

## DCCC Sheriff Candidate Questionnaire

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### 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:** Yes.

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

When I turned 18. During the President Bush senior era, I left to start the Green Party of California. But when I decided to support John Kerry and Barack Obama, I knew it was a matter of time to rejoin the Democrats - the party that my family helped build since the days of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the civil rights movement, union labor movement, and women's and peace movements. The Party that I shall continue to help build toward advancing sensible progressive ideals.

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

Senator John Kerry; Senator Barack Obama

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

Donated money to both presidential and congressional fundraising committees; offered to volunteer both inside and outside California.

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

Bernie Sanders, 1994; Ralph Nader, 2000; Matt Gonzalez, 2003.

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

As Supervisor, I inherited the second highest murder, criminal violence rated area in the city. Through community-driven strategies, we've reclaimed neighborhoods (Divisadero, Western Addition, Hayes Valley, Lower Haight) from chronic crime while tackling the roots that induce it. Due to my insistence for accountable community policing and rehabilitative programs in and near public housing, my District has experienced the biggest drop in violent crime citywide.

Between 2005 and 2007, I vigorously pushed the city to support restorative justice strategies that realize that what happens inside our local jail system directly impacts public safety throughout San Francisco, especially in neighborhoods that are host to the highest percentage of parolees and probationers. Recidivism is at 65%. I successfully secured San Francisco's first \$1 million grant from the State Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to develop a pilot program called NoVA - a landmark program addressing violent felons. I also authored the creation of the City's first Reentry Council - obligating all local government, nonprofit and ex-offender stakeholders to formally address Reentry needs.

My qualifications extend to over 10 years of employment and training with law enforcement. SF Police Academy, class president; certified in advanced forensics, Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, Georgia; certified with SF Fire Department/SFPD Bomb Squad, licensed by the state in Advanced Emergency Response; Criminal Investigator, SF District Attorney 1996-2005 (white collar crimes, elder abuse); one year at the Youth Guidance Center. Honorable Discharge from U.S. Navy (Reserves).

As the longest serving member of the Board's Budget Committee and twice chair of the Public Safety Committee, I am intimately familiar with San Francisco's criminal justice system, their combined \$1.2 billion budgets, and the complicated issues confronting all partners in our city's criminal justice system.

Between the governor's "prisoner realignment" plan that commences this October to the 40,000 individuals who come through San Francisco's jails each year, I have the most effective combination of law enforcement experience, legislative experience and political acumen to be our next Sheriff.

I am honored to be endorsed by Sheriff Mike Hennessey.

**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 have worked hard toward the election of office holders on the federal, state and local levels by contributing money, lending my name for endorsement and volunteering. Troubled by the insurgency of the right wing and the dilution or abrogation of cherished Democratic Party beliefs and polices, my affiliation with the party is rooted in the profound concern where this nation is going. While we work for national Democratic Party change, reliance grows in the need to fortify party influence and success at the municipal and state levels.

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

a) Synchronize Better Service Delivery with City Criminal Justice Partners:

- Spread custody programs throughout the City in the neighborhoods where our clients live;
- Provide childcare to both male and female offenders so they may work on their recovery without worrying about their children;
- Make sure the programs are both culturally relevant and gender responsive;
- Provide a safe environment with empathetic case managers to assure successful reentry as well as increase the likelihood of long term sobriety;
- Increase best practice trainings for both sworn and civilian staff;
- Increase the presence of 12 Step groups in the jails and provide meeting space to like-minded groups in the community to assure that our clients have as much access to self-help recovery as possible;
- Build and nurture inmate centered programs where the inmates are held accountable to themselves and each other for the success of their program and individual recovery;
- Make the programs more accessible to a larger portion of our population (i.e. If the defendant is sentenced to a Sheriff's Department alternative program for a current charge, allow them to participate based on risk assessment);
- Increase volunteer and community involvement in jails.

b) Improve Public Safety - Assist SFPD: Retirement levels-attrition are surging in the San Francisco Police Department, well outpacing the retirement of deputy sheriffs. Even with

recent approval from the Board of Supervisors for a new police academy class, the city will not be able to keep up with law enforcement staffing deficits. A targeted conversation needs to happen about how both branches from the PD and SD can work together in assisting with at-large public safety duties.

