

# EL CERRITO DEMOCRATIC CLUB

## AD15 CANDIDATE ESSAY RESPONSES

### Other Questions

Each response was to be approximately 60 word response.

AK = Andy Katz, Attorney, Law Offices of Andy Katz

BB = Ben Bartlett, Lawyer, Re: Public Good

BW = Buffy Wicks,

CS = Cheryl Sudduth, Consultant, M<sub>2</sub>E<sub>2</sub> Inc.

DK = Dan Kalb, City Councilmember, City of Oakland

JA = Judy Appel, Senior Grants Manager, James Ford Foundation

JB = Jovanka Beckles, Mental Health Specialist, Contra Costa County

OP = Owen Poindexter, Freelance Writer, self employed

RPO = Rochelle Pardue-Okimoto, Registered Nurse, Sutter Health

### 1) Under what circumstances, if any, do you favor the death penalty? Please explain your position

AK: I do not support the death penalty. It is overall more costly than a life incarceration, and cannot be applied equitably from a racial justice and civil rights perspective. Wrongful convictions are known to occur, and can lead to wrongful executions. The United States is the last industrialized country to allow for the death penalty, and should abolish it.

BB: There are no circumstances under which I favor the death penalty. There is nothing about the use of the death penalty that represents justice or rehabilitation. The death penalty is administered by a criminal justice system that is rife with flaws, racism, and wrongful convictions and we cannot allow this system to kill.

BW: I do not support the death penalty under any circumstances.

CS: I do not favor the death penalty.

DK: I am and have always been 100% OPPOSED to the Death Penalty. I am proud that my first campaign for city council joined forces with the YES on 34 (death penalty repeal) campaign to do joint precinct walking. The Death Penalty is on its face immoral!

JA: I don't support the death penalty. The state should not be in the business of murder. My wife has represented men and women on death row for two decades. I am deeply familiar with the complexities in the lives of her clients on death row. This skewed spending equation needs to be fixed and invest in early interventions and support.

JB: I do not favor the death penalty.

OP: No circumstances. The sense of justice we feel in certain rare instances pales in comparison to the injustices committed in the name of this policy. It has also not been shown to be a deterrent or to even save money for the state. I support ending the death penalty in California and nationwide.

RPO: I do not support the death penalty.

### 2) Under what circumstances should affordable housing be mandated in market-rate housing projects?

AK: The State should require cities to implement plans to meet their Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA), including affordable housing allocations. Cities should be able to have discretion regarding how to achieve these allocations, but should be held accountable. Many cities would likely join the growing number of cities requiring inclusionary zoning or impact fees to support affordable housing.

BB: All circumstances. My housing platform proposes that municipalities must meet their affordable housing obligations or pay into regional funds to be used to develop affordable housing projects elsewhere. I believe that communities can choose how they would like to meet these obligations. They can develop projects that are entirely affordable or they can include affordable housing within market-rate housing projects.

BW: First and foremost, we need more funds for affordable housing. I believe the passage of the housing package last fall was a critical development, and I would actively explore other ways for financing and speeding up the development of affordable housing (e.g. Prop 13 reform) as well as create a California Public Infrastructure Bank.

CS: Affordable housing must be adequately defined; projections indicate we need to build 200k units to accommodate the estimated 2-5% expected growth so the mandate needs to exist now to build, build, build. To avoid displacement, the mandate must include housing at all income levels, including low-moderate-market. I propose a 10-20-70 ratio with developer incentives and streamlined permit processes.

DK: I believe that every city and county should require below-market housing units in or immediately adjacent to new market-rate housing developments. One exception might be for jurisdictions that are meeting their assigned Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) numbers for all the below-market categories.

JA: Every new development should follow the inclusionary housing guidelines and build the maximum affordable units. Every city should meet their affordable housing requirements and that processes to accomplish this, while taking CEQA and other considerations into account. For example, El Cerrito's Special Plan for San Pablo is a great example of increasing housing stock, while keeping units affordable.

JB: During California's current housing crisis affordable housing should be mandated in all market-rate housing projects.

OP: Any project over four units should have a certain percent mandated toward affordable housing. Mixed-income housing is economically viable and counteracts income segregation. These mandates can allow the growth of market rate to pull affordable housing along with it.

RPO: I would support mandates in transit rich areas and in areas where communities have failed to provide adequate affordable housing.

### 3) What hurdles prevent California converting to a no-fault compensation system that reduces business liability, costs and exposure while increasing health care outcomes?

