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**Berkeley Progressive Alliance  
Candidate Questionnaire  
Nov 2016 Election**

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Candidate for what office: Mayor of Berkeley  
Campaign Web site: www.jesse.vote

**1. Why are you running for mayor / city council?**

The biggest challenge facing Berkeley, and my top priority, is the housing affordability crisis. Housing costs continue to rise each month, with rents increasing by roughly 25% in just one year, and the cost of a single family home exceeding \$1 million dollars. Escalating housing prices are putting pressure on long-term tenants who face harassment or eviction. The limited supply of housing, in particular affordable housing, has resulted in widespread gentrification throughout the city, with low-income and middle-income families and individuals being priced out. The housing crisis is changing the face of Berkeley, and we are losing our economic and racial diversity. As an example, the African American population has decreased from 20% in 1970 to roughly 9% in 2015. The soul of our city is at stake, and Berkeley must remain an inclusive, diverse place.

A related challenge is the widening income gap and addressing income inequality. Berkeley holds the distinction of having the biggest wealth gap in the Bay Area. With wages not keeping up with the cost of housing or cost of living, many workers in Berkeley cannot afford to live in the city they work in and are forced to commute long distances. According to a recent report by the City of Berkeley Office of Economic Development, only 33% of those who work in Berkeley live in the city. We need to address the growing jobs- housing imbalance. Central to this is raising the minimum wage to a living wage. On the City Council, I co- sponsored the original proposal to study a municipal minimum wage. While the current minimum wage is \$11, going up to \$12.53 in October 2016, it is not enough for people to support their families. I advocated for raising the minimum wage to \$15 and support the ballot measure to reach \$15 by 2017 with a cost of living increase thereafter, and paid sick leave.

Berkeley also faces many other challenges including a growing homeless population, addressing the achievement gap in our public schools, tackling health disparities, addressing growing infrastructure needs, and tackling the climate crisis. As a Councilmember, I have worked hard to address these issues, and as the next

Mayor, I will engage the community and Council in developing innovative solutions to these challenges. More importantly, Berkeley has a long tradition of being a progressive trailblazer, but it has lost its step in recent years. I will provide innovative, fresh leadership so that Berkeley leads the way in tackling the challenges cities face in the 21st century.

Berkeley is at a crossroads, and this election will decide the future of the city. I am running for Mayor to ensure that Berkeley moves forward and everyone shares in our prosperity, while continuing our tradition of progressive leadership.

**2. Why do you think you'd make a good mayor / council member?**

I have extensive experience in public service. Before my election to the City Council, I not only worked as a Legislative Aide to a Berkeley City Councilmember, but I also served on a number of Berkeley's elected and appointed Boards and Commissions. Through these positions I gained valuable experience about city issues and about how city government operates. I also built working relationships with city officials and staff and learned strategies to get progressive legislation passed. I have applied this experience in my role as a City Councilmember, and have been one of the most effective members of the Council, drafting and passing numerous bills on a wide range of issues.

During my 14 years of involvement in the Berkeley community I helped initiate and pass numerous legislative proposals and programs such as: the "Bear Pass" transit pass for UC Berkeley faculty and staff; amendments to the city's Condominium Conversion Ordinance to protect sitting tenants and expand homeownership; increasing monetary assistance to tenants who are evicted; helping secure funding for hundreds of units of permanently affordable housing; strengthening the City's Climate Action; creating new Police Department policy to discourage vehicle impounds of undocumented drivers; drafting the city's Downtown Area Plan; implementing a policy prohibiting racial profiling by City Police; streamlining permitting rules and supporting small businesses; crafting historic police reforms on government surveillance, mutual aide, and ICE-non cooperation, just to name a few.

**3. What are the key issues that the City Council should address?**

**My Plan for a Berkeley that Works for Everyone**

- Tackle the housing affordability crisis
- Address homelessness through innovative solutions and more housing
- Improve public safety and disaster preparedness
- Promote universal childhood education so our children have a foundation for success
- Create a world class city with improved streets, storm drains, parks and other public facilities
- Raise the Minimum wage NOW, not five years from now as other candidates prefer
- Close the gap in health, education and economic disparities
- Promote environmental sustainability and fight climate change
- Promote innovation in government and our economy
- Continue to realize the potential of our Downtown
- Promote fiscal sustainability, while ensuring equitable distribution of city services

**4. Do you support the**

[Berkeley Progressive Alliance's mission statement and progressive agenda?](#)

- a) Is there anything you would add?      Yes X      No       
 What would you add? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Is there anything you would not support? Yes           No X       
 Which Items would you not support? \_\_\_\_\_

Please visit our [mission statement and agenda](#).

