

## DCCC Sheriff Candidate Questionnaire

**Name:** Chris Cunnie

**Address:** 562 Arballo Drive

**City, State, Zip:** San Francisco, CA 94132

**Campaign phone number:** 415-236-3796

**Cell phone number:** 414-637-8941

**Email:** [chris@chriscunnie.com](mailto:chris@chriscunnie.com)

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Please complete this questionnaire and bring 45 copies with you to be distributed just prior to your interview appointment on Saturday, August 13th, 2011.

**\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*** Please send an electronic copy in Microsoft Word or PDF format to Emily Lowe, [Elowe@sfdemocrats.org](mailto:Elowe@sfdemocrats.org) by **5:00 PM on Monday, August 8th, 2011.**

**With the *possible exception* of a Democratic candidate filing to run after the questionnaire due date, *only* candidates who return a completed questionnaire electronically by the due date will be allowed to present before the committee.**

At the time of the interview, you may also provide 45 copies of up to 4 pages of information attached to your questionnaire for distribution to SFDCCC members (materials are not to be passed out during the meeting).

If you have not heard from the committee by August 12th, please contact Emily Lowe at [Elowe@sfdemocrats.org](mailto:Elowe@sfdemocrats.org) to schedule a specific time slot at the Endorsement Interview Meeting on August 13th, 2011.

While it may seem that some of these questions do not apply to the office you are seeking, they represent Democratic Party Platform principles and since many people run for higher office where they will be called upon to answer these questions, we would like them addressed.

We will distribute the questionnaires at the event and post them on the DCCC website for the public to view.

## **DCCC Candidate Questionnaire**

### **GENERAL QUESTIONS:**

**1. Please confirm that you are a registered Democrat.**

I am registered as a Democrat.

**2. When did you first register as a Democrat?**

Thirty-nine years ago, at age 18.

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

I supported John Kerry in 2004 and Barack Obama in 2008.

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

I continue to support President Barack Obama for the 2012 presidential election. In 2008 I walked precincts and did other field work for Obama's campaign, and I will do so again in 2012.

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

Not to my knowledge.

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

Public safety in San Francisco, and throughout California, faces a critical moment in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court decision that will send tens of thousands of state prison inmates back to local communities. To meet this challenge, we need to break the habit of city and state agencies operating in silos.

Over the last thirty years I have seen law enforcement and public safety from every angle. I walked the beat as a police officer in the neighborhood I grew up in and became a fierce advocate for community policing. I am proud to have been awarded two medals of valor during my service. I served as president of the San Francisco Police Officer's Union – and during a part of that time also served as executive board vice president of Walden House, San Francisco's acclaimed substance abuse treatment center. After reshaping the 9-1-1 communications system under Mayor Gavin Newsom, I became a part of then District Attorney Kamala Harris' reform team as her Chief of Investigations. Last year I had the deep honor and privilege to be named as Undersheriff by Sheriff Mike Hennessey.

I am the right person for the job because I have worked in the jails, worked on the streets in law enforcement, worked in the treatment community to provide services to the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated and worked in Sacramento to coordinate statewide public safety efforts. I have the experience and relationships to bring all of these groups together – and together we'll keep San Francisco safe.

**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.**

I worked for Kamala Harris's campaign for Attorney General, when she was the Democratic party's nominee in a major statewide race. I have also contributed financially to the Democratic party's nominees in statewide races, and have walked precincts for Democratic candidates for years, including the Obama campaign in 2008. I have been a part of the labor movement that has contributed time, money and grassroots strength to numerous Democratic candidates and causes.

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

1. The most important challenge facing the next Sheriff is realignment – and the return of inmates from the state prison system back to San Francisco – as a result of the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision. My first priority would be to work with all levels of law enforcement, city non-profits, the treatment community and the community at large to implement this mandated reform of our state prison system by accepting inmates into our county system. In order for San Francisco to handle realignment successfully, it's crucial that the Sheriff hit the ground running and have a seamless transition. I will use my existing strong relationships to bring the criminal justice community and related non-profit organizations together around the implementation of realignment.

