

Solano County Democratic Central Committee (SCDCC)
2013 Endorsement Questionnaire

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Office sought: Vallejo City Council

- 1) What is the nature and extent of any prior relevant involvement in community, civic, and/or political activities? Have you held elected or appointed office before, if so please describe.
- *Current Director (one of three) District One, Solano County Fairgrounds Board, appointed by Former Supervisor Barbara Kondylis.
I facilitated bringing the three components of Fire Protection to Youth Ag Day. Cal Fire has been a participant, I was able to bring the Federal (US Forest Service) , and local components (City of Vallejo) to teach the 3,000 Solano County third grade participants about fire protection and safety.*
 - *Current Steering Committee Member, Vallejo Participatory Budgeting (PB), appointed by the Vallejo City Council.
As a member of the inaugural Steering Committee, I was integral in the creation of the PB Rule Book and guiding the very first city-wide PB process in the United States. I also acted as a facilitator for the Education Committee, and one of our projects, a new floor and other improvements for the Omega Boys and Girls Club, was one of the winning twelve projects out of an original list of 832 PB ideas!*

I am currently investigating the use of Eminent Domain to seize underwater mortgages from banks, a program that KEEPS people in their homes. This program is getting a lot of support from Unions. I initially became aware of this through Vallejo's PB process. This may not be a solution for Vallejo but it's an intriguing opportunity.
 - *Current Vice President, Vallejo Heights Neighborhood Association (VHNA)*
 - *Current Volunteer, Vallejo Fighting Back Partnership, monthly anti-graffiti paint-out*
 - *Produced five Vallejo City Council Candidate Forums*
 - *2003: Vallejo Community Planned Renewal and Glen Cove Neighborhood Assn*
 - *2005: Vallejo Heights Neighborhood Assn and the Sierra Club/Solano Group*
 - *2007: Vallejo Waterfront Coalition and the Sierra Club/Solano Group*
 - *2009: Vallejo Waterfront Coalition and the Sierra Club/Solano Group*
 - *2011: Citizens for Vallejo PAC*
 - *Founding Steering Committee Member, Better Vallejo, 2009-2013*
 - *Treasurer, MIRA Theatre Guild, 2010-2011*

- *Overhauled Mira's fund-accounting financial system*
- *Prepared the 2010 and 2012 990-IRS Non-profit Information Return (none needed in 2011 as revenues did not meet 990 filing requirement)*
- *Contributor, Vallejo Independent Bulletin*
- *Member, Citizens for Vallejo*
 - *Remove Binding Arbitration from the Vallejo City Charter*
- *Executive Committee (ExCom) Member, Sierra Club/Solano Group, 2004-2010*
 - *Political Chair, facilitated the endorsement process for Barbara Kondylis, Linda Seifert, Skip Thomson, Becky Benton*
 - *Worked with Vallejoans for Responsible Growth against Super Walmart*
- *Phone-banking/precinct walking, Measure A, Remove Binding Arbitration from the Vallejo City Charter*
- *Co-Campaign Manager, Committee to Elect Marti Brown to the Vallejo City Council, 2009*
- *Raised \$8,400 for HIV/AIDS services while finishing the Florence, Italy AIDS Marathon Fundraiser, 11-2006*
- *Participant on the City of Vallejo's Downtown Advisory Group, 2004*
- *Raised \$6,000 for HIV/AIDS services while finishing the Honolulu AIDS Marathon Fundraiser, 12-2002*
- *Vallejo Waterfront Coalition Co-Chair*
- *Phone-banking: John Kerry for President*
- *Vallejo Community Planned Renewal (no LNG)*
- *Treasurer, Vallejo Artists' Guild, 2001– 2002*
 - *Reinstated the Guild's rescinded non-profit status as of July, 2002*
 - *Organized the 2001 Vallejo Open Studios*
- *Phone-banking: Al Gore for President*
- *Shanti Project AIDS volunteer: emotional and practical peer-support, 1992 – 1997*
- *NARAL volunteer, fundraising and community organizing 1985-1992*

2) What background or experience makes you the best candidate for this position? How is it applicable?

I have more than 20 years of non-profit finance management that includes, as Budget Director at the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, having to navigate the "dot-com bust", "9-11", and resulting stock market recessions. I understand the complexity of Government Fund budgets (very similar to non-profit budgets) and the critical need for protecting service delivery, which—in Government—is often done through partnerships with non-profits.

I deeply understand that a healthy organization is one that does not spend more funds that it takes in. Since I moved to Vallejo in 2000, the City has never been able to balance its budget, which eventually led to bankruptcy. It is imperative that Vallejo invests Measure B funds into economic development and grow our local economy.

3) Why are you running for office?

I have worked tirelessly as a volunteer since I moved to Vallejo in 2000 to improve our city and I want to serve the City of Vallejo on Council as a continuation of this work. In the thirteen years I have lived here, I have come to know wonderful people all over Vallejo. This town has great promise and I want to work as a Council Member to see that promise realized.

I support sunshine laws and fair and effective governance. As a council member, I will research issues and practice due diligence when asked to make a decision, and will base that decision on the greatest good for Vallejo.

More than ever, we need someone who understands complexity, with proven experience balancing and prioritizing what we need with the reality of what we can afford.

4) What do you hope to accomplish in office? What are your top goals for this term?

