San Francisco Young Democrats | Local Questionnaire - November 2024

(Mayor, Supervisor, District Attorney, City Attorney, Treasurer, Sheriff, SFUSD, CCSF)

Please answer the following in 300 words or less:

1. Please answer these informational questions:
    1. What is your full name? **Laurance Lem Lee**
    2. What will be your age on Election Day? **54**
    3. What are your pronouns? **He/him/his**
    4. Are you a registered Democrat? **Yes**
    5. What office are you running for? **SF Board of Education**
    6. Do you have a campaign website? **Yes, https://www.laurancelemlee.com**

2. Why should the San Francisco Young Democrats endorse you for this race?

I am a San Francisco native and public school graduate who is ready to give back to his school district. My 7th grade algebra teacher encouraged me to do a state math contest, and I won first place. Thanks to my educators, I went to Lowell, Harvard, and Stanford and had a great career in biotech. I wish every young San Franciscan all the opportunities to be their best selves.

I was with the school board recalls from the first day and gathered hundreds of signatures. I brought back oversight to the $744 million in SFUSD facilities bond funding spending and am now in my 2nd year of the Citizens Bond Oversight Committee pushing for greater transparency. I was with the teachers from the first night they did a sleepover to protest the terrible EmPower payroll software. I was with students when they rallied for student safety and more services for mental health.

All us candidates want to balance the budget and to improve student outcomes. Only I have the practical experience of looking through the meeting documents to find millions of dollars of wasteful consultant spending. Only I have been working with the district auditors for years. Only I have called for a full forensic audit of how money is being spent.

Of all the candidates, only I have been pushing to reduce chronic absenteeism. We can follow the lead of successful school districts throughout the state by reaching out and responding to families. I am the only candidate who has been working with folks in the bay area that have been bringing kids up to grade level in literacy. I am the only candidate working to save popular programs like language immersion.

Endorse the only SFUSD K-12 graduate.

3. How do you personally uplift young people through your work?
    1. Do you commit to paying the interns on your campaign?

        Yes

4. Do you accept campaign contributions from the SF Deputy Sheriff's Association, SF Police Officers' Association, or leaders within those unions? If so, who?

    No

5. What is one example of a piece of legislation that you supported that came from an office you might not typically agree with?

    I have supported Supervisor Chan's motion to return $58 million of budget cuts to children and youth.

6. If elected, how would you empower and prioritize the needs of young people in your district, and encourage their participation in the political landscape?
    1. Do you commit to meeting periodically with SFYD to check the progress made on your commitments made in this questionnaire?

    Yes, absolutely. Young people are our future, and deserve a say in our public school system's progress. I remember being inspired to work in public service when I was a teen here.

Please go into more detail on the following questions (you may go beyond 300 words):

7. Please share your top three priorities affecting San Francisco, why they are important, and how you plan to use your platform to advocate for them if elected.

1) Student educational experience. We need to get our students reading and doing math at grade level. We can do this work by bringing kids back to the classroom, supporting their mental health support, and giving them proven curricula. I am the only one with the knowledge and network to have us make good progress in a year's time.

2) Averting a state takeover of the SFUSD school system. We absolutely can balance the SFUSD budget in a thoughtful way that avoids disparate impact. Some schools will need to close, but we will ensure that the process is as smooth as possible, and that Black and Latino families are not disproportionately impacted. I will analyze the data, and make sure that community input is truly incorporated.

3) Bringing a culture of accountability and transparency. We have for too long put major concerns under the rug– from leaking roofs, to unsafe schools, to lead in the drinking water, to countless other examples. We have to be honest about past failures and publicly commit on ways to improve the lives of our students and educators. I have been doing this work for years on the CBOC.

***SFUSD BOE & CCSF BOT ONLY*:**

8. What is your vision of how to best support students, educators, and staff?

We've got to bring improvements to the student experience– from being in school, to feeling safe, to having mental health support, to learning middle school algebra. The district has to work to make life easier for the principals and educators and the Commissioners can push that agenda from the top.

