the ASUC — UC Berkeley's Student Association — where I advocated for more student housing as chair of the Real Estate Student Board, and worked with environmental groups to successfully push the UC Regents to divest from the Dakota Access Pipeline.

I recently finished my term as the ASUC's External Affairs Vice President, where I was responsible for advocating on behalf of the 40,000 students of UC Berkeley. My office successfully delayed January's proposed tuition hike, protested a UC Regent accused of sexual harassment until he resigned, and galvanized students around the closure of the Alta Bates Medical Center.

In addition, I have worked to elevate student voices in politics — sending students to Sacramento to lobby for more state funding, turning out record-breaking numbers of students to city commission meetings, and hosting student-oriented town halls with candidates and elected officials.

I also served as the University Affairs Chair of the University of California Student Association, for which I acted as the primary liaison between the UCSA and the UC Office of the President. As Chair, I advocated on behalf of students on a number of issues, from police accountability to basic needs insecurity.

4. Land Use

What do you think are the most important land use issues facing the city today?

There are vacant lots across our city in the midst of a housing crisis. We must make better and more efficient use of the land we have in strategic ways to ensure that everyone can live with a roof over their head. The City should work on using carrots and sticks to push the owners of vacant lots to either turn them into something productive, especially housing, or sell them, especially to the City or a non-profit developer.

The City and the University have different missions: what conflicts/challenges do you foresee on land use policy, and how would you address these?

The University has been abrogating its responsibility both to the City and its students by failing to prioritize student housing. As a consequence, students seeking housing in the Berkeley market have played a role in driving up housing prices and driving gentrification. The University has no say over how many students it takes, or how much money it gets from the state. It does have a say over how it allocates its resources. In the past, it has misused scarce land and funding to build fundamentally less important things like the new stadium and a pool. It has gone back and forth on building a hotel. The City should do everything it can to insist that the University build more student housing.

What is your position on the building of housing on The People's Park?

The question of what to do with People's Park is obviously a sensitive one, and needs to be handled with the proper community input. I would like to see the location serve multiple communities. I believe that the space should include housing for the homeless and students, as well as open/greenspace.

5. Automobiles

What policies should the city take to reduce automobile use and make the city friendlier to pedestrians and other non-automobile transportation?

The City is working on making Berkeley's streets friendlier to bicyclists, I support that effort and would want to see it expanded. The city should work as closely as it can with AC Transit to expand bus services in Berkeley. We also need to examine our options around ridesharing services like Uber. Oakland has placed an Uber tax on the ballot. I would support a similar policy for Berkeley.

Should the city promote electric car use, and what policy and infrastructure changes would you support, if any?

Yes. Moving to electric vehicles is an important part of transitioning off fossil fuels and combating climate change. The city fleet currently has a miniscule number of electric cars. We should transition the fleet to all electric as cars need to be replaced. The city should also promote the installation of public charging stations, including on city owned land.

6. Safety and Infrastructure

What are the most important public safety issues facing the residents of Berkeley?

In my district, snatch and grab robberies and muggings are a significant problem. All Berkeley residents deserve to feel safe in their communities.

What kinds of programs are useful for creating a safe environment for all people?

Improving lighting and nighttime transit is vital for our residents safety. We also need to improve community trust in our police department. Residents must feel safe calling officers. I support community policing as a way of achieving this trust.

What infrastructure should be a high priority for city management?

I am working on the passage of Measure R - Vision 2050 right now to answer this question through a thorough community engagement process. Much of our city infrastructure was built 70 years ago and needs repair. Improving our storm drains, sewers, and streets also provides a valuable opportunity to implement new green technologies into our public infrastructure. We should *not* be prioritizing parking. We need to move away from large scale car use, not reinforce it.

7. Affordable housing

What is your position on building market-rate housing versus affordable housing?

Berkeley needs to build more housing of all kinds, but there needs to be an emphasis on affordable housing. We need to build some market rate housing as it is a major source of the funds that come in to the Housing Trust Fund, as well as of inclusionary affordable units. It also matters what part of the city the housing is being built in. In the south of campus area, there is an acute shortage of student housing at all income levels. In West and South Berkeley, the affordability crisis is the most acute.

Does building mostly market-rate help or hinder affordability in Berkeley?

Building ONLY market rate would hinder affordability in Berkeley. Building SOME market rate, with strong inclusionary requirements and displacement protections, is a key part of the process in building the affordable housing we so desperately need.

What affirmative steps would you take to increase the availability of new or refurbished affordable housing in Berkeley?

I support the expansion of the city Small Sites acquisition program, whereby the city purchases small homes and apartments for conversion to permanently affordable housing. This can also be used as an anti-displacement tool, when buildings are acquired with existing tenants who can be given protection.