2. I would immediately do an evaluation of the department's resources and the staffing levels in our system to ensure that our sworn personnel have the resources they need to keep our city, the people who work in our jails and inmates safe. It's important that we are achieving public safety efficiently and that we are prepared to deal with the influx of prisoners to our jails.

3. In public safety and law enforcement, we can never be content to rest on our laurels. I would immediately start to expand and enhance the programs and rehabilitative services we have in place now, working in coalition with all levels of city government and our community organizations. My diverse experience gives me the perspective necessary to lead effective treatment and job training programs that keep inmates from returning to jails and prisons. Successful public safety is not just about punishment. It is not just about treatment. It's about both.

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

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

No.

**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. Please describe what, if any changes, you would like to make in the operations of the Sheriff's Department.**

In public safety and law enforcement, change is constant and inevitable. The biggest changes we are facing - realignment and result of the recent Supreme Court decision - are upending the landscape of public safety in San Francisco and rest of the California. I will bring with me the experience and existing relationships that enable me to hit the ground running and immediately begin to deal with these issues.

I can work across all lines of city government, with the police department, and in coalition with communities. These partnerships will be an essential part of my approach to the work of the SF Sheriff. I firmly believe that the different groups working on the issue of public safety won't succeed in the future working in silos as standalone entities, and that we need to integrate rehabilitation more fully into the department.

Public safety is my first priority, and rehabilitation is crucial to keeping offenders from committing repeat violations. My experience working with offenders as a police officer, at Walden House, and as undersheriff have taught me that effective treatment, education, and job training programs, both in and out of custody, can change people's lives and make our communities dramatically safer. I have always been a strong supporter of alternatives to incarceration for low-level, non-violent offenders. Because we are likely to face jail capacity issues due to realignment, this approach will now be more important than ever.

I would continue and expand on the good work already happening in our custody programs and alternatives to incarceration. Many of the most successful efforts are the product of cooperation between jail staff and our city's community based organizations, and as sheriff I will fight to access more funding for these programs.

The implementation of Five Keys Charter School, the only charter school of its type in a county jail, has been a notable success. As the undersheriff I sat on the Board of Directors of Five Keys, and if elected sheriff I would continue to be a strong proponent of the expansion of this great program, especially the post-release educational satellite centers that have been initiated since 2008.

**B. Do you believe there should be an expanded role for the Sheriff's Department in performing functions currently within the purview of the Police Department. Which ones? Why?**

As sheriff, I will do whatever I can to help support the needs of the police department, but I do not believe that the SFSD's role should expand to functions currently within the purview of the police department.

In order for the sheriff's department to work well with the SFPD, the sheriff needs to have strong personal relationships within the police department. Because of my 25 years as a police officer and 7 years as president of the POA, I have these existing relationships. I am committed to ensuring that the sheriff's department works cohesively with other city entities that have a vested interest in public safety, including the police, community groups, and city government. Throughout my career I have built relationships across organizations so that joint efforts are integrated and use resources efficiently, and I would continue to do so as sheriff.

**C. What, if any, changes would you make to San Francisco's rent control and condo**

**conversion laws?**

I support affordable housing options that make it possible for all San Franciscans to continue to live in our city. Policies that establish rent controls and limit condo conversions ensure that this city can offer safe, affordable homes for all.

**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 have not taken a position on any of these specific development projects. My personal opinion is that I generally support thoughtful redevelopment efforts that take the community's opinion into account, consider environmental factors, protect renters and produce local jobs.

**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 negotiated pension reform measure put on the ballot by the Board of Supervisors, because that's the one that was drafted cooperatively with labor at the table. Public employee unions must be involved in this type of negotiation. The working men and women employed by the city stepped up, made sacrifices and compromised, working with government and business to devise a common-sense solution.

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

The Recreation and Park Commission is appointed by the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to oversee the Director of the Recreation and Parks Department, and serves an important role overseeing the city's public space and fostering community involvement in our shared resources. I would leave park and recreation policies to the experts – the Board of Supervisors, Rec and Parks Commissioners, and the Department's Director – and continue to build strong relationships with the commission and the department so that we can work together cooperatively.

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