9. Students have advocated for significant investments and improvements to school resources, including, but not limited to: mental health services, school safety infrastructure, and academic support. How will you deliver on these priorities?

We absolutely must ensure that our schools are a safe environment where our students can learn and thrive. We must provide mental health support for struggling students – I myself received much needed support from my counselor Ms. Catelli in tenth grade, while my parents were going through a divorce. In order for our students to succeed, they need the right environment. I was with students when they rallied on a school day for better school safety and more mental health support. I will keep pushing for ways to increase staffing and resources to make progress in these areas.

10. Do you support school site closures? If so, please explain how you'll support affected communities during and after the closures.

School closures will unfortunately be necessary in order to balance the SFUSD budget and to avert a state takeover. I will be watching the dollars to see that we will do what is necessary and not bring any further unneeded pain. I will push for fuller transparency as many parents and educators are anxious and still in the dark. I will ensure that the community feedback process extends all the way to which schools close, how people will transition, and how we will go about growing student enrollment.

11. Disrupted by a pandemic and recalls, SFUSD and CCSF have been in fiscal crisis for years. If elected, how will you ensure SFUSD's/CCSF's financial security for the years to come?

It is true that the pandemic-era school closures adversely impacted our fiscal situation. We spent all the one time funds and did not get better outcomes for our students. I will bring the expense in line with the income and make sure the limited funds will be used wisely to support our students as much as possible. I will push for a smaller district administration and less expensive consultants. I have been

working for years to make the facilities department spend our limited bond money better by drilling down on where they have been overspending unwisely.

12. As of today, frictions and disagreements persist between SFUSD's/CCSF's administration and the Board. How will you work to improve collaboration with administration, while also fully holding them accountable for their actions?

I already know dozens of school administrators and district leaders, from advocating for various things over the years. I am always respectful and grateful for their service. And I also have been bringing good changes like in my work on CBOC. We always can begin with gratefulness and respect and get big things better for our students.

13. (SFUSD only) Lowell High School's merit-based admissions process has been under scrutiny for years, in addition to the lottery system as a whole for SFUSD schools. What is your vision on the best process for students going into high school? Do you believe in lottery, merit, or an alternative?

I believe in a merit-based system at Lowell High School, and advocated to restore it. Similarly, RASOTA's selective admissions should continue. We can put more effort to helping all students in middle school and have all high schools have centers of excellence, including in areas that will steer students to careers that don't need college.

Policy Area-Specific Questions:

In a poll of our members, Housing, Transit, and Homelessness were our top policy priorities.

HOUSING

14. California's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) mandates that San Francisco construct 82,069 new residential units between 2023 and 2031. In 2023, SF approved 1,136 unit permits, falling far short of the 9,118/year needed to meet our housing goals.

1. What do you perceive to be a bottleneck to the permitting and construction process and what do you propose to accelerate our local permitting process for both affordable and market-rate projects? What are your thoughts on the recent implementation of SB 423 (Wiener, 2023) in San Francisco?

I support less regulation and shorter review times as means to speed up and reduce the cost of building housing. As a real estate professional who has worked across the state and in other states, there are many models to follow. Wiener's legislation is a commendable addition.

2. Do you support ending the RH-1 zoning designation of single-family homes in favor of establishing sixplex multi-family residential buildings as the city-wide minimum residential density? Do you support the proposed SF Housing Element plan to increase housing density?

   This topic is worthwhile considering and is outside my scope as a Board of Education Commissioner candidate.

3. Do you support increasing residential density within ½ mile of major public transit stops or high-quality transit corridors? If so, to what extent?

I do support such a reasonable idea and am flexible as to what extent and other details.

15. Do you support converting any of our six public golf courses to be zoned for low-income housing? If so, which golf courses would you convert and how many residential units would you propose building? If not, why?

I have no opinion on this topic.

16. Would you modify the existing Rent Ordinance of 1979 which outlines San Francisco's rent control policies? If so, how? If not, why not? *This question can be a yes or no response. If you'd like to elaborate, we encourage you to do so.*

    No.

