

Q1

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Q2

*What are your qualifications for District Attorney?*

As a Deputy Attorney General at the California Attorney General's Office, I'm the only candidate for District Attorney who is both a prosecutor and who manages a team of prosecutors—a critical combination for the management position of DA. For the past seven years, I have worked in the Criminal Division of the AG's Office, handling over 400 cases in state and federal court - from trials to arguments before the California Supreme Court. A graduate of Yale College and Harvard Law School and former Ninth Circuit clerk, I have also served as a policy advisor for then-Attorney General Kamala Harris and have testified before the California State Assembly and State Senate on issues ranging from human trafficking to environmental protection. In addition to this work experience, I will bring to the role my lifelong passion for criminal justice, a passion that traces to my mom's work as a nurse at a juvenile hall along the central coast of California. After years caring for youth at the Hall, my mom persuaded us to become a foster family. We took in a dozen kids over the course of a decade, adopting two: my sister Elissa, and my brother Ian. Through that experience, I saw firsthand the effects of trauma and of poverty, the cycles of crime, how the deck can be stacked against you from day one. But I also saw amazing people like my mom working within the justice system to intervene early, to make sure victims got the justice they deserved while defendants got the help they needed to make sure they never reoffended. Those varied experiences, and the inspiration I draw from saints working inside the justice system make me the right person for the job.

Q3

*Would you support creation of Environmental Justice Unit at the DA's Office to investigate and prosecute cases related to pollution or contamination? Please describe the reasons for your answer below.*

Not only do I support the creation of an Environmental Justice Unit at the DA's Office, I have been publicly advocating for such a unit for years! When I interned at the San Francisco District Attorney's Office in 2005, then-DA Kamala Harris launched a fully-staffed Environmental Justice Unit to investigate and prosecute crimes related to oil spills, hazardous waste disposal, and air and water pollution. Having been there from the start and knowing its successes, I was incredibly disappointed to learn that the EJ unit had since been phased out, leaving the office unable to investigate environmental injustices like the soil contamination saga playing out at the Hunter's Point Shipyard. If San Francisco is going to be a leader on these issues, we need to restore the Environmental Justice Unit immediately. I will do so within 6 months of taking office if elected District Attorney. This proposal has been a centerpiece of my campaign, as seen in my Chronicle op-ed with Theo Ellington in May 2018

(<https://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/openforum/article/Hunters-Point-is-a-textbook-case-of-environmental-12917354.php>) and this press release from August 2018

(<https://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2018/08/29/18817196.php>). We must put an end to industrial activity and pollution that targets low-income communities and communities of color. And we must send a clear message to those who perceive such communities are voiceless in the political process that they are mistaken.

Q4

*What would your priorities for an Environmental Justice Unit at the DA's Office if one existed be? How would you identify cases?*

My number one priority for the Environmental Justice Unit would be a full-scale investigation of the Hunters Point Shipyard soil contamination saga. I, for one, do not trust Donald Trump's EPA and U.S. Attorney's Office to adequately protect our environment or enforce the laws. However, I will also work with environmental organizations, regulators, and community groups to investigate and prosecute air, water, and soil pollution more generally; illegal dumping of trash and construction debris on our streets; improper disposal of hazardous waste; and violations of workplace protections for workers (frequently undocumented people) exposed to hazardous materials. I will also work with District Attorneys and regulators throughout the region and state to build large enforcement actions like past successes involving underground storage tanks and Big Box store hazardous waste disposal. Finally, I will leverage my relationships with the California District Attorney Association's Environmental Circuit Prosecutor Program to ensure our EJ attorneys have the training and resources they need to be effective. It is time for the San Francisco DA's Office to reclaim the mantle as one of the top environmental enforcement agencies in California.

Q5

*What types of remedies would you seek if you were to create Environmental Justice Unit, e.g., probation, fines, jail time?*

I will empower my Environmental Justice Unit to consider all available remedies for environmental crimes, including restitution, fines, probation, and yes, jail time. As we saw with the Wall Street Collapse of 2008, for many bad actors, a civil fine is just a cost of doing business – it is the threat of jail time that really scares them and deters predatory behavior. If we truly want to change the behavior of industries that put our air, water, and soil at risk, we need a District Attorney who isn't afraid to send that strong deterrent message. I'm not afraid to do so.

Q6

*Would you work with the City Attorney's Office to pursue cases through an Environmental Justice Unit from both a criminal and civil perspective? Please describe your reasons for your answer below.*

Yes. One of my first meetings after filing to run for DA was with City Attorney Dennis Herrera. Among the issues we discussed was the need for greater collaboration between our two offices on issues ranging from environmental protection to fraudulent evictions. Therefore, my Environmental Justice Unit would include a designated liaison to the City Attorney's Office to handle case referrals and to coordinate civil and criminal enforcement actions. Working together, we can ensure effective deterrence for those who would foul our air, water, soil, and people.

Q7

*Would you work with local environmental groups to coordinate on citizen enforcement actions and criminal prosecution through an Environmental Justice Unit from both a criminal and civil perspective?*

Yes. Many of my ideas for the Environmental Justice Unit were generated in consultation with local environmental groups and leaders (like Stacey Geis at Earth Justice), and I will maintain those relationships with the local organizations working on the frontlines of these issues. I saw first-hand the tremendous impact of local environmental groups when I became involved in the fight to end fracking in California. I grew up on my family's organic farm along the central coast of California. In May 2014, I got word that a Texas-based oil company was planning to frack 8 new oil wells in the beautiful Los Padres National Forest that backed up to our family farm. After looking into it, I discovered that oil companies had been fracking there for over 25 years without environmental impact reports and with little oversight. I reached out to several local environmental

groups, and we started an online petition to gather signatures and public comments opposed to the fracking proposal. Working together with these groups, and with no budget, we gathered over 3,000 public comments from local residents calling for proper environmental review of the proposal. We delivered these comments to the Forest Service, as well as the local congressional and state legislative representatives. We even authored the California Democratic Party's platform plank against fracking in state and national forests. I'm proud to report that five years later, the fracking project is still on hold as regulators review every single public comment. For me, it reaffirmed the impact that a few community groups, working together toward a common goal, can have. As District Attorney, I look forward to working with groups like the League of Conservation Voters to achieve similar outcomes and protect our people and our environment.

Q8

*Why should SFLCV endorse you?*

It is not enough simply to elect officials who will be passive supporters of environmental initiatives. The decline of the SFDA's Environmental Justice Unit is proof of that. Instead, we need environmental champions who have shown through their record and priorities that they will work tirelessly to pursue a robust environmental agenda. I will work every day to be that type of District Attorney, whether it's resurrecting the EJ Unit or working to improve the safety of our streets and public transit systems so that residents will swap their cars for bikes, buses, and other environmentally-friendly modes of transit. And I hope to work with LCV to highlight for the public the important (but under-appreciated) role that DAs can play in environmental protection. My commitment to environmental justice and to a safe, livable city is reflected in our broad array of 100+ endorsers, from California Treasurer Fiona Ma and the San Francisco Firefighters Local 798, to the Latino Democratic Club (#2) and Deputy Sheriffs Association (sole). Our supporters also include many local and state environmental champions like Melanie Nutter, Nick Josefowitz, Sierra Club Bay Area Chair Igor Tregub, Assemblymember Monique Limon, Coastal Commissioner Erik Howell, and Environmental Caucus Chair RL Miller. I would be honored to earn your support and work together in the months and years to come!