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Current occupation: Council Chief of Staff

**Note:** You may respond to any question with a link to your website or other posted positions. For the yes/no questions, please answer "yes" or "no" and if you wish to add to your answer, feel free to do so.

1. Motivation -- Why did you choose to run for City office? If you are running against an incumbent, what are your main dissatisfactions and differences with him or her?

***I'm running for the District 4 Oakland City Council because, as a daughter of refugees, single mom, and a life-long advocate for economic and social justice, I bring a fresh perspective and bold ideas to the Oakland City Council.***

***I'm the youngest candidate running in this race, but I'm also the most experienced. I've worked on the Oakland City Council as Chief of Staff to a progressive Councilmember, who was once a member of the Green Party, for almost five years. Understanding the mechanics of City Hall is crucial to identifying solutions. During a time when we are experiencing high numbers of unhoused individuals and families coupled with housing and economic insecurities, it's important to have a progressive candidate who can hit the ground running, and be an effective leader for District 4 and Oakland.***

***In the past, I've advocated for fair treatment of healthcare workers, I've worked on policies and legislations to strengthen protections for Oakland residents, and lead the charge urging the City of Oakland to continue working with labor unions post a Janus decision. Most recently, I worked on a ballot measure that will bring in revenue for homeless solutions and illegal dumping abatement in Oakland. I'm seeking your endorsement to bring a young, progressive voice to the Oakland City Council.***

2. Program and Priorities -- Elected office provides the opportunity to lead by placing new ideas on the agenda for consideration and development. What are some specific ideas you intend to pursue if elected? What do you believe are the main priorities for the City?

***Some of my top legislative priorities and issue areas of focus are:***

- Immediate solutions to house our unhoused and protecting tenants from displacement, including expanding housing for all income levels. I am currently working on legislation to rezone areas for transit oriented development, so that we can build vertically and house more people.***
- Expansion of local jobs. It's important to invest in our job training centers so that there are more opportunities for our community to gain careers that have good wages and benefits.***
- Continue to fight for a Public Bank and continue to push the city to work with the community to update Oakland's ECAP, including implementing immediately the low-hanging policies that has a minimal cost, with huge environmental gains e.g. free bus passes for ALL city employees and finalizing the move of CASS and CWS out of West Oakland and onto the Army Base etc..***

3. Qualifications -- Please give a brief summary of your background and qualifications for the office of City. If you are a current City Government elected official, what issues can you point to in your time as an elected official that have had a positive impact?

***I have many years of experience working on the Oakland City Council, where I am currently Chief of Staff. Oakland is faced with important issues, such as the homeless crisis, housing crisis, illegal dumping and more. There is so much more that we can do for our city and our community, and to solve these problems, and it starts with working together. For the past 5 years, I've cultivated strong, working relationships with all of the Councilmembers, City Administration, Departments and Mayor's office. Through my experience, I can bridge the gaps at City Hall, and work with all my colleagues to create consensus and get good policy and legislation passed. Passing a balanced City Budget is one of City Council's most important responsibilities. As Chief of Staff, I worked as the lead on the city's past 2 budget cycles, and as Councilmember for District 4, I will continue to work with my colleagues and work with the community to pass a responsible, transparent and balanced budget in the Spring.***

***Although, I am currently not an elected official, I have worked on many issues that have had positive impact to the city and our communities, including working on the language for Measure JJ, Oakland Renters Protection Measure, I've worked on passing the Resolution for a feasibility study of a Public Bank, and I've also supported Measure FF, the minimum wage increase and more.***

4. Local groups -- Are you affiliated with any of the active Oakland groups? Such as TOLA, Make Oakland Better Now, Oakland Justice Coalition, Block by Block, Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club, GO Public Schools, OCO, or any other. Describe your involvement and why you feel this group is worthy of your support.

***East Bay Women's Political Caucus, Member***

***Sierra Club, Member***

***Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club***

***I've also worked with and am an ally to organizations such as Make Oakland Better Now, West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project, and others in my capacity as Chief of Staff to Councilmember Kaplan.***

5. Local activities -- Other than local politics, are you involved in any other Oakland based community activities that you would like to share with us? This can range from volunteering in your school to being in your church baseball league.

