

DCCC District Attorney Candidate Questionnaire

Name: George Gascon

Address: 150 Post Street, Suite 405

San Francisco, CA 94104

Campaign phone number 415-323-5962

Cell phone number: 415-323-5962

Email: info@gasconforda.com

DCCC Candidate Questionnaire

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

1. Please confirm that you are a registered Democrat.

YES.

2. When did you first register as a Democrat?

January 2011. Like most Cuban immigrants, I registered as Republican when I was able to vote. My leaving the party came as a result of the time I spent in Mesa, Arizona. While there, I worked aggressively to protect the rights of immigrants in the state. My views were unpopular with many, including most of the Republican Party. At one specific event, a member of the party told me "I don't think you belong in the Republican Party." To which I responded, "That is the first thing you said that I agree with." I then registered as decline-to-state as I was unwilling to identify as a Republican after the way I saw the Party treat Latinos and others. My lifelong record is one of supporting immigrants, women, the LGBT community and working people, at times in the face of fierce political opposition. I took the time to evaluate my own values and determined that I was most welcome and best suited to the Democratic Party. I re-registered as a Democrat after being appointed as District Attorney and am proud to have the endorsements of Senator Dianne Feinstein, Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom, Attorney General Kamala Harris, and many local Democratic leaders.

3. Who did you vote for in the last two Presidential elections?

My voting history is private. That assurance of privacy and the ability to support candidates and causes, without political persecution, was the reason my family left Cuba and came to America. My uncle was jailed for more than 10 years as a political prisoner and my father was fired from his job for allegedly speaking out against the government. In 1967, on a Freedom Flight, my family immigrated to the United States as political refugees. We came here knowing that in America we can support whomever we choose at the ballot box without fear of reprisal.

4. What have you done and what do you plan to do to ensure the election of a Democratic president next year?

I worked to help President Obama's campaign in 2008 by advising and writing on immigration issues and plan on helping in the same capacity in 2012.

5. Have you ever voted for or endorsed a non-Democrat in an election? Who? When?

My voting history is private.

6. Please provide a brief summary of your *qualifications* for this office. (no more than 250 words)

As a first generation immigrant, I learned that a safer city begins with building trust and partnerships among diverse communities, law enforcement and the court system. This trust is based on a commitment to fairness, openness and justice. It is with these guiding principles that I have managed more than 8,000 members of the LA police Department, protected the rights of immigrants as Police Chief in Mesa, Arizona and now direct the policies of the San Francisco District Attorney's office.

As District Attorney, I am aggressively prosecuting violent crimes to ensure that those who cannot be rehabilitated no longer remain a threat to society. At the same time, I am diverting low-level offenses to community courts to ensure that victims are made whole and perpetrators face appropriate consequences while being given an opportunity to choose a different path by receiving the services necessary to do so. This Neighborhood Courts program is also cutting costs, allowing more resources to focus on more serious crimes.

I know how to work with the community to reduce crime. I have over 30 years of experience in working directly with communities- on their streets, and in their homes, community centers and businesses-- to lower crime and reduce recidivism. Under my leadership at SFPD, homicides dropped nearly in half and all other crimes were reduced substantially. I am continuing that trajectory as DA, working with the community and the SFPD to effectively prosecute cases while implementing innovative strategies to reduce crime, reduce recidivism, and prevent youth from heading down the path of a life of crime by keeping them in school and ensuring they graduate.

7. As a testament of your commitment to the Democratic Party, please describe your contributions to the Democratic Party at the local, state and or/national level in the last 4 years.

As stated above, I worked to help elect President Obama and welcome the opportunity to help again in 2012. I also worked to elect Kamala Harris Attorney General and Gavin Newsom Lieutenant Governor.

8. If elected, or if currently holding office what are the three top issues you will work to affect?

1. Taking violent offenders off the street, while finding alternatives to incarceration for non-violent and minor offenses.

As District Attorney, I am aggressively prosecuting violent crimes to ensure that those who cannot be rehabilitated no longer remain a threat to society. At the same time, I am diverting low-level offenses to neighborhood courts to ensure that victims are made whole and perpetrators face appropriate consequences

while being given an opportunity to choose a different path by receiving the services necessary to do so. This Neighborhood Courts program is also cutting costs, allowing more resources to focus on more serious crimes.

2. Protecting our most vulnerable victims of crime

I have launched a program to address and prevent elder abuse, a crime that is significantly under-reported, and I am working with local consulates to help increase crime reporting in immigrant communities, because fear of reprisals due to immigration status also leads to under-reporting.

I have focused resources on prosecuting employers who violate workplace safety and wage laws, with one particularly egregious employer who took advantage of immigrants now facing jail time. We must make sure that vulnerable populations know how to report crime without fear if we are serious about reducing crime and making San Francisco safer for everyone.