17. Do you support the roadmap outlined in the SF Climate Action Plan (2021) to have the city achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040? If not, why?

Yes.

18. The SF Climate Action Plan (2021) states that 35% of San Francisco's greenhouse gas emissions come from burning natural gas in building appliances (gas stoves, gas-powered

water heaters, and gas-powered centralized heat). *The following questions can be yes or no responses. If you'd like to elaborate, we encourage you to do so.*

1. Do you support decarbonizing / phasing out / banning the use of carbon-emitting appliances from existing buildings? If so, what is your proposed timeline to accomplish this goal to achieve net zero emissions by 2040?

Yes. I believe we have to balance the timing of this goal with the needs of businesses in these trying economic times.

2. Do you support adopting a building performance policy requiring large commercial buildings to completely transition to efficient and all electric equipment no later than 2035?

Yes.

PUBLIC TRANSIT AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

19. What is your primary mode of transportation?
    1. How often do you take public transit and how often do you ride a bike or other form of micromobility (scooter, skateboard, etc.)?

I take transit several times a week. I occasionally ride a bike and walk almost daily.

2. If you own a car, how often do you use it?

I own a car and use it for several trips during the day.

3. What barriers may prevent you from taking public transit or using micromobility more often/at all?

I would like safer and more regular public transit.

20. Since the pandemic, both MUNI and BART face structural operational budget deficits due to reduced fare box revenue. Without additional operational funding, BART will be forced to make major service cuts, resulting in significant transit worker layoffs and scenarios including the end of weekend service, termination of an entire BART line, or

multiple station closures. MUNI will be forced to gradually end the service equivalent of 15-20 bus lines.

1. What new funding mechanisms do you propose to alleviate these budget shortfalls in both the short term and the long term?

I believe this question is out of scope for my work with the public schools.

2. Do you support SB 532 (Wiener, 2023/24), which would temporarily increase Bay Area bridge tolls by $1.50 from January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2028, in order to prevent major near and medium-term service cuts that agencies around the Bay Area, including but not limited to MUNI and BART, are facing, until additional long-term, sustainable transit operating revenue sources are identified?

I believe this question is out of scope for my work with the public schools.

3. Do you support the ComMUNIty Transit Act on the November 2024 ballot? If not, why?

I believe this question is out of scope for my work with the public schools.

4. Did you support Prop L (2022)? If not, why?

Yes

21. Do you support the construction of the Rapid Bus Lanes included in the ongoing Geary Boulevard Improvement Project between Stanyan and 34th Ave? If not, why?
    1. In the future, would you support the creation of a new Geary and/or 19th Avenue corridor BART or MUNI rail line?

I believe these questions to be out of scope for my work with the public schools.

22. Do you commit to working alongside the SFMTA to install three additional dedicated bus lanes in your district by the end of your term? If so, for which bus lines?

23. Do you commit to working alongside the SFMTA to install three additional protected bike lanes in your district by the end of your term? If so, along which corridors?

24. What was your stance on Prop I in 2022? Do you support the November 2024 ballot measure to transform the Great Highway into a permanent car-free park?

25. Do you support expanding the Slow Streets program in your district to include commercial corridors? What streets within your district, whether commercial or residential corridors, would you expand the program to?

[answer here]

26. SF's BayWheels bike share program has the highest user fees of any bike share program in the United States. Do you support appropriating an additional $5 million dollars from the General Fund General Reserve to the operational budget of the Baywheels bike share program to lower the cost of use for one-time rides and annual memberships? If not, why?
    1. Would you support financing a city owned and operated bike share program (as they have in Montreal) in lieu of a privately owned and privately operated bike share program (as we have in SF today)?

[answer here]

2. Do you support adding additional Baywheels stations in neighborhoods where a network gap currently exists? *This question can be a yes or no response. If you'd like to elaborate, we encourage you to do so.*

[answer here]

27. If you were appointed to represent San Francisco on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), would you support an integrated transit fare structure for the Bay Area's 27 different transit agencies as outlined in SB 917 (Becker, 2022)? If so, how?
    1. Would you support creating a monthly pass for unlimited 9-county-Bay-Area transit system use, expanding upon the recently instituted Clipper BayPass pilot program?