***Redwood Heights Association (my neighborhood association) – Board member***

***Oakland Asian Cultural Center – Board member***

***I volunteer at my son's school.***

***Rapid Response working group with the Alameda Labor Council – working on sound and rapid plan to help our undocumented neighbors.***

***Creek clean ups in my district.***

***School clean ups throughout Oakland.***

***Volunteer to speak with high school students, college students and young graduates about local government and the importance of being civically engaged.***

***And more...***

6. Budget -- If you were on the Council for the next budget in 2018, how would you act differently from the council members dealing with the budget in 2016? How much additional revenue should the City aim to take in, and how would you generate it?

***I will work with my colleagues to pass a responsible, transparent and balanced budget. The city is losing millions of dollars to entities not***

**paying their fair share of business tax, e.g. transportation network companies like Uber and Lyft. They utilize our city roads, and conduct business in our city, but we are not receiving any tax from them, and that is a big problem. I'm currently working on this issue with the various TNC's and hope to find a solution soon. Moreover, Oakland has a retail leakage, losing about \$20million/year, we must look into this and better support our small businesses – including during the permitting process.**

7. Youth -- What would your priorities for youth be for Oakland government and how would they be implemented and paid for?

**It is crucial that we involve our youth in local government processes and create programs that support our youth and their growth. Investing in the city's summer youth jobs program is one of my priorities, including continuing to offer internships in City Hall for our young people and engaging with them. I believe that the youth voice is not prevalent enough, I want to add a youth angle, role and involvement for neighborhood councils throughout the city, for Boards and Commissions, and through city hall partnerships. Many of these programs can easily build in the youth aspect, with zero cost. For the youth summer jobs program, I will work to have a private/public partnership and have the city apply for grants (as we usually do) to fund and further expand the program. As we know, it shows that if our youth are busy, and engaged, this will decrease crimes and keep our youth safe. We must invest in our youth, so that our youth will invest in us.**

8. Police -- Describe the current relationship between Oakland residents and the OPD? Do you suggest any changes? Do you support diverting people from prosecution if they participate in a restorative justice program? Do you support a change in the use of force policy of the Oakland Police Department? Do you support Assembly Bill 931 that would require that police use deadly force only when there are no alternatives?

(See [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201720180AB931](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB931))

**I believe there has been a loss of trust between residents and City Hall and that includes OPD. That is why I supported the Independent Police Commission so there can be more civilian review and oversight. Police accountability is a key component of building trust with the community. I am a strong supporter of restorative justice, peer courts and other efforts that divert people, especially young people, from prison. It is critical that we provide wraparound services to help provide our young people with alternatives, care, and treatment if needed. I believe more training of our police officers can improve outcomes and so I support AB 931 which has standards in place in other cities such as Seattle. Use of force should always be a last resort.**

Do you support Senate Bill 1421 that would honor the public's right to know about confirmed officer misconduct and serious uses of force? ([See https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201720180SB1421](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SB1421))

***I am in support of efforts to make accountable officers who engage in confirmed misconduct. Transparency and accountability apply to all public servants whether politicians or police.***

Does the current police commission have the right to fire a police officer for misconduct? What are your thoughts about police misconduct and how do you feel Oakland should deal with it?

***An Oakland majority voted for an independent oversight commission of the Oakland Police Department and we must follow-through and make sure that this is implemented. Recently, at City Hall, there was an attempt to weaken the commission, but the City Council upheld the voters voice and voted for an independent oversight commission, which I am supportive of.***

***The relationship between our police department and community needs to be improved. Part of this is that we cannot use police to solve every problem, and I fully support expansion of restorative justice efforts, community policing, and not sending our officers to deal with situations where a mental health/social worker is better equipped to handle. I will invest in our youth and violence prevention programs and continue to fight for a more robust hiring protocol, such as recruiting locally, and hiring from diverse and under-represented groups e.g. women.***

9. Development Projects - Financial and real estate interests currently play a controlling role in shaping Oakland development projects. What are your thoughts and views about holding the developers accountable to the city's zoning, code, and permit regulations?

***It's important that development projects benefit the community. This includes having local hire and good jobs standards on projects. I'm currently working with the community and stakeholders on a City-wide Public Lands Policy that the City Council should pass. The Public Lands Policy will have built-in community benefits, including labor standards, ban the box, 50% local hire and more. Moreover, we need to hold projects accountable to building housing at all income levels, and I will continue to fight for developers to include community benefits that is good for the residents and the environment, such as funding to extend transit access to the location.***

10. Housing & Gentrification -- Increasing rents, dislocation, and gentrification have been in the news. What policies do you advocate to assure that Oakland tenants are protected and that Oakland remains an economically and racially diverse city? Do you support State Proposition #10 that would repeal the Costa-Hawkins Act, a 1990s law that barred rent control expansion?