AK: A no-fault compensation system would likely either fail to adequately compensate for injury for some, even if it improved certainty of recovery for all, or would increase liability insurance rates. The no-fault compensation system in workers' compensation ends up rationing benefits and delaying care. Our civil justice system requires a functional insurance market and increased court funding.

BB: Concerns regarding the evaluation of negligence under the no-fault system as well how the no-fault system could hold doctors accountable for repeated violations and/or negligence are both hurdles. Another is a question of financing the system as well as patient and doctor buy-in.

BW: I support single payer health care and believe that it would ensure every California has quality health care. It has the potential to lower cost, confusion, and uncertainty for citizens. It would ensure health care security for working people, make our companies more competitive, and free Californians from being tethered to their employer for health care thereby allowing them to do what [Truncated Response]

CS: The biggest hurdle is our society is so litigious so the compensation has to be high enough to warrant to be enticing; Tort reform is easy; insurance companies have to sign on. Medical Associations have to 'buy in'.

DK: Like many ideas, no-fault systems of insurance coverage have their plusses and minuses. Making sure the victims of bad actors are held accountable is important to deter harmful behavior and deter distribution of faulty products.

JA: Our most vulnerable populations are also our most disenfranchised. When these communities are impacted by unsafe or exploitative practices, they are the ones who have the least access to recourse or compensation. I support efforts made

to ensure that those in our communities have a resource that will amplify their voices and help them navigate the often Byzantine legal process.

JB: The cost of such a program and finding a revenue stream to support it.

OP: This is a political challenge, one that would be much easier with comprehensive campaign finance reform. If politicians aren't worried about losing donors—in this case from the insurance industry among others—they will be more open to common sense policy such as a no-fault system.

RPO: In California, the workers compensation program is a no fault system. I would need to learn more about this possible conversion to elaborate on potential hurdles.

#### 4) What specific legislative changes would you introduce to restore full service health care hospital(s) to northern Assembly District 15?

AK: I stood with the community at rallies to keep Doctor's Medical Center from closing and am leading efforts to save Alta Bates. I will introduce legislation to provide for an equitable share of state funding for hospital districts that are separate from County Hospitals, and if needed, authorizing legislation for the West Contra Costa Healthcare District, or a new District or Joint Powers Authority to finance a new public hospital.

BB: I support repealing commercial protections under Proposition 13 and using those tax dollars to fund healthcare. Through the creation of a state bank, rather than depositing the billions of dollars of California's annual tax revenues in private banks, California could put those funds to work to fund things such as restoring full-service healthcare hospital(s).

BW: I would strongly support laws that declare emergency services to be "essential public services" and champion budgets that provide funding to emergency departments and trauma center to provide care to the uninsured and indigent. I will also lead oversight efforts to ensure compliance as it relates to these matters. I also support SB 687, which would require the consent of the Attorney General [Truncated Response]

CS: Mandate County provide trauma-supported medical center within five miles of this marginalized community y build operational expenses into the county budget even if a private/public partnership & take steps to ensure legislative budget includes adequate funding for this impacted area to alleviate medical deserts in marginalized communities resulting in deaths of Black, Brown, & impoverished people at the expense of profit margins.

DK: My mother lived in San Pablo for nine years very near Doctors Hospital, so I am keenly aware of the need to have a full-service hospital in West County. I would require that a specified state agency must sign-off on any hospital closure before the closure can go forward. And if there would be an increased risk to residents, the agency would be allowed to deny the closure. Restoring full-service hospital would require new funding.

JA: I will continue to work hard to keep Alta Bates in our community so we don't lose it. However, if we are not successful, I will work together with local government to develop a plan to bring a full service hospital back to the area, including exploring the use of incentives to bring a hospital back into our community.

JB: I would support current legislation that establishes regulations to prevent medical deserts, where locals do not have an emergency room or quality medical institution within a reasonable distance. I would work with local regions to prepare incentives to bring health care providers and institutions to the area.

OP: As we push for universal healthcare, we should include the provision that proximity to a hospital is part and parcel with healthcare access. From there, we can mandate a maximum distance a population center can be from a hospital, and work to find funding for a hospital in Contra Costa County.

RPO: We need a mandate on providing hospital care to locations that are hospital deserts. We need the state or the state partnered with the counties to locate the holes in the system and address them.\_

#### 5) Under what circumstances should a school district support charter schools?

AK: When the proposed school satisfies a unique need that the district does not meet, has a strong financial plan, commits to ongoing accountability and transparency, supports comparably or better paid union labor, implements

accessibility and nondiscrimination policies and enrollment practices, and does not impair the district's ability to manage its enrollment and facilities planning.

