

**POTRERO HILL MAYORAL CANDIDATE FORUM**  
**Tuesday, August 30, 2011**

Questionnaire for candidates for the office of  
**Mayor of the City of San Francisco**

**Candidate/Campaign Information**

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Percentage of donations \$100 or less: Will be released on August 1

*Thank you for taking the time to complete the Questionnaire for the Potrero Hill Mayoral Candidates Forum. Note that your responses to this Questionnaire will be used as one of the criteria by which candidates will be invited to participate in the event ; completion of the Questionnaire is not a guarantee that you will be invited to participate.*

*Please write a brief response (fewer than 200 words) to each question.*

1. Why are you running and why should we vote for you?

I'm a progressive independent and I'm running for mayor to put school improvement and job creation on the top of the agenda. It's time for an innovative and transparent approach to problem solving. I've achieved success by focusing on practical ideas where the cutting edge meets common sense. I have taken the same approach as a mother, mentor, educator, and advocate for public school reform and that's what I'll do as a Mayor for all of San Francisco's diverse neighborhoods.

My moment of obligation, and the reason I am running for mayor, came upon learning that only 49% of San Francisco public school students graduate from high

school. That number is even lower in some neighborhoods. This is simply unacceptable and is representative of a broken system. Education reform is the primary reason I am running for mayor, I cannot imagine anything more important than our young people's future. We can and must do better for them. As mayor, I will be San Francisco's Chief Education Advocate.

We need to gain control of our budget, grow our way out of the deficit and create good paying jobs. We need to address the budget deficit and make the budgeting process more transparent.

2. What sets you apart from your opponents?

I'm an entrepreneur and I will bring that spirit with me to City Hall.

I'm a teacher, mentor and education reform advocate. I teach at Santa Clara University and have served for eight years on the Bay Area Board of the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship, which brings business building skills to students in low-income communities. I'm an advisory board member of the San Francisco School Alliance and I serve on the board of the New Schools Venture Fund, which helps education entrepreneurs 'scale' their enterprise to affect systems change in San Francisco and across the country.

I managed a family owned 42-room hotel and brought it back from the brink of bankruptcy. When I moved to San Francisco in 1993, I opened a restaurant in Rincon Center. Unfortunately, after just two years, the business was forced to shut its doors, providing a valuable long-term lesson in the practical realities and challenges of running a small business.

In 1996, I took the risk of a life time, plunging headlong into the traditionally male dominated world of venture capital, and with \$50,000 cobbled together from savings and personal debt, I formed VSP Capital. I have invested in more than 60 Bay Area companies.

3. Have you qualified for public financing? If not, do you plan to do so? If you do not plan to seek public financing, why not?

Our campaign has qualified for public financing. We have received over \$440,000 in matching funds to date.

4. What do you view as the top three issues facing San Francisco? Please describe your solutions for those issues.

I'm focused on education, jobs and transparency.

Education needs to be a citywide endeavor that is treated as one of our core civic priorities. We cannot afford for our Mayor to stand on the sidelines and allow public

schools to fend for themselves. Too many kids are being underserved and too many families are leaving the City, because education has not been a priority. We must take bold steps to support our teachers and our schools, making San Francisco a leader in education innovation.

Every San Franciscan deserves the strong feeling of community that is achieved when people work close to home and have their children go to neighborhood schools. We must bring quality, high wage jobs back to San Francisco, so that workers who ride buses everyday to Silicon Valley can instead walk or take public transportation to jobs in the City. It's time to fundamentally rewrite the City's economic equation with a long-term strategy focused on job creation.

Most people are willing to pay for support and services to make the City feel safe and clean. But people want to know what they are paying for and where the money goes. An effective government must communicate its goals and actions.

5. What are some specific public safety strategies currently being implemented in San Francisco that you agree or disagree with? With these strategies in mind, what do you intend to do about public safety if elected mayor?

Every San Franciscan deserves to live in a safe and secure neighborhood, and as mayor, I will work with our police and community leaders to improve neighborhood safety. I believe that we need a well-funded police department that focuses on building relationships with every community and uses technology to prevent and investigate crime.

Police foot patrols are one of the keys to strengthen the bonds between law enforcement and our communities. Foot patrols turn police officers into members of the community and promote open communication between neighborhood residents and law enforcement. I also support increasing coordination between law enforcement and community and neighborhood watch groups.

Technology has allowed for the development of crime-fighting initiatives like Compstat, the Bay Area Regional Crime Center, and the Shotspotters program. I support full adoption of these programs and will push for the police department to find cutting-edge ways to combat and prevent crime and make San Francisco as safe as possible.

