

**Berkeley Progressive Alliance
Candidate Questionnaire
June 2018 Primary**

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Deadline for submitting completed questionnaires: Friday January 19, 2018

1. Introduction

(maximum 300 words total)

a. Why do you think you would be an effective representative of AD 15?

In fast-moving times we need forward thinkers, and I have a record of being ahead of the curve on social and economic issues. I don't just solve problems, I identify root causes, as shown in my advocacy work around campaign finance and universal basic income. I am an expert strategist, willing to work with anyone to advance progressive policy goals. I am a good listener and community leader—a biweekly potluck I started 7 years ago continues to this day.

b. What are the differences between you and the other candidates?

The other candidates simply want to advance the progressive goals of the past generation—they stick to what's familiar. While I share these goals, such as affordable housing, universal healthcare and climate change action, I believe strongly that these are not enough. Even with these measures in place, we would still have millions of Californians in poverty, unconscionable racial inequities, and a political system controlled more by donors than voters.

We can aim higher. A basic income would end poverty directly, and we would see positive ripple effects in housing, healthcare, education and public safety. A public matching fund for candidates who limit themselves to small dollar donations would bring a new wave of candidates not beholden to the rich and powerful. We need a big investment in green tech, such as carbon capture and energy storage to create jobs and have an impact on climate change that goes beyond our borders.

The other candidates are running on safe issues. I don't care about being politically safe. I care about creating an economy, justice system and climate for my son to grow up in.

Issues. (Please limit each response to **200 words**; you may provide links to more detailed statements/position papers)

2. General

a. What are the critical key issues the Assembly must address?

Housing: we need to increase supply and the ability of our people to fill that supply through jobs, housing vouchers and a basic income.

Economic insecurity: housing is just one piece of the puzzle. We need to address poverty directly with a basic income. Here's our neighbor Robert Reich explaining the concept: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqESogRgrYw>. And here's my plan for California, showing a basic income of \$400/month/person is very much within our reach.

Criminal justice reform: end cash bail, invest in alternatives to prison, make prisons more humane and reduce recidivism through public works, affordable housing and basic income. Climate: This century, the world could have upwards of one billion climate refugees. California will see more droughts and wildfires, threatening our homes and our farms. We need to lead on climate with dramatic investments in research and implementation.

3. Healthcare

a. Do you support legislation (e.g. AB 562) to establish **single payer health care** in California?

Yes, though that bill needs to add detail about how we can achieve that. I advocate for a CA public option and an individual mandate in the short term.

b. Berkeley is threatened with the loss of its hospital, **Alta Bates Medical Center**.

What could you do as an assembly member to ensure that Berkeley continues to have a nearby hospital with an emergency room?

We need to save the birthplace of the East Bay, and ultimately we will need a solution that brings Sutter Health on board, or else closure will be a constant threat. As Assemblymember, I will work with Sutter, the nurses union and other stakeholders to find a solution that keeps Alta Bates in Berkeley. Ultimately, this would likely involve working an item into the state budget that ameliorates the situation.

4. Housing/Rent Control

a. Do you support repeal of **Costa Hawkins** vacancy decontrol legislation?

Yes. The lack of rent control in California is doing serious harm.

b. Would you support **reform of Costa Hawkins**, such as allowing cities to implement rent control on new buildings after ten years?

This is an interesting compromise that I could support if packaged with other measures that increase the supply of affordable housing. I'll note that it's the political power of developers (and their money) that would necessitate such a compromise, which underscores the need for campaign finance reform.

Regional housing statistics show that Bay Area communities are meeting regional allocations for above moderate income, market-rate housing but falling woefully short in creation of housing affordable to very low-, low- and moderate-income households See <https://abag.ca.gov/planning/housingneeds/>

c. What could the legislature do to ensure that an adequate amount of below market affordable housing is created in California?

We need to balance the incentives that currently tilt heavily toward market rate housing. This means better rent control, easier access to funding, state funds to match affordable housing grants, housing vouchers to cover rent over 30% of income for specified units,

d. Do you support using state bonds or other public funds to fund construction of below market affordable housing in California? [reason for change: everyone is going to support the state affordable housing bond, but do they have other public funding ideas or do they think private developers will take care of it]

Yes. I support using state bonds in cases where we will see long term benefits from short term spending, and increasing affordable housing supply will have much-needed long term benefits. We need to couple this with measures that provide more market support for affordable housing.

e. What should state elected officials do to help prevent displacement of low income residents?