***As a tenant in District 4 I have a unique perspective on increasing rent, dislocation and gentrification. Having worked in coalition on tenant protections including Measure JJ, the Renters Protection Act, and legislation to increase the relocation payments to bring the amount up to date and to set-aside funding for minimum wage and renters rights education.***

***Yes. I support the repeal of Costa Hawkins and will vote yes on Prop 10, so that local cities can find the solutions that will work best for them.***

11. Environment -- What do you think the Oakland City government should be doing about the environment?

***There's a lot that the Oakland City Council can do be more ecological sustainable. That is why I helped with the work to ban coal in Oakland and have worked actively to get CWS and CASS out of West Oakland, in a residential area, onto the Army Base – where there will be cleaner machinery's used. There are many other low-hanging fruits that Oakland can implement immediately that will help our environment.***

***Transportation is the main culprit against the environment, the city can offer ALL of its employees free transit passes – and this is something that can happen immediately. This was already passed by the City Council (part of ECAP), but has not yet been implemented - we must upgrade our city and public buildings to have solar panels, and water-saving technology. Moving forward, I'm currently working on legislation to rezone transit hubs, so that we can build denser, transit oriented developments and lower the parking requirements. I'm also happy to announce that BAAQMD has made West Oakland and East Oakland their priority areas, which gives these areas dedicated funding of \$50million to improve their air quality.***

12. Public Banking - Inspired by the Bank of North Dakota (BND) <https://bnd.nd.gov/>, a feasibility statement to create a Public Bank of Oakland is currently before the Oakland City Council. The Public Bank of Oakland would hold the city's deposits -- in contrast to having them held by Wall Street Banks as currently done. It would make fiscally responsible loans in the best interest of the residents of Oakland -- in contrast to Wall Street banks' record of risk and ruin. Profits made by the Public Bank of Oakland would be returned to the General Fund of the City of Oakland, or used to further buttress the loan capabilities of the bank, much as the BND does (the

BND has returned over \$400M to the General Fund of the State of North Dakota over the last 21 years (<https://ilsr.org/rule/bank-of-north-dakota-2/>, while substantially increasing its capitalization and its loan outreach.)

***Yes! I do support Public Banking that is why I worked with the Public Bank coalition to pass the feasibility study. We're excited for the study to come to committee and to learn of the results, and will continue to support this proposal/initiative. With so many of our local residents having trouble getting mortgages or small business loans from traditional banks, by creating our own local public bank, we can better invest in our community.***

Are you in favor of making Oakland one of the first cities in the nation to create a municipal bank?

**Yes!**

13. Local Payday Lenders -- Oakland is awash with for-profit Check Cashing and PayDay Loan emporiums (a simple Google query on "Oakland Payday lenders" shows 20). These outfits provide emergency cash and other financial products to those who cannot obtain it otherwise - at outrageously high interest rates and/or extremely high fees. Professor Mehrsa Baradaran, in her book *How the Other Half Banks*, quotes the astounding statistic that unbanked families who must use these services spend on average over \$2000 per household per year -- more than it spends on food. NALC.org: "Author makes the case for postal banking" <http://tinyurl.com/h9e6a2p>.

It is not widely known, but Oakland is home to the only non-profit check cashing and payday lending storefront in the country - Community Check Cashing (<http://communitycheckcashing.org/>) in Fruitvale Plaza. It provides the same services for-profit operators do at 33% - 50% of the cost, while paying its employees a living wage.

Will you support build-out and capitalization loans by the City of Oakland to expand non-profit check cashing to other storefronts around Oakland -- much as the City Council gave a 50-year, \$3,300,000 interest-free loan to the East 12th Street developers (see Oakland City Council agenda, June 15th, 2016 <http://tinyurl.com/jzy398p>)?

***Yes. Payday lender/check cashing companies are very destructive in our community, taking money out of the hands of those who can least afford it. This is another reason why I believe in a Public Bank and have worked with the community towards the first step, for a feasibility study. A Public Bank could be an alternative these shark-like companies, and yes, we should also expand Community Check Cashing..***

14. Satisfaction of Residents -- How do you think the average resident feels about city government? How would you rate the satisfaction level?