Are there any particular demographics that you would target for this housing?

We should give first priority for affordable housing to those who have been recently evicted or priced out of their home in Berkeley, or who are at imminent threat of the same. We must prevent the further erosion of our community. This kind of prioritization is a vital anti-gentrification tool.

Are there any particular neighborhoods that you would target for this housing?

We need to build affordable housing in ALL parts of Berkeley. We need affordable student housing near the campus, we need affordable housing in South and West Berkeley as an anti-gentrification measure, and we need to address the economic segregation of our City by building affordable housing in the Berkeley Hills.

Do you think Berkeley can/should tackle gentrification? If so, how?

Berkeley *must* tackle gentrification. I have listed some methods above. Small site acquisition and prioritizing affordable housing for displaced residents are important tools. Expanding rent and evictions controls is also vital.

Do you support land value capture and should the City ask for a share in the increase in land value that results from upzoning?

Yes. Land value recapture should be used as a way to acquire more resources for affordable housing, not as a bludgeon to prevent development. I support asking the beneficiaries of upzoning to provide more on site inclusionary housing.

Do you support SB 827?

SB 827 was a flawed bill. I was especially concerned by the bill's weak affordability requirements and potential to drive gentrification. However, the bill was seeking to address a very real issue. Too many municipalities fail to create the housing we need in this state, and some have even used exclusionary zoning as a tool to keep out working class residents and residents of color. The state must take action to address the abuse of zoning laws at the local level while preventing gentrification and ensuring housing affordability.

8. Rent Control

How important is it to keep Berkeley's form of strong rent control and eviction protections?

Vital. We can't just keep our existing rent and eviction protections, we must strengthen them. The housing affordability crisis has been devastating to long standing Berkeley communities. Rent control and eviction protections are one of the only thing keeping these communities in place. I am 100% behind Prop 10, the repeal of Costa Hawkins. As a Councilmember, I will stand with Berkeley's renters and strengthen these laws.

How important is keeping an elected rent board?

An elected Rent Board is vital to ensuring that Berkeley's tenants are well represented.

Do you support any candidates for the Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board?

If so, which one(s) and why?

I am proud to endorse and be endorsed by The Community Power Slate for Rent Board, the slate nominated at the 2018 Berkeley Tenant Convention. They reflect my values of ensuring strong tenant protections and upholding Berkeley's rent control laws.

What is your position on the effects of Costa-Hawkins on the affordability of Berkeley units?

Costa Hawkins, particularly its vacancy decontrol provision, has been a significant driver of displacement in our community and throughout the Bay Area, severely impacting senior citizens, the disabled community, minimum wage workers, and more. It is also harmful for Berkeley's student community, as they move frequently and are thus unable to enjoy the full benefits of rent control.

Do you support Proposition 10, the repeal of Costa-Hawkins?

Absolutely. Hopefully Costa-Hawkins will be repealed in November, and we can reestablish vacancy control, single family home and condo control, and reducing the new construction exemption.

9. Homelessness

What do you think can and should be done about "Homelessness" here in Berkeley?

I support establishing sanctioned encampments where our homeless residents can sleep knowing they will not be pushed out by the City. This is a win/win. It benefits the homeless by giving them more security and allowing for the centralization of services, and also benefits housed residents by reducing the number of people sleeping in their yards and in the downtown.

What is your position on the Police raids on homeless encampments?

I opposed raids on encampments. No one should be roused in the middle of the night and have their homes torn apart.

What is your position on the evictions of houseless RV dwellers in the Berkeley marina?

I opposed their eviction. We need to find an appropriate long term location for them to stay. While we were doing that, they should have been allowed to stay in place. Now, they are being bounced back and forth between locations, and being given unnecessary fines they cannot afford. As a City Councilmember, I will work to identify long-term solutions and potential locations to address this issue.

Do you think the Pathways Project is a good use of city funds?

The Pathways Project has taken up a significant part of the City's budget on homelessness, and going forward we need to ensure that it does not drain resources away from other equally important efforts. The Pathways Project is an important part of the City's effort to address homelessness, though it cannot and should not be the only or even a majority of that effort.

Have you made an effort to talk to the homeless and listen to their priorities?

My district and my walk to campus along Telegraph is home to many homeless individuals, any and all of whom I greet and financially support when I can. Berkeley's homeless residents are constituents. They need to have a seat at the table in determining their future. I'm proud to have worked with housing advocates, including the president of UC Berkeley's Homeless Student Union, on issues facing the campus' unhoused residents.

What essential services should be a high priority for the homeless?