BB: Charter schools should be supported when they have true measurable innovation and outcomes and when they are subjected to the same rules and regulations as public schools, regarding population. The guiding determination should be to protect the integrity of the public education system for all children. All schools should be governed with transparency and accountability in mind.

BW: Charters can serve a need in our community, however we need more transparency and accountability given our taxpayer dollars fund these schools. We need to outlaw for-profit charter schools and under no circumstance should we consider vouchers for private schools. Charter schools should be subject to the Brown Act and the Political Reform Act. This will enable parents and the community [Truncated Response]

CS: Charter schools should be supported when they meet a specific gap that public schools are not fulfilling. The charter schools should still be held to a high level of educational standards. A prime example in West County is Middle College Prep at CCC.

DK: That should be up to the elected school board. Certain criteria should be specified in advance. Any new charter should be required to act like a public school in terms of transparency and accepting children with all types of challenges.

JA: As the public education candidate in this race, I have and will always support and prioritize public education funding. Charter schools take resources away from public school students, resources that could provide higher salaries for teachers, more classified staff in the classroom and ensure that all students have access to quality public education.

JB: I do not support charter schools.

OP: The charter school must select a representative or underserved population of students (not selecting rich or high achieving kids) and report any findings from the school about novel methods of education. We should also reform the charter system so that all schools produce annual reports on student achievement, and we hold each school to strict quality standards under threat of their charter being revoked, among other reforms.

RPO: I support a moratorium on new charter schools in our district. We need make sure that the remaining traditional schools are not going to be stripped of funding.

## 6) Should Proposition 13 be partially repealed (Split-roll) or fully repealed, and why?

AK: Proposition 13's provisions should be repealed for commercial property tax exemptions from reassessment to raise \$8 – 11 billion for the state budget and to restore funding to our public schools and city services. Local voters should be able to decide what tax rate best funds schools and local services. Its requirement of a 2/3 vote of the legislature to adopt new revenue measures should also be reduced to a majority vote.

BB: I support partial (split-roll) repeal. Commercial property owners need to pay their fair share. I am more cautious with respect to repealing protections for residential property. I have concerns about seniors on fixed-incomes and homeowners living on the margins or at risk of displacement. I recognize the inequities caused by Prop 13, but this is a complex issue and deserves a nuanced approach.

BW: I strongly support Prop 13 reform, requiring commercial properties (with a small business carve out) to pay property taxes at their market rate. Doing so will generate an additional \$11.4 billions in revenue which can be used to finance more affordable housing, as well as investments in local schools, roads, and other public services.

CS: Prop. 13 should be partially repealed based on commercial tax structures, exempting small businesses (those grossing <\$500k annually). However, we should carefully review the unintended consequences of such repeal on small businesses y consumers so as not to create further market imbalance or higher prices (raised rents, tenant fees, prices from large corporation passed through due to higher tax bills.)

DK: I am a long-time supporter of reforming the commercial side of Prop. 13 (i.e. Split roll). For fairness and to raise needed funds for education and other vital needs, we must ensure that large businesses pay their fair share so the burden of paying taxes in our state is not overly weighted on individuals and families. Proud to be endorsed by Assemblymember Phil Ting, a Bay Area leader in the fight to reform Prop. 13.

JA: I am a strong proponent of reforming Prop 13 through the Make it Fair split tax proposal. I believe we need to end the supermajority requirement for all revenue generating proposals and end the corporate tax giveaway, which allows commercial property owner to avoid paying their fair share of property taxes.

JB: Prop 13 should be split-roll repealed to ensure that commercial real estate property owners are paying their fair share for owning in California.

OP: Full repeal. It would make sense as a next step to treat commercial and residential property differently under the tax system, but we need greater flexibility in property taxation and assessments across the board. Commercial loopholes should be removed and residential property should be reassessed at a predictable schedule. We can also raise property or land taxes for some lots.

RPO: I believe we need to start with a partial repeal, but ultimately we need to move toward adjusting the tax on private property as well. I believe we currently have the political will to have a partial repeal.

## 7) What types of renter protections should be mandated at the state level?

AK: I support Just Cause for Eviction protections, protections against harassment, and the repeal of Costa-Hawkins. The state should advance health and safety standards and model city and county testing services to address the growing problem of mold exposure.