6. What does the term "affordable housing" mean to you? What, if anything, will you do to increase the quantity of affordable housing in San Francisco?

Producing affordable housing and creating stronger neighborhoods for working families will be a high priority if I am elected mayor. I will provide leadership in fostering public private partnerships to find innovative ways to provide more affordable housing. We can modify building and planning regulations to encourage smaller and more efficient housing units, support mixed use developments such as housing units above retail, change parking space requirements, and promote secondary units on existing residential lots. We can also make use of inclusionary zoning to require developers to build moderate income housing units in market rate developments and use zoning to increase the number of housing units within walking distance of public transportation. In addition, I support bringing an affordable housing bond to voters.

I support rent control, particularly for the elderly and other residents on fixed-incomes, and I will work to ensure that our city has enough affordable housing for low-income and fixed-income families and individuals. I also support efforts to streamline housing development processes while ensuring that community needs are met.

7. In the 2000 census, San Francisco was the second most racially diverse county in California. In the 2010 census, we were twelfth. What issues do you see in the changing demographics of the City, and how as mayor do you plan to support racial, economic and cultural diversity?

San Francisco is losing families at an alarming rate. I will work to improve quality of life and affordability issues for our residents so living in the city is a viable option. That starts with fixing our schools and continues with the way we budget and allocate resources for the basic quality of life issues important to our community: clean, well maintained streets, good public transit, comfort in safety and security, accessible parks and open space, support for the arts and a strong sense of local communities reinforced by vibrant merchant corridors and good public schools. To have a strong city we must focus on school improvement and get our economy moving in the right direction by creating jobs and growing our way out of the constant cycle of budget deficits and harmful cuts.

8. What is your position regarding privatization of the public sector, i.e., contracting out public land and services to for-profit or private entities? Please explain with specific examples.

Our public employees serve our community and deserve respect for the services they provide. Public employees are under assault from the right wing across the country – and as Mayor, I will stand up to this unfounded aggression and stand by our public employees. Generally speaking, I do not support approving a private contract for work currently performed by public employees. I will seek a balance that respects public employees and meets our need to adapt to a rapidly changing world.

I support innovation and cutting red tape to make progress on important issues. For example, our city technology and data systems are outdated. There are many open source and free or low cost solutions to the challenges we face in this area, but procurement procedures and other contractual obligations prevent us from moving forward quickly. We need to be able to respond better to our changing world – and save taxpayer dollars by utilizing technology.

9. Do you support reforming the 1932 Refuse Collection and Disposal Ordinance to allow the City to contract out its garbage services through competitive bidding?

I believe in competition and a fair process when awarding city contracts. The waste disposal contract negotiations provide us with an opportunity to evaluate our long standing relationship with Recology and to review our trash collection and disposal ordinance. We should take time to review all of the available options relating to waste disposal and trash collection before entering into a long term contract. Recology is a valued city partner and it might make sense to contract with them for waste disposal, but we should take time to study all of our options before making a final decision.

10. Do you believe that San Francisco should be a Sanctuary City, and will you remove San Francisco from the Secure Communities Program?

I support our status as a Sanctuary City. I will not allow municipal funds or resources to be used to enforce federal immigration laws. I support policies that make it easier for undocumented immigrants to contribute to the diversity of our neighborhoods, like making it easier to obtain identification, get an education and earn a living. Our neighborhoods would not be nearly as culturally and sociably rich without our immigrant families.

I am opposed to implementation of S-COMM and support our Sheriff's decision not to implement it. S-COMM undermines trust between local law enforcement and immigrant communities and oversteps the constitutional authority of the federal government. If police use this program as an excuse to round up immigrants, immigrants will avoid the police. When immigrant communities know or believe that police are involved with ICE, seeking aid from police becomes too risky. This leads to unreported crimes and victims go unprotected.

11. What will you do as mayor to fulfill the promise of Hope SF and improve substandard public housing conditions? What changes, if any, would you make to the San Francisco Housing Authority?

I support HOPE SF and the goal of replacing distressed public housing sites into thriving mixed-income communities. Programs like HOPE SF will be a priority in my administration because they benefit all levels of the community, and contribute to unique culturally rich neighborhoods. Instead of isolating certain income levels to a specific geographic location, HOPE SF embraces the unique diversity of San Francisco.

The goal of HOPE SF is to rebuild eight of San Francisco's most distressed public housing sites as mixed-income communities with minimal displacement to current residents. The program's intention is to focus not just on real estate, but also on improving the quality of life for residents. The first phase of the program is supposed to rebuild 1,800 units at four of the sites into 3,000 homes for sale and rent.