***I think the average resident is frustrated with City Hall. There are real needs in our communities that a better functioning City Hall can address. Having worked in City Hall for 5 years, and spearheaded two budget cycles, I plan to utilize my positive relationships with Council staff, department heads, and community leaders to break the stalemate and pass good public policy that benefits all of us.***

15. Accountability -- How do you propose making yourself accountable and accessible to the citizens of Oakland?

***I plan to hold open office hours in various places around the district where I will be present to learn the concerns of those that live in my community. I will always have an open-door policy in City Hall, as I already do now as Chief of Staff to the At-Large member. I will use existing, underutilized resources, to communicate with the residents of District 4 regarding the budget and capital improvement plan detailing the positive – and negative – impacts on our community. I believe representative Democracy requires an informed and engaged citizenry. I intend to be the Councilmember that listens to my neighbors.***

16. Governance -- What kind of relationship could you have with other office holders? Who do you see as a working majority on council and who can you work with?

***I have good working relationships with all of the Councilmembers and their staff. Again, having worked in City Hall, and now as Chief of Staff, there are a variety of issues that require working with other members, department heads, and community leaders. I plan to work with all Councilmembers on issues that are important to all of Oakland while remaining focused on District 4 and working to benefit our community. Moreover, I will continue to work with our neighboring city elected officials, county electeds and regional governing boards.***

17. Endorsements -- Who has endorsed you so far? Who do you expect to endorse you? Who are you endorsing, from statewide races all the way down ballot to local races? Include your #2 and 3 choices (if applicable) for your own race and note that this year the City races are Council seats, School Board seats and City Attorney.

***I have been endorsed by Councilmember At-Large, Rebecca Kaplan, Assemblymember Rob Bonta, Oakland Firefighters, California Nurses Association (#1), National Union of Healthcare Workers, SEIU 1021, Alameda Labor Council, IFPTE Local 21, Oakland Rising (#1), Block By***

**Block Organizing (Duel #1), and more.**

**I've not endorsed any candidates at this time.**

**For my race, the fellow women in my race have agreed to support each other.**

18. Campaign Funding -- How much money do you currently have for this race? How much money do you plan to raise? Where will the money come from? Describe sources of financial contributions for your campaign that you would refuse to accept (if any).

**I have raised over \$30K so far and plan to raise \$125K to fund direct voter contact. I plan to have a robust online presence and will be canvassing every night. I have no intention of taking corporate or corporate PAC donations. My money will come from working people in Oakland and Labor Unions.**

19. Checks and balances -- How do you view current the relationship between the Council and Mayor? Any comments on the same question for the Auditor and City Attorney? Are there any changes they would propose to the city charter?

**I think that there is certainly factionalization at City Hall that impedes the ability of the City get to things done and work for the common good. One of the strengths I believe I bring is that through my years of experience as City Council Chief of Staff, I have developed a strong working relationship with both the Mayor's office and the various Councilmembers. I believe that if elected I will be uniquely positioned to bridge some of the divide that currently exists.**

20. Money in elections. -- Does Oakland need campaign finance reform? If so, what kind? Do you support amending the Constitution to end corporate Constitutional rights and getting money out of politics? Have you Taken the Pledge to Amend (<https://movetoamend.org/take-pledge-amend>)?

**Yes, I support public financing of elections to take corporate money out of politics. Yes, I've taken the pledge.**

21. Anything Else? -- Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?

**I believe that healthcare is a human right, and I'm a supporter of single-payer in California and will continue to fight for this.**

22. Please answer "Yes" or "No" to these questions, and follow with an explanation if you want to add one:

- a. Do you support raising the minimum wage to a living wage?

***Yes. I was a strong supporter of Measure FF in 2014 and have also worked on legislation to set aside funding for minimum wage education and outreach to our communities, specifically those who are most marginalized and our communities of color. I would support raising the minimum wage to a living wage. We're seeing record numbers of our neighbors being displaced in Oakland and throughout the region and state. Implementing a living wage along with strong local rental protections is important to keep our Oakland residents in Oakland, and from displacement.***

- b. Do you support the California Peace Officers Bill of Rights? **No**

- c. Would you vote for using eminent domain to abate foreclosure crisis? **Yes**

- d. Do you support Ranked Choice Voting?

***Yes, I support ranked choice voting. It gives candidates with less funding an opportunity to be a strong player in elections, so RCV gives a more level playing field and allows for less well-funded candidates to form coalitions to defeat corporate backed candidates.***

- e. Would you support Proportional Representation? **Yes.**

- f. Do you support Community Choice Aggregation? **Yes.**

- g. Would you vote to allow more grey water systems? **Yes.**