3. Keeping kids out of the criminal justice system

Working to end the cycle of crime, I have implemented the CARE program to provide school credits to students who have missed school due to truancy or dropping out. By partnering with YMCA of San Francisco, kids receive missed instruction and services that allow them to graduate. I have also partnered with the YMCA and the Bayview Hunters Point YMCA to provide paid internships for San Francisco youths who are participating in the CARE program. These young students receive skills training and mentoring in the DA's office to prepare them to be productive, contributing members of our community.

ISSUES QUESTIONS (please answer yes or no and include an explanation only if necessary):

1. Do you support capital punishment (the death penalty)?

Although I am personally opposed to the death penalty, it is the law of the state. However, I support Senator Hancock's bill, SB 490, to abolish the death penalty and provide instead for imprisonment for life without the possibility of parole. As a representative of each and every San Franciscan, I believe it is incumbent upon me to have a serious analysis of each case that qualifies for capital punishment, and have retained the same procedure used by Kamala Harris. Although she indicated she would not seek the death penalty, she still felt it important to have a process in place for evaluating these cases. I agree with Kamala Harris and have preserved her procedure and abide by it in evaluating cases.

2. Do you support a woman's right to choose a safe and legal abortion? YES.

3. Do you support Affirmative Action?

YES.

4. Do you support same gender marriage?

YES.

5. Do you oppose privatization of essential government services and the outsourcing of public and private sector jobs, and support vocational retraining, income support and health care for workers who lose their jobs due to globalization?

YES.

6. Do you support reducing prison overcrowding and the drain on our economy by decreasing penalties for minor drug offenses and other victimless crimes, making the punishment fit the crime?

YES.

7. Do you support the implementation of community-based policing to break down barriers between law enforcement officers and the people they serve, and to curtail police misconduct?

YES.

8. Will you oppose anti-worker initiatives that seek to undermine the ability of union leaders to carry out the will of their members and engage in political activities?

YES.

9. Do you support and encourage increased and expedited processing of applications for citizenship, family reunification and naturalization?

YES.

10. Do you support increasing the construction of affordable housing to alleviate and prevent homelessness, and develop supportive housing with continuum of care services to help homeless people re-establish themselves as self-sufficient contributors to society?

YES.

11. Do you support the many lifesaving programs of the Violence against Women Act (VAWA), including the educational and preventative programs, especially for those who are at higher risk for sexual and domestic violence?

YES.

SHORT ANSWER ISSUES QUESTIONS (Please provide brief answers of no more than 250 words each to the questions below).

A. Describe your views of the proper role of the District Attorney in prosecuting public corruption.

Public corruption undermines the public's confidence in their government and victimizes everyone who places trust in their representatives and other public servants. The Public Integrity Unit in my office aggressively pursues charges of public corruption, whether bribery, theft of public funds, election fraud or legal conflicts of interest.

B. Describe your views on the proper role of the District Attorney in addressing police misconduct.

As both Chief and now as DA I have taken a firm stance against police misconduct. In the police department I created the first criminal internal affairs unit to investigate officer misconduct. I worked diligently with the Police Commission to clear the large backlog of unresolved misconduct cases, including some cases that are approximately 10 years old. I also created the first Brady list within the San Francisco Police Department to keep track of officer misconduct and report it to the District Attorney so that it can be considered in how to proceed on the case and to allow it to be shared with defense counsel.

As your District Attorney, I have expanded this work. Recently, I decided that a homicide conviction needed to be vacated because we learned of trial irregularities when the case was being tried. The man had served almost twenty years before I reviewed the case and determined that the conviction could not stand. I will continue to review cases with this same commitment to truth.

The recent allegations of misconduct by some police officers in the Southern and Central stations resulted in my office opening an investigation into their conduct. Our review of the evidence available at that time convinced me this was a matter my office was not sufficiently resourced to handle. Therefore, I contacted the US Attorney's Office to ask that the FBI come in to investigate the activity. I have never tolerated police misconduct and will not in my capacity as District Attorney. Within the DA's Office I created The Trial Integrity Unit. It was created specifically to deal with misconduct and is working well to identify problematic evidence, witnesses and police officers.

C. What, if any, changes do you support to San Francisco's rent control and condo conversion laws?

I don't support any changes to the rent control and conversion law at this time.

D. Did you support or oppose: a) Lennar's Bayview-Hunter's Point Development; b) the Treasure Island Development; c) the Park Merced Development? Why?

I did not take any public position on these measures.

E. Do you support the negotiated pension reform measure put on the ballot by the Board of Supervisors? Do you support the Adachi pension reform measure? Why?

I support the pension reform measure put on the ballot by the Board of Supervisors as I believe it is a fair measure that helps keep the city financially stable and was developed with the input and consensus of all parties who will be impacted. I oppose Jeff Adachi's plan and last year actively opposed his first effort, Measure B.

F. What, if any, changes do you support to the management and priorities of the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department?

I don't support any changes to the management and priorities right now.

Thank you for your time. We look forward to seeing you on August 13th, 2011.