Hunters View is the pilot site for the HOPE SF initiative. The site includes 267 units on 20 acres, but only 148 families live in the development because so many of the units have become uninhabitable. The rebuilt development will include 700-800 mixed-income units, public parks, semi-private tot lots, a senior center, and an expanded child care center.

12. Complaining about Muni is a local pastime. That said, we have seen repeated decreases in service while the City has approved plans to substantially increase the population of zip code 94107 over the next 20 years. What, as mayor, will you do to fulfill the City's Transit First Policy for today's San Franciscans? How will you prepare for tomorrow's Muni riders?

San Francisco should have a world-class public transportation system and funding for Muni will be a priority in the budgets I propose. State budget cuts have hit our public transit system particularly hard. In addition to other structural reforms, new revenue is required to get Muni on solid ground. I will investigate ways to increase revenue and support a \$100 vehicle mitigation fee. Once we provide Muni with a reliable source of revenue, we can make progress on other important transit issues like improvement of on-time performance, cleanliness and expansion of service.

Use of public transit will increase if it is convenient, reliable and safe. I will work to improve the flow of Muni vehicles and increase on time performance. I support several ideas to make that happen including implementation of Bus Rapid Transit lanes and synchronization of traffic lights on major transit corridors for buses and light rail to give them priority.

"Transit-First" means more than having a world-class public transit system. We need more dedicated bike lanes and additional bike storage. We need pedestrian friendly

sidewalks and street crossings. Our land use policy needs to reflect our transportation values as well.

13. Likewise, the San Francisco Unified School District provides an often-cited reason for families to leave the City and is a source of stress for those choosing to remain. What are the biggest issues related to public education in the City, and what factors contributed to these issues? What will you do in your term as mayor to improve education in the City?

To prepare the next generation of San Franciscans for the innovation economy, we have to change the equation in our public schools. I know from over a decade working in the trenches on the issue of education reform, systemic change is possible when you ignore conventional wisdom and start with two basic building blocks: the expectation that every child can succeed and the belief that our schools must become synonymous with innovation. Small increments of improvement are just not good enough as more children slip through the cracks. Only 49% of San Francisco public school students graduate from high school on time. We need to support our Superintendent and school district with the resources to meet their goals. We can and must do much better.

San Francisco's economic future depends on its schools. Too many families leave the City every year for better educational opportunities elsewhere. Meanwhile, facing a massive shortfall, the San Francisco Unified School District was recently forced to make more cuts. We can do better. We must begin attracting families back to the public schools by making sure every child can attend a quality neighborhood school within walking distance of his or her home.

I will be San Francisco's Chief Education Advocate.

14. How, as Mayor, would you facilitate better dialog and collaboration between City departments, such as SFMTA or Recreation and Parks, and neighborhood organizations?

When I am mayor, I will work to change the way we look at city government. I believe government exists to serve people and deliver critical services to its citizens, but we can do more than that. We need to improve communication, increase transparency, make it easier for employees to give feed back, and collaborate with neighborhood organizations. City employees should be constantly thinking of ways to make its resources more readily available to the public and deliver them in a way that allow citizens to build and create things on their own to solve challenges. We already pay to create and collect data. We will get more value out of the price we have already paid if we completely open our data and encourage people to innovate using this data.

15. Please review the policies and programs you have advocated in your responses to the questions above. Given forecasts of difficult budgets for the next several years, how do you propose that we fund the aforementioned policies and programs while maintaining other vital City services and programs?

I am a firm believer in bottom-up budgeting. I support complete transparency in the budgeting process. In my budget proposals, each department will start at \$0 and must justify all expenditures. Each program will be evaluated on its merits with results tied to accountability. Programs that are working will be maintained and expanded. Programs that are not performing well or no longer serving the needs of our community will face reductions in spending or elimination. City government is not nearly transparent or accountable enough. The city must hold itself to the highest standards while measuring the success of its many programs.

Our tax policy discourages job creation and must be reformed. I support wholesale reform of our payroll tax, which discourages companies from hiring new employees. San Francisco is the only city in California with a payroll tax. In 2004, San Francisco instituted a payroll tax exclusion for biotechnology companies. This exclusion has proven to be a success and has attracted companies and jobs to San Francisco. It has kick-started an entire new industry in the city. Since the exclusion was passed, the life science sector has expanded by over 2000 jobs and it has created new revenue for the city. We can take this success and use it as a template for broader changes.

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*Please return your responses to this Questionnaire by **Thursday, July 7, 2011**, to [contact\\_us@phdemclub.org](mailto:contact_us@phdemclub.org). Thank you again for your participation.*