- *Fund the city services we deserve*
 - *Stretch our public dollars to support police and fire safety, seniors, families, working people, and youth.*
- *Build a healthy local economy*
 - *Eliminate roadblocks to business expansion*
 - *Support programs that provide vocational training and job readiness for the under-employed*
 - *Send a clear message to developers or those wishing to bring business to the City that we welcome new, 21st century businesses that are compatible with our existing strengths in light industry and manufacturing, tourism, health services, and higher education.*
- *Support stronger neighborhoods*
 - *Through targeted code enforcement and coordinated neighborhood watch groups*
 - *Enforced ordinances that address squatters, vacant buildings, and neglectful landlords; and strategic spending on infrastructure improvements.*
- *Invest in People*
 - *Promote meaningful opportunities for everyone to get involved, strengthening our City in real, tangible ways. Fostering community pride honors the efforts of those of us who have lived and worked here through the best and the worst of it, and builds our City for the future.*

Many of our city's best accomplishments have come from the ground up. As a local community advocate, I know how to bring people together to work towards a common goal.

5) Do you seek the endorsement of the Solano County Democratic Central Committee? Why?

As a registered Democrat since age 18, in 1976, I would be honored to have the endorsement of the Solano County Democratic Central Committee.

I am not seeking the endorsement of the Solano County Central Democratic Committee because as a current Federal Contractor, I am covered by the Hatch Act which restricts me from seeking any partisan party endorsements.

I appreciate the opportunity to complete this questionnaire and participate in the forum/interview so that I can let the public at large understand my stands and positions on critical City issues.

- 6) California, Solano County, and local jurisdictions are all facing substantial budgetary difficulties. What ideas do you have to help in the office you are running for deal with fiscal issues?

It is incredibly difficult for Government entities to raise revenues; raising taxes in California is an arduous process, and economic development takes years to see through fruition. This calls for careful and prudent budgeting even during good economic times, and for the creation of reserves during good economic times; dipping into them cautiously during lean times.

Our local economy may be stabilizing and there is hope that the most significant cuts are behind us. A structural deficit of approximately \$5.2 million still exists and it is imperative to close this gap. If revenues remain flat and additional cuts are needed, the impacts must be fair, and shared by all. I believe employee benefits should be the same across all employee groups, however that doesn't mean the most generous benefit packages should be extended to all.

I will actively support the investment of Measure B funds into Economic Development.

I also support the update of Vallejo's general plan, which has not been updated since 1983. Because of the neglect of our general plan, Vallejo has more than 20 specific plans – an unusually large amount for a city. These plans often contradict each other and makes navigating Vallejo's Planning Department that much more difficult for businesses wanting to locate in Vallejo.

- 7) What do you feel are the major issues facing the constituents in your district?
- *Public Safety – Vallejo does not have enough Police Officers on the street. This is exacerbated by the housing crisis which continues to impact Vallejo, with foreclosures and abandoned homes which plague our city*
 - *Economic Development – Vallejo has not recovered from Mare Island Shipyard closure.*
- 8) What do you feel are the major issues facing public employees in your district? Do you support contracting out for certain services (i.e. police, maintenance, etc.)

Even with Measure B funds, the city again—as with the last decade and before—finds itself asking employees for concessions.

Public Employees are concerned with the elimination of Binding Arbitration from the Vallejo City Charter.

When facing with budget deficits, all options must be considered. However, regular, ongoing public services are best provided by public employees, for continuity and effectiveness.

9) What do you feel are the major issues facing unions and union members in your district?

- *Availability of living wage jobs with good benefits.*
- *The disappearance of middle class jobs.*
- *The movement of manufacturing overseas, eliminating local jobs.*
- *The automation of manufacturing, also eliminating jobs.*
- *The increase of Union busting big-box retailers, combined with the community's clamor for them (including some local employee unions).*
- *The weak housing market and not much building*
- *The importance of Project Labor Agreements and local hiring.*

10) Do you support moving the election cycle to even years in your jurisdiction?

Yes.

11) How long have you been a registered Democrat? Why are you a Democrat, and how do your reasons relate to the office you seek?

I have been a democrat since I first registered to vote at age 18 in 1976. I am a Democrat because I believe in fairness and social justice and this belief will be in the forefront as I make decisions for the City of Vallejo.

12) Have you read and do you support the California Democratic Party platform? Please explain any parts you do not support and why.

I have read it and although I don't know it word for word, I absolutely support the Platform's underlying foundation of fairness and Social Justice. I am thrilled that California Democrats deeply support a woman's right to choose and marriage equality.

*Other sections of the Democratic Platform that resonant the most for me:
Business & Economy: Grow Jobs – I deeply appreciate the emphasis on Green and Sustainable jobs and will advocate these types of jobs in Vallejo and on Mare Island. I*

also appreciate the emphasis on small businesses. A community with a diverse cross-section of smaller businesses is the healthiest.

Children, Young Adults and their Families – the country is not investing in our children.

And, of course the section on Women!

- 13) Please share any other information you think will assist the Central Committee in considering your endorsement?

I am not seeking endorsement of the Solano County Democratic Central Committee due to my federal employment and the Hatch Act, but appreciate the Solano County Democratic Central Committee giving me the opportunity to complete this questionnaire and participate in the forum, and bring my positions and ideas to the public.