For example: Without depleting staffing resources, the Sheriff's Department can aid the SFPD through a memorandum of understanding in shared relief duties, since the delta in what a sheriff makes compared to a police officer is almost 23 percent. Pilot MOU's between the SFSD and SFPD need to be implemented on several fronts: transfer of prisoners from district police stations to jail; guarding prisoners while at SF General Hospital or at the SF Courts; assisting with special events patrol and crowd management. Freeing up police officers from tasks that sheriffs can perform will save money and help SFPD focus on more critical objectives. Mindful that programs-treatment cost substantially less than incarceration, better risk assessment and greater diversion will help us save money and reduce recidivism.

c) Make Prisoner Realignment Work: I've held three hearings on prisoner realignment and have sponsored three laws that enable the City and its departments like Adult Probation and the Sheriff to ready themselves for an unprecedented test - the infusion of approximately 700 inmates (low level felons).

Through case by case risk assessment for each prisoner, determination must be made of whether they warrant incarceration or diversion or home detention (electronic monitoring) -- We've helped facilitate the release of a 20 page plan that explains how San Francisco will conduct realignment.

Strategies for realignment are a function of available money and resources. It is considerably more expensive to incarcerate, but that may be necessary depending on the assessment, compared to assigning the inmate to Drug or Behavioral Court or home monitoring. This complex situation will also give rise to purpose of the Reentry Council (I legislated its creation). Even prior to realignment, we created the Council to help educate the general public about the nexus between safe neighborhoods and smart reentry services. But with realignment, the charge for unfailing service delivery has heighten substantially. The conundrum is that roughly 37 percent of the total funding needed is furnished by the state - it's disconcerting to expect that additional funds may have to come from the city's general fund. As Sheriff, I will advocate vigorously for funding sources that go beyond city sacrifice.

## **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. Always, at all government levels.

### **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 - not only have I opposed privatization of essential services every single time that a new Proposition J has come before the Budget Committee, I'm the only candidate for Sheriff who has led the charge four different times against efforts to contract out deputy sheriff services at SFGH, Department of Emergency Management, Laguna Honda and Jail Health.

### **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?**

Absolutely. The "war on drugs" is an abysmal failure, claiming too much in human lives, criminal justice and taxpayer resources. There are more effective ways to mitigate the criminal-driven narcotics trade. Based on a more comprehensive risk assessment process, I will pulpit and create policy to draw attention to the need to divert offenders toward treatment-based programs rather than incarceration. As it relates to my understanding on the issues relative to marijuana, I wrote the city-and-nation's first comprehensive regulations for medical cannabis dispensaries. I also received the 2006 NORML (national organization for the reform of marijuana laws) Hero Award.

### **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?**

Of course! Despite the claims of many in law enforcement and city hall, San Francisco needs to do a much better job at community policing. Our game is weak here as compared to a number of cities throughout the country. I helped commission studies that underline this reality.

I've authored over a dozen laws aimed at improving community policing. Despite initial resistance from Mayor Newsom and law enforcement, we've been able to demonstrate how tried-and-true tactics applied in other cities are a welcome and effective tool in many of our neighborhoods.

A critical point to remember - The Sheriff's Department is not subject to OCC (Office of Citizen Complaints) or SF Police Commission authority. All disciplinary review is internal and concerns about officer abuse or excessive force should never be taken lightly. We need to retain an independent, executive authority administered by the Sheriff who is not prone nor exhibits a history of bias.

**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?**

Always. As the union representative for the SF DAI Association, selected to be the lead in city-union contract negotiations, I am quite familiar and supportive of union labor issues implicating all sides. My ethos will always be union friendly as it applies to organizing the right to dismantle barriers to organizing.

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

Yes. While we wait for immigration reform on the national level, San Francisco...and California, must lead the way. Sheriff Mike Hennessey was courageous in the way he addressed the reckless and uneven implementation of the ICE and Secure Communities - this is a stance I shall continue to build on.

**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?**

Absolutely. I will support a bond dedicated to true affordable housing. Proposition A in 2004 should've won if it received the promised support of elected officials. We need to upgrade and do it again.