BB: Increased funding for anti-displacement programs like eviction defense and legal advocates. Small Sites Acquisition Program to preserve affordable housing. A Tenants Opportunity to Purchase Act to prevent displacement. A Tenant Protection Ordinance to guard against tenant harassment. Prohibit renter discrimination based on source of income/section 8 status. and statewide just cause protections.

BW: We have to guard aggressively against displacement and create a safety net for low income families, who are our most vulnerable residents on the brink of instability. Two out of five Californians live in or around the poverty line. Three out of four Californians can't weather an emergency expense of \$700 or more. Nearly half of renters spend 35% of their income on rent. [Truncated Response]

CS: Enhance fair housing & anti-discrimination policies; mandate displacement: tenant protections + displacement disincentives, minimize harm to owners (esp. small property); help establish 'no-cost mediation'; offer homeowner incentives for permitting renters right of 1st refusal to purchase rentals up for sale, require homeowners to assist those displaced w/placement in current area. Ensure municipalities meet demand (per RINA) w/o displacing: 10-20-70 (low-moderate-market) housing.

DK: There must be fundamental eviction protections for all renters. We must repeal or substantially reform/modernize Costa Hawkins so local jurisdictions have the tools to protect their renters from displacement.

JA: With the recent failure of AB1506 to get to the floor of the legislature, we need to repeal or reform Costa Hawkins to address our state's ongoing housing crisis. I am also open to exploring statewide efforts to encourage rent stabilization in municipalities that currently do not have it, while ensuring that local jurisdictions maintain control.

JB: I support the repeal of Causta Hawkins and Just Cause eviction protection for all California tenants.

OP: The state should provide legal representation for all people facing eviction. We should have blanket rent control, with municipalities allowed to make adjustments. Housing discrimination should be actively enforced. In addition to repealing the Costa Hawkins Act, we should repeal the Ellis Act as well.

RPO: Repeal of Costa-Hawkins and just cause eviction protections need to be implemented statewide.

## 8) What are the two most serious issues facing AD 15 communities?

AK: 1) Our schools and safety-net programs are underfunded. We need to increase state revenue so we can lead the nation in education spending instead of California ranking near the bottom. 2) The loss of Doctor's Medical Center and

potential loss of Alta Bates Hospital poses a serious challenge for AD 15 communities. I will continue to lead efforts to protect and restore hospital services.

BB: The housing crisis and the overall creation of a new underclass, largely populated by people of color. Property values and housing demand have created record-breaking rents and displacement, altering the economic and cultural landscapes of AD15. The median worth for families of color is projected to drop to zero within the next 55 years, creating a treacherous foundation for poverty, instability, and loss of freedom.

BW: There are many issues facing Assembly District 15, but I believe housing and education are two of the most critical issues. The crisis we face on these issues has a reverberating effect on our criminal justice system, our environment, the economic security of our residents and the general health and well-being of our community. Here's what I want to do [Truncated Response]

CS: A. Social Injustice: Housing insecurity affecting every aspect of life: health, environment, education & may impact interaction with criminal justice system. A pay-for-liberty money bail system. Healthcare systems tying well-being to one's wealth. Police misconduct. Youth in adult prisons.

B. Environmental Injustice in Marginalized Communities: existing/growing food deserts, disproportionate exposure to hazardous conditions (landfills, lead/other toxins in water, paint, toys, building materials).

DK: • Homelessness & Housing Affordability • Environmental Health, Justice and Stewardship and Quality of Life in our communities

JA: Affordability for working families- Working families are getting priced out of this district, unable to buy or rent in communities they've lived in for decades. We must protect our working families. Public Education- There are so many inequities in our education system, especially among low income students of color. We must craft policies that addresses student needs from cradle to career.

JB: The current affordability crisis and education standards are two of the most serious issues facing AD 15 communities at this time. We must work on keeping our working families and long time residents in the cities they have lived in for generations and where they work. Public schools in the region are losing students and funds to local charter schools and we must work on regulating charter schools and securing education funding.

OP: 1) Financial insecurity. This touches on housing and an uncertain job market, but the core issue is that people young and old live in a great deal of uncertainty when it comes to covering their basic needs. 2) Housing. We are losing long-time community members and potential new residents because the rent is too damn high. Stable communities become vibrant communities and we should work to make that happen.

RPO: The lack of affordable housing including homelessness. The lack of access to healthcare, education, and clean air in some communities. The potential rupture of the Hayward Fault.