

**POTRERO HILL DEMOCRATIC CLUB
DISTRICT ATTORNEY CANDIDATE FORUM
Tuesday, September 6, 2011**

Questionnaire for candidates for the office of
District Attorney of the City of San Francisco

Candidate/Campaign Information

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| Anticipated budget: \$750,000 |
| Funds raised to date: \$284,000 (through June 30) |
| Percentage of donations \$100 or less: 58 percent (through June 30) |

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 am running for District Attorney to make San Francisco the safest and fairest city in the country.

I am a graduate of Stanford Law School, and began my career at community-based organizations like Walden House Adolescent Facility and Legal Services for Children, helping to keep young people in school and out of the criminal justice system. At the National Council on Crime and Delinquency and the W. Haywood Burns Institute, I focused on alternatives to incarceration and reducing racial disparities in the juvenile justice system.

In the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, I spearheaded a study to address gun violence, which led to the "zone strategy" that helped

dramatically reduce homicides. And as a Police Commissioner, I fought for modern upgrades such as CompStat. I am the founding Executive Director of the Berkeley Center for Criminal Justice, where I developed criminal justice reforms and best practices from around the country.

As your District Attorney I will focus on building strong partnerships between law enforcement and the community. I've earned the endorsement of over 1,900 supporters, including Assemblymember Tom Ammiano, six of the seven San Francisco School Board members, the California Police Chiefs Association, United Educators of San Francisco, the Bernal Heights Democratic Club and over two dozen current and former members of the San Francisco Police Department.

2. What sets you apart from your opponents?

Three things:

- I have spent my career reforming our broken criminal justice system from the outside -- unlike my opponents, who have spent their careers within law enforcement and thus lack the broader perspective required to make the bold changes needed to reform our system.
- My campaign is all about building collaboration between law enforcement and the community, which I have been doing in neighborhoods throughout San Francisco for the past twenty years, as evidenced by list of 1,900 plus supporters from all San Francisco neighborhoods. None of the other candidates have a long history of working with community partners in San Francisco.
- I am the only candidate who unequivocally opposes to the death penalty, and has consistently held this position throughout the campaign and my entire career.

3. What do you view as the top three issues facing the San Francisco District Attorney's office? Please describe your solutions for those issues.

My first priority will be building partnerships between law enforcement and the community, because the data shows that's what makes us safer. Simply put, a collaborative approach that builds trust will have a

huge payoff in reduced crime in our communities, reduced corrections costs and reduced recidivism.

Second, I will focus on keeping kids out of the criminal justice system by reforming our juvenile justice system. I will implement a restorative justice program for juveniles that will hold offenders accountable while meeting the needs of victims. I will make the juvenile unit a full division in the DA's office and revamp the recruitment and training of juvenile DAs.

Third, I will bring data-driven upgrades and an innovative approach to the District Attorney's Office. We brought American policing into the 21st Century by focusing on data-driven methods that reduced crime. As a Police Commissioner, I fought for modern upgrades such as CompStat, a management and accountability tool that gives police better data to prevent crime. I also spearheaded a study to address gun violence, which led to the "zone strategy" that helped dramatically reduce homicides and earned the Department of Justice's prestigious Project Safe Neighborhoods Achievement Award. But results-oriented strategies have not yet been broadly adopted in perhaps the most important arm of law enforcement – prosecution. Continuing this kind of modernization in the DA's office will help make San Francisco the safest and fairest city in America.

4. 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 District Attorney?

Our public safety policies should be data driven – but all too often they are not. As District Attorney my office will focus on building partnerships between law enforcement and the community, because the data shows that's what makes us safer. That includes working with schools and community-based organizations to keep young people in school and out of the criminal justice system, seeking permanent imprisonment – not the death penalty – for the most serious offenders, reforming Three Strikes to focus on violent offenders, and bringing a restorative justice approach to the juvenile justice system.

I do not support the current DA's policy of "direct filing" minors into adult court. The data are clear: transferring minors to adult court does not make us safer. Outcomes are much better when youth remain in the juvenile system, where they have much more access to

rehabilitative services and are less likely to suffer physical or sexual abuse. In the very rare case where I determine that the youth should be tried as an adult (for example, a youth a few weeks shy of 18 years old commits a serious and violent crime), I would go through a fitness hearing before a judge where the probation department and public defender can also weigh in – not unilaterally direct file.

5. Considering the current budget crisis, do you support reducing spending on corrections and if so, how? If not, how do you propose to fund the current corrections system?

I absolutely support a reduction in spending on corrections – and it is essential that part of the savings generated be passed back to the counties to support law enforcement and community resources to work with the state prisoners who will be returning to local communities under realignment.

As someone who has focused on how we fund our criminal justice system, I will work to reduce the overall burden on the system and fight for the necessary dollars to fairly enforce the law. My experience developing programs that have kept youth in school and out of the system taught me a lot about the best way to manage resources – and that sometimes a small upfront investment can make a huge difference down the line. I’ve been endorsed by the United Educators of San Francisco and six of the seven school board members because I see education as a form of prevention – and preventing people from entering the criminal justice system is the best way to lower costs.

6. Do you believe that San Francisco should be a Sanctuary City, and how will you work with state and agencies to enforce the City’s Sanctuary City policy?

I am a very strong supporter of the Sanctuary City ordinance. I support David Campos’ legislation on undocumented juveniles and support seeking to opt out of the federal Secure Communities program. I will work with state and federal officials to make sure that our Sanctuary City policy is respected.

7. Is there any instance in which your office might seek the death penalty?

I am the only candidate in this race who is unequivocally opposed to the death penalty, and I will not seek it under any circumstances if I am elected. My whole career has been about looking beyond the politics that dominate law enforcement and finding proven solutions based on facts and data.

Here are the facts – the death penalty does not make us safer. It is not cost effective. It is not fair and equitable. We would save \$1 billion over 5 years if we moved everyone on death row to life in prison without the possibility of parole – resources that could be spent on things that actually make us safer, like more cops on our streets, teachers in our schools, more services in our communities, and more support for victims.

I respect the deeply held views of those who support the death penalty. My service as a Police Commissioner has helped me better understand these views and given me an even deeper appreciation for those parts of the law enforcement and victim communities who support the death penalty.

But I am running for DA to move this office and the entire public safety community toward proven safety solutions. And the death penalty simply has not been shown to make us safer.

State law gives local prosecutors enormous discretion in deciding what to charge. I would use that discretion to seek permanent incarceration in the most serious cases. My strategy will mean more certain punishment and more available resources directed to keep us safer.

8. What is your position on Loni Hancock's SB490?

As the only candidate for San Francisco District Attorney who unequivocally opposes the death penalty, I applaud Senator Hancock's proactive approach to reforming a broken part of California's criminal justice system. The death penalty does not make us safer, is not cost effective and is not fair and equitable. That is why I will work hard as District Attorney to help pass this bill.

9. How would your office address the truancy problem in San Francisco, particularly of children in elementary and middle schools?

The number one way we can help keep a young person from a life of crime is to help that young person get a high school diploma and go on to college. We need a District Attorney who understand the close interconnection between education and criminal justice. We need to invest more money in our schools and less money on incarceration – that will pay enormous dividends in the long run.

I am proud that I have earned the support of San Francisco's teachers (United Educators of San Francisco) and six of the seven San Francisco School Board members. I look forward to partnering closely with them to work together to reduce truancy and improve graduation rates for our youth.