(Please limit your response to 250 words)

## Housing:

5. Do you support The Berkeley Progressive Alliance's Affordable Housing Platform?

Yes  No

6. Do you support our proposed funding sources for affordable housing?

Yes  No

a) Is there anything you would **add**? Yes  No

- Develop an Affordable Housing Funding Plan, which identifies funding from a variety of sources: Transfer Tax Surplus, General Fund revenues, Transient Occupancy Tax, State and federal monies, community benefit funds. Set a goal of creating 500 units of low-income housing over the next five years.
- Explore the creation of the Speculation Tax, which would increase the real property transfer tax for multi-unit properties of two units or more which turn over within a year of purchase to 24 percent and 14 percent if property is sold within five years.
- Explore a land acquisition fund to purchase properties for use by the City or non-profit agencies for affordable housing.
- Explore ways to capture vacant units for housing, including through the Small Sites Program.
- Study the creation of a Housing Balance policy: A Housing Balance ordinance could ensure that at least half of all new housing is affordable before allowing market rate housing.
- Build more housing for students at locations close to the UC campus as called for in the Southside Plan. Work with the Berkeley Student Cooperative to expand relatively affordable co-op housing.
- Prioritize public owned land for affordable housing, consistent with General Plan. Policy LU-32 which sets a goal of 50% of the housing units built on the Ashby BART station site to be affordable to low and very-low income households.
- Expand funding for eviction defense services to keep existing tenants in their homes.

b) Is there anything you would **not support**? Yes  No

Which Items would you not support? \_\_\_\_\_

(Please limit your response to 250 words)

My of these proposals are ideas I have brought forward to the City Council but have been voted down by Capitelli and the Council majority. I will continue to fight for progressive solutions to affordable housing and addressing income inequality.

**Our affordable housing platform:**

<http://berkeleyprogressivealliance.org/2016/02/26/affordable-housing-platform/>

7. Will you commit to **supporting the candidates for Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board** chosen at the Tenant Convention on April 24? Yes  No

**Ballot Measures:**

8. Will you support the **ballot measure to increase the Berkeley minimum wage** to \$15 in 2017 and provide paid sick leave? Yes  No   
(See pdf attached to e-mail for info.)

I am part of the Coalition for Working Families and helped gather signatures to qualify the initiative for the ballot. The Council majority's failure to act to lift people out of poverty is completely unacceptable and is widening our income gap. I will actively campaign for this measure.

9. Will you support **the ballot measure to increase the business license tax** paid by landlords with five or more units to pay for affordable housing, with an increase sufficient to generate \$4 million a year? Yes  No

This tax is actually something both Steve Barton and I conceived four years ago. I have fought for four years to get this on the ballot, and now there is a broad coalition forming to support the Windfall Profits tax. I am a co-chair of the Committee for Safe and Affordable Homes which is working to get this on the ballot and will actively and proudly campaign for this modest proposal to increase revenue for affordable housing and homelessness prevent.

10. Will you support **a ballot measure to implement public financing** of local elections for Mayor and City Council? Yes  No

I strongly support the proposed public financing measure. I have support every effort at City Council to get this measure on the ballot. Public financing is essential to level the playing field in Berkeley elections, help reduce the influence of big corporate dollars and promote a diversity of candidates.

**Info about this proposed initiative:**

<http://records.cityofberkeley.info/Agenda/Meetings/ViewMeeting?id=178&doctype=1>

See Item 12, with supporting documents in the April 5 Council agenda.  
(Please limit comments, if any, to 75 words on questions 9, 10 and 11)

- 11, Berkeley has a rich history of being a community that is economically and racially diverse. What do you think the city could do immediately **to stop the displacement** of African-Americans and other people of color?

In 1970, African Americans made up 23.5% of Berkeley's population, but in 2010, that dropped to 10%. Much of our city's history and culture is being erased as a consequence of the housing affordability crisis, especially in South Berkeley where families who have lived there for generations are being priced out their homes. More must be done to protect our city's diversity and culture. I support expanding

Measure Y protections and assistance to those facing Ellis Act evictions, along with prioritizing affordable housing for those at the lowest income levels.

**12. How will you campaign in your race?**

- a) If you run, will you **knock on doors** and talk to voters? Yes  No
- b) Will you **call and email people** and ask them to contribute money to your campaign?  
Yes  No
- c) About how many **hours a week** would you devote to campaigning between Labor Day (Sept 5) and Election Day (November 8)?

As much time as needed to win. I announced my candidacy on October 22, 2015 and have been actively campaigning since then.

(Please limit response to 11. to 75 words)

**How to submit your responses to the Questionnaire:** Type your responses; they may be in a separate document, using the question numbers. Be sure to include your name, contact info and what you are running for. Then e-mail the completed document containing your responses to: [berkeleyprogressivealliance@gmail.com](mailto:berkeleyprogressivealliance@gmail.com)

**Deadline for submitting completed questionnaires: Friday, April 22**

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