[answer here, REMAINDER OF QUESTIONNAIRE: fill in answers unless noted]

28. The SF Climate Action Plan (2021) states that 47% of San Francisco's greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation (2.20 million mtCO2e). Of these total transportation emissions, 72% come exclusively from gasoline-powered privately owned vehicles (1.58 million mtCO2e).
    1. How do you propose building electric vehicle charging infrastructure for individuals who park their EVs on the street?

    2. Do you support a complete electrification of the City-owned vehicles? If so, what is your proposed timeline? If not, why?

    3. Do you support timing stoplights to prioritize bike and pedestrian use rather than car use?

29. Do you support the removal of the remainder of the Central Freeway stub (the portion of US 101 that diverges from the Bayshore Viaduct near 9th/Van Ness and ends at Market and Octavia Streets) and replacement of the structure with a surface boulevard, transit and active transportation improvements, and increased housing? If not, why?

30. Are you in favor of expanding the use of Autonomous Vehicles (AVs) for ride- hailing services in San Francisco? If so, under what circumstances? If not, why?

HOMELESSNESS

31. Do you believe we need to put additional funding into temporary shelters or permanent supportive housing?

32. How should the City streamline the construction of new Navigation Centers?
    1. Do you commit to building a new Navigation Center within your district by the end of your first term? If so, where?

33. Would you support a bill similar to SB 57 (Wiener, 2022) which would authorize the City and County of San Francisco, the County of Los Angeles, the City of Los Angeles, and the City of Oakland to approve entities to operate overdose prevention programs? If not, why?

34. Did you support Proposition C in 2018? Would you make any amendments to the allocations within the proposition as it was written?

35. Do you support SB 43 (Eggman, 2023), which expands state conservatorship laws by lowering the legal standard for the City or the State to implement a conservatorship on an individual experiencing homelessness, by expanding the definition of "gravely disabled"?

36. Recently, the US Supreme Court decided in *Grants Pass v. Johnson (2024)* that people experiencing homelessness can be criminalized if sleeping outside, even if there are no shelter or housing alternatives available. Should SFPD be able to clear encampments of people experiencing homelessness? If so, under what circumstances?

37. Do you support reforming or repealing the Ellis Act (1985) and the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act (1995)? If so, how would you modify these laws?

38. San Francisco's COVID-19 residential eviction moratorium for non-payment of rent ended on August 29, 2023. Do you support the end of this moratorium? If not, why?
    1. Should any additional services be provided for affected individuals who are evicted as a result of the end of the moratorium?

EXISTENTIAL

39. If you were to modify the existing SF City Charter (effective as of July 1996 and written by Supervisor Barbara Koffman's committee which re-established district-based Supervisorial elections) in any way, how would you do so? *SFYD does not have any specific policy proposals we advocate for on this topic, but we are curious how you perceive the efficacy of our local systems and their strengths and shortcomings.*

    1. Do you believe the Board of Supervisors would benefit from more or fewer districts?

    2. Do you believe the Board of Supervisors would benefit from any at-large Supervisorial districts? If so, why?

    3. Would you further empower the Executive Branch (Mayor) or further empower the Legislative Branch (Board of Supervisors)?

4. There will be two competing measures to enact citywide commission reform in November. The first is to drastically cut city commissions and is proposed by TogetherSF Action, and the second is to create a task force and public process to increase efficiency and reduce the number of commissions by Supervisor Peskin. Which of these do you support? Why or why not?

5. Do you think our existing system for ballot initiatives (also known as “Props”) works well or would you choose to reform it? If so, how?

6. Do you think the Boards of SFUSD and CCSF should remain elected offices? If not, why?

   Yes

7. Do you think the maximum campaign donation should be lowered or raised from $500? If so, to what amount?

8. Do you support lowering the minimum voting age to 16 for municipal elections? If not, why?