We need to do more to provide basic sanitation services like toilette and shower facilities. Providing access to health services is also vital, especially mental health. Providing these services is far easier if the homeless population is concentrated, which is part of why I support sanctioned encampments.

What long term city priorities can be made to meet their needs that are independent of regional, state or federal funding?

The proposed transfer tax to fund homeless services will bring a vital source of funds to address homelessness independent of outside funding.

10. Food Policy

What policies would you support to re-localize our food system?

I support urban agriculture. As the representative for environmental student groups on UC Berkeley's student senate, I had the privilege of working with a variety of food advocacy organizations such as the Gill Tract Community Farm, the Student Organic Garden Organization, and Top Leaf Gardens. The promotion of community supported agriculture can meet food security needs while providing residents the means to secede from the agribusiness food system.

Do you support labeling of GMO foods, similar to Vermont's law?

It is important that people know what they are eating-- an issue that we can best address at the state and national level.

11. National Policy Statements

Should the Berkeley City Council take positions on national and international issues?

Yes. As a leader in progressive policy, Berkeley often leads the nation and the world in a wide variety of issues. We should advocate for working people around the country and the world.

12. Police

Do you agree with the recent Berkeley City Council vote to allow Police to participation in Urban Shield for 2018?

No. While there are parts of the Urban Shield training, like the training for our firefighters and other emergency response portions, that are effective and important, others are deeply concerning. I supported the Urban Shield Subcommittee's recommendation to not participate in the militarized police simulations and weapons exposition, and am disappointed that recommendation was not adopted by the full council.

Do you think participation in this training competition should be determined by the City Council, the City Manager, or the Berkeley Police Department?

The City Council, representing the will of Berkeley's voters, should always be the final arbiter of the rules and policies guiding our police department. The minutiae of everyday operations should be left to the department and city manager to govern, but this is not the minutiae. This is a question deeply important to the people of Berkeley, one over which the Council should have a say.

Do you think the Berkeley City Council should sign MOUs (memorandums of understanding) with NCRIC (Northern California Regional Intelligence Center), with ICE (Immigration and Customs) and with UASI (Urban Area Security Initiative)?

No part of the City should sign an MOU with ICE. There are some parts of UASI, such as the firefighter trainings, that I believe the city should participate in; others, like the Urban Shield expo, we should not. Any MOU with UASI should be strictly limited to those parts of the program not encouraging militarization. With regards to NCRIC, it provides important functions to our police, but we must be careful that it is not used improperly.

How should Berkeley balance the right to privacy against police interest in surveillance equipment?

The right to privacy is fundamental in a free society. I am supportive of the efforts that have been undertaken by the current council as a compromise in consultation with regional privacy rights groups to set guidelines on the use of surveillance equipment. Our security as a city is important, but I reject the assertion that security requires giving up privacy.

What is your position on the Police Review Commission (PRC) Charter Amendment (item 70 on the July 24 agenda) that the Council is considering for the 2018 ballot?

I supported it. While I am disappointed that it was not placed on the 2018 ballot, I am happy to hear that there are plans to immediately place it on the ballot for 2020. A strong police accountability system is vital for ensuring just outcomes and community trust in our police.

Do you favor creating a PRC that is independent of City Manager control?

Yes. The Police Department is a unique aspect of our City. We shouldn't pretend like it is just any other department. No other department is armed. No other department has the authority to arrest and detain Berkeley citizens. The Police Department has an extraordinary amount of power; it thus requires a matching level of oversight. A fully independent police commission is vital in providing this. For the commission to be fully independent, it cannot be under the City Manager, the person also responsible for overseeing the Police Department.

13. Race

Do you support The Movement for Black Lives Platform?

Yes. Criminal justice and police reform are desperately needed throughout the country, including in Berkeley. Though we may view ourselves as a progressive beacon, we are not immune from the racial strife affecting our nation. Black Lives Matter, and we need to change our justice system to reflect and insure that fact.

Is there anything that you have personally done to help your understanding of problems with racism and white supremacy in our society?

Growing up in one of the most segregated and unequal cities in the country, St. Louis, informed my perspective on racism and white supremacy in America. The Ferguson Uprising began just as I was leaving home to come to Berkeley, and I joined my peers in marching in the streets when the justice system failed Black people time and time again. My education here has furthered my understanding of the issue, as I was able to take classes ranging from a lecture about race in relation to music and a weekly three-hour seminar about diversity and implicit bias.

14. Climate Change

What specifically will do you think Berkeley needs to do locally to fight climate change?

To make Berkeley a zero carbon city?