The above measures plus a California basic income and a universal right to legal counsel for anyone facing eviction. (Read more about the latter idea here: <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/11/9/16623906/immigration-court-lawyer>)

5. Climate Change and the Environment

a. Do you support a **statewide ban on fracking**?

Yes. We need to grow our energy capacity through renewables, not methods that release fossil fuels and poison groundwater.

b. Do you support **High Speed Rail** in California?

Yes, let's not give up on this. It will be a win for the state and the environment.

c. Do you support increased state funding for public transportation?

Yes. Public transportation helps low-income people and the environment.

d. What other efforts would you support to reduce greenhouse gases created by transportation?

Congestion pricing on highways along with faster, better, further reaching public transit. A steadily rising emissions standard for vehicles sold in California. A carbon dividend (described below) would also incentivize people toward more carbon-friendly travel.

e. Do you support implementation of a **Zero Net Energy** standard for new residential construction in California in 2020? (See <http://www.californiaznehomes.com>)

Yes, with the one caveat that I would allow for exceptions to speed construction of affordable housing.

f. Would you oppose any efforts to delay implementation of the **Zero Net Energy** standard?

Yes, barring extraordinary circumstances (e.g. a huge earthquake leaves tens of thousands of people homeless and new construction is needed immediately to house the affected).

g. What additional actions should the legislature take to reduce generation of greenhouse gases in California?

A carbon dividend. This proposal was being pushed by Senators De Leon and Wieckowski during the cap and trade negotiations. The idea is to impose a fee on carbon extraction and then distribute the revenue equally to everyone in the state. The overall effect is that carbon emissions go down because gas prices go up (as do other sources of pollution), and the people that use less carbon than most—which includes nearly all low-income people—earn money. The reason that we don't have a carbon tax anywhere in the U.S. is that it raises the cost of living for everyone. A carbon dividend only does this for the biggest polluters, and even stimulates the economy by putting cash in the hands of people who are most likely to spend it. Here's an article I wrote about the idea for Progressive Magazine:

<http://progressive.org/dispatches/how-a-carbon-tax-could-pay-dividends-to-everyone/>

h. California faces a long-term water crisis. How do you propose to address that crisis? Some of this we can handle with better management of our groundwater. The three bills signed in September of 2014 provide a framework for this, but the timeline on developing a groundwater management plan needs to be tightened, and we need assurances that government responses to non-compliance with those plans will be swift and equal to the task.

6. Higher Education

a. What should state elected officials do to make higher education in community colleges, CSU, and UC affordable for California residents?

We can introduce an alternate funding model: students would be able to forgo paying some or all of their tuition in exchange for a percent of their income in the years following graduation. We can also create a simple but powerful rating system for all trade schools and institutes of higher learning based on completion rate and average salary in the years following graduation. That way, students and families who need to see a financial return on their investment in education would know what to expect (and the less scrupulous for-profit colleges may simply go out of business or leave the state.

Lastly, a basic income has been shown in studies to lead to better grades and higher completion rates. Poverty creates potholes and roadblocks to students' future success. We can eliminate those by addressing poverty directly.

7. State revenues

a. **Do you support** reforms of Prop 13 that would ensure that commercial property owners pay adequate property taxes?

Absolutely. This is the biggest, most obvious place to start to generate funds for our schools and our communities.

b. Do you favor creation of **a split roll property tax**?

Yes, we ought to have flexibility around property taxes. I support raising residential property taxes as well in a progressive way, but there is no reason this should be inextricably tied to commercial property taxes.

88. Politics and Campaign Finance

a. Who did you support for President in the 2016 California Democratic Presidential Primary and why?

I supported Bernie Sanders. His message around inequality of wealth and political power resonated strongly with me. Wealth inequality is one of the animating forces in my political activity.

b. Is your campaign accepting corporate PAC money?

No, and I am also only accepting half the legal maximum for donations. I believe that the \$4,400 maximum pushes candidates to seek approval from rich donors whose political desires may be in conflict with the people we hope to represent. By giving myself a self-imposed limit of \$2,200, I am leading by example.

Please type your responses to the Questionnaire and submit them in pdf or Word documents using these question numbers/headings/questions. Be sure to include your name

and contact info at the top. E-mail the completed document containing your responses to:
BPA2016@aol.com

We will post each candidate's responses online prior to our endorsement meeting and our members will be encouraged to read them.

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