**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?**

Naturally - not only do I support these programs, I will magnify them with resource support so that their capacity is enhanced. General fund and grant funding commitments need to be increased dramatically. Violence prevention and intervention programs merit a more mainstream implementation ranging from public school to workplace training, to community centers (cultural competent) to the criminal justice system, to the jails.

**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.**

a) Procure New Resources; Save the City Money: There are specific strategies that I will establish to generate new revenue:

- Require outside law enforcement jurisdictions that book prisoners in San Francisco's jail to be charged a booking fee (that currently doesn't exist but does if San Francisco law enforcement books prisoners in outside jurisdictions).
- Institute a charge for outside jurisdictions that require us to monitor their prisoners at SF General Hospital or at another institution. The current practice is not reciprocal.

- Additionally, the Sheriff's Department can assist with special events and SFPD priorities at less cost to the city and put resources into the Department itself.

b) Improve Public Safety, Fast: There are thousands of un-served felony and misdemeanor warrants. Un-served warrants, especially for more heinous suspects, send the wrong signal that collides with statute of limitations constraints, and compounds public safety challenges. I will reassess staffing shortages with the Sheriff's Central Warrants Bureau and work closely with SFPD in addressing this burgeoning problem.

c) Strengthen Jail Reentry Services: There are renowned programs like the Women's Reentry Center; Cover Program, RSVP (violent/nonviolent felons); Five Keys Charter School; NoVA; Garden Project, and more that deserve a stable future. I will institute a penetrating auditing system for programs so that more is learned beyond the success-failure rate of an offender who repeats. There is a strong need to fortify programs for the following populations:

- Building on the One Family program model - domestic re-integration for multiple family members who are incarcerated at the same time (example: father and son) as well as dealing with children whose parent(s) are incarcerated, as well as post release community re-integration training to assist with reuniting families;
- Transgender and LGBT populations are in serious need of specialized programming and improved facility (while incarcerated) support;
- Project Breakthrough for young adults;
- Develop a more robust workforce placement and training system for post release preparation - the one current staffer is insufficient.

**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?**

Throughout the questionnaire I've shared ideas on how SFSD can complement SFPD without merging departments or threatening union rules. They are: Prisoner Transfer Unit; Prisoner monitoring; Patrol for special events, 10B; Muni patrols, Rec-Park Patrols; A conversation needs to take place that addresses how the SFPD staffing levels are going keep up with project development demands that will see population increases at Treasure Island, Bay View Lennar, America's Cup and more. I believe that without compromising current staffing duties, the SFSD can assist the SFPD, help improve public safety, and save tax payers money.

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

I would retain local law and do everything possible to amend Costa Hawkins on the state level; and to off-set against the abusive use of Ellis Act evictions. Since working class and middle class home ownership is very difficult for many San Franciscans, with some exception through the TIC process, questions are begged about how to reform condo conversion without hurting tenants or reducing rental housing stock.

**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?**

a) Support with amendments: Until we reform how the Redevelopment Agency is held accountable (moot now perhaps), and absent an alternative, after 10 years the Lennar project is the only project in the pipeline.

b) Support with amendments: Similar to my previous answer except our amendments didn't go far enough to address the environmental mitigations and realities caused by climate change and sea level rise.

c) Opposed - This was complicated because there are few projects of this scale on the city's westside and there is merit to rebuild--but--there is a risk of significant tenant displacement due to inferior protection by local and state laws.

**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 Board's version and I am opposed to Adachi's version. Pension reform is the genie out of the bottle, and it needs to happen -- best if it's prompted by a well-rounded and uncommon coalition between business, labor, and government.

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

I would reform the governance of the commission. The RPD's decisions are not eligible for appeal to the Board of Supervisors, therefore exacerbating tensions between the RPD, Chief Executive and Board. While there are escalating policy differences with RPD staff, going to the ballot due to these differences should be a last resort, not a first.

Going to the ballot places greater attention on the need for more inclusion to RPD decision-making processes. I think this is so important that I introduced a 2010 charter amendment for a split appointment RP Commission that was ultimately given up in budget negotiations.

I also want to see a more secure stream of funding so that privatization is no longer used as the quick remedy or excuse for trading a public domain for private interests. Our Recreation and Parks system needs to be reminded that they need to be the great equalizer between the rich and poor.