We talk a tough game on climate change in Berkeley, but still must do more to implement rhetoric into action. We must continue to create mechanisms that disincentivize residents from driving cars, and we must build partnerships to make it easier for residences to transition to renewable energy sources. We should do more to promote the East Bay Community Energy Program and to incentivise that new development includes energy and water efficiency standards and small scale energy generation. We should also provide more city resources to help residents improve their own homes through things like solar panels and improved energy efficiency windows.

15. Berkeley Ballot Measures

What are your positions on the Berkeley Ballot Measures?

\$135M Affordable Housing Bond?

Support. I also support the proposed transfer tax on the top 1/3rd of property sales.

Police Commission Charter Amendment?

Not on the ballot, though I support it.

Amending the Rent Control Ordinance to Cover Newer Buildings?

Support, though 20 years is too long of an exemption.

16. State Propositions

What are your positions on State Propositions?

Prop 1 Housing bonds?

Support

Prop 2 Bonds for homeless prevention housing?

Support

Prop 3 Water/Environmental bonds?

Oppose

Prop 4 Bonds for children's hospitals?

Support

Prop 5 Homebuyers transfer tax assessment?

Oppose

Prop 6 Repeal of fuel tax and vehicle fee increases?

Oppose

Prop 7 Permanent Daylight Savings?

Support

Prop 8 Dialysis Clinic Refunds?

Support

Prop 10 Repeal of Costa Hawkins?

Support!

Prop 11 Ambulance workers on call?

Oppose

Prop 12 Bans sale of meat from confined animals?

Support

17. Endorsements

Whom do you support for State Assembly District 15?

I am proud to endorse and be endorsed by Richmond City Councilmember and AD 15 Candidate Jovanka Beckles!

Are you endorsing anyone else in your own race, considering that we have instant runoff voting? Who has endorsed you?

I have not endorsed anyone else in my race.

I am endorsed by Berkeley Mayor Jesse Arreguin, Incumbent District 7 Councilmember Kriss Worthington, Berkeley Councilmembers Kate Harrison, Ben Bartlett, Sophie Hahn, Linda Maio, Susan Wengraf, and Lori Droste, Rent Stabilization Board Commissioners John Selawsky, Paola Laverde, Maria Poblet, James Chang, and Igor Tregub, Assembly Speaker Emeritus John Pérez, Richmond Councilmember and Mayoral Candidate Melvin Willis, El Cerrito Mayor Gabriel Quinto, Fremont Vice Mayor Vinnie Bacon, EBMUD Director Andy Katz, UC Student Regent Devon Graves, UC Student Association President Caroline Siegel-Singh, UC Berkeley Student Association President Alexander Wilfert, UC Berkeley Student Association Executives Nuha Khalfay, Melany Amarikwa, and Hung Huynh, a majority of UC Berkeley Student Association Senators, CSU East Bay Student Association President Myles Watkins, Cal Berkeley Democrats President Varsha Sarveshwar, and UC Berkeley Progressive Student Association President Harriet Steele.

Organizationally, I have been endorsed by the Berkeley Tenants Union Steering Committee, the National Union of Healthcare Workers, the California Young Democrats, the East Bay Young Democrats, and Run For Something.

18. Campaign Financing

Will you obtain public financing for your campaign?

Yes! Berkeley has an excellent public financing system that we are using.

19. Health Care

Do you oppose Sutter Health's plans to close Alta Bates? If so, do you have any ideas on how to motivate them to keep it open?

It is absolutely vital for the Berkeley community that Alta Bates stays open. Hospitals in the region are already often at capacity-- it is imperative that services at Alta Bates continue. The City has explored rezoning the hospitals land specifically for medical use, which would make it harder for Sutter to sell their facilities piecemeal. If Sutter Health refuses to continue servicing the Berkeley community, we must aggressively move to find an entity to continue the operations

of the hospital. In the best case, the region would work in coordination to create a public hospital on the site. The

Do you support single-payer healthcare in California?

Yes! A person's income should not determine whether they receive adequate health care. I support single payer in California and nationally.

20. Anything Else?

Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?

Four years ago, students led an effort to redistrict District 7 into the nation's first **student supermajority district** — with the hope that, someday, students would elect one of their own to be their voice in City Hall. Now, it's time.

UC Berkeley was my dream school, and it has been the privilege of a lifetime to earn my degree here. But beneath the blue and gold, students are struggling every day to make ends meet. Housing, food, and safety are basic needs, and they aren't always being met. And while students make up almost a third of this city's population, they are often missing in the conversations that affect them most.

This campaign is about progressive change, but it's also about making sure that students are heard. We need strong advocates who understand the campus community.

21. Have you signed either of the following pledges?

A. For democracy: <https://movetoamend.org/candidate-questionnaire>

Yes.

B. For peace: <http://www.peacelegislators.org/pledge-form/>

Yes.