



## The Briones Society

### Candidate Questionnaire, November 2024 Election

#### Background information

1. Name: Keith Freedman
0. Campaign email: mayor@keithfreedman.com
0. Campaign phone number: 415-738-2024
0. Campaign website: <https://mayor.KeithFreedman.com/>
0. Party registration: Dem
0. Are you a veteran of or reservist in the Armed Forces, former or reservist law enforcement officer, or former or reservist first responder?  
No
0. Do you have a criminal record?  
No

#### Priorities and experience

1. If elected, what would be your top three priorities in office?  
Business & Economy  
Poverty  
Education
2. How do you measure success with respect to those three priorities?  
Zero homeless on the streets by the end of 2025  
1000-2000 formerly homeless holding newly created jobs with SF Businesses by end of 2026  
Reopened businesses  
Our reputation on the national stage restored.
3. How has your personal or professional background prepared you to be successful in this office?  
I am a smart and passionate problem-solver bringing innovative ideas from my technology, education and business background. I have a master's degree in computer science and started my career as a software engineer at Los Alamos National



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Laboratory. I am a part-time instructor in computer science at City College of San Francisco and the University of California, Berkeley Extension. I am passionate about bringing opportunities through education to the underserved.

I am a 28-year veteran of San Francisco, and am well-known to many government officials through my community service and activism. My love of this city led me to start a small business almost ten years ago hosting tourists from around the world. As a member of the San Francisco Tourism Improvement District Board, South of Market Business Association, and Co-Chair of HomeSharers Democratic Club I am dedicated to working For A Better San Francisco.



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### Voting record

1. Did you support or oppose the recall of District Attorney Chesa Boudin in 2022?
  - a. Yes
2. Did you support or oppose the recall of BOE Commissioners Alison Collins, Gabriela Lopez, and Faauuga Moliga in 2022?
  - a. Yes
3. Did you support or oppose challengers Chip Zecher and Jean Roland in their races to unseat incumbent Superior Court Judges Michael Begert and Patrick Thompson in March 2024?
  - a. Yes (SUPPORT)
4. Did you support or oppose the following measures on the March 2024 ballot in San Francisco?
  - a. Measure E
    - i. Yes
  - b. Measure F
    - i. Yes
  - c. Measure G
    - i. Yes
5. Will you support or oppose the following measure on the November 2024 ballot in California?
  - a. Proposition 47 Reform: Allows felony charges for possessing certain drugs, including fentanyl, and for thefts under \$950—both currently chargeable only as misdemeanors—with two prior drug or two prior theft convictions, as applicable. Defendants who plead guilty to felony drug possession and complete treatment can have charges dismissed. Increases sentences for other specified drug and theft crimes.
    - i. Yes (YES)



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### Issues and policy

1. What is the appropriate size for the budget of the City and County of San Francisco (pop. 843,071)? What departments or programs would you cut or add to reach this number?

It's not so much how much we should spend, it's about getting what we pay for. We are a wealthy city so, while \$15.7 Billion dollars is a lot, the real problem is that we aren't getting value.

Chicago is more than 5x the land area and 3x the population. Their budget is \$16b. Denver is 3x the land area and roughly the same population as SF. Their budget is \$4b.

We're no better off than either of these cities. I think we can do more with this budget. If after we get value, we can look to reduce the city's revenue. Budget cutting isn't my priority—making our city agencies work the way we expect them to will be my focus.

0. How many full-time, active-duty sworn police officers should be serving in SFPD? I'm in agreement with the IACP that the number of officers shouldn't be tied to population. We need to determine this based on what Service Level Agreement we expect. Cities with effective policing and a reputation as being "tough on crime" can do with a smaller police staff than cities that are a go to place for criminal activity where crime fighting is a futile game of whack-a-mole.

We need to change the police policies and make them more effective. We need to utilize technology to increase police effectiveness.

Ideally we would increase staff to somewhere around 1800, but initially we will need a temporary expansion to get things under control and I'm not sure any specific number is the right one. With current police policies we could double our staff and see no better results. Once we effectively enforce laws and dispel our reputation for criminal tourism, we can determine the appropriate staffing levels to maintain our safety and security.

(I've appended my letter to the Police Officers Association)

0. How would you change the incentives for drug tourists and the voluntarily homeless in San Francisco?

<https://mayor.keithfreedman.com/issues/homelessness/rising-tide-initiative/>

My rising tide initiative is the only effective and financially viable solution on the table. It's the carrot. If people don't bite, then it's time to use the stick. But I prefer to offer positive incentives before punitive measures.

The workforce reintegration component provides financial incentives to businesses for taking a risk of hiring a formerly homeless person once they've completed life skills classes and



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jobs training. The Rising Tide resident can earn money instead of being handed cash giving them a sense of self worth and dignity.

Shelters and other solutions don't offer wrap around services which is why they're largely ineffective. You can't simply have someone sleep 6 inches off the ground and expect that solves all the problems. We have to give people a place they're more likely to want to go than a street or a storefront. Rising Tide accomplishes this.

Once the cruise ships are ready for occupancy, living on the streets is no longer an acceptable option. We simply won't allow it.

0. SFUSD spends \$23,500 per student per year – in the top 15 percent among unified school districts in California, almost \$10,000 more than the US average, and more than two times the OECD average. Why do you think that is?

We like wasting money on nothing. I don't really know exactly where all the money is going but this is the same problem we have with all our city agencies. They're black holes into which no money escapes.

I really don't mind spending \$23,500 per student if we're producing the best and brightest. Only a few of our high schools are producing results, yet we spend the same on all of them. Instead of looking to cut the budget, let's look at where we are successful and replicate it.

If we can get good results with less money, then great, but I plan to focus on results and getting value for the money we're spending before simply looking to slash budgets.

0. Do you support the expansion of voucher and charter school options in San Francisco so that working- and middle-class families can have the same educational choices that wealthy families do?

I'm generally opposed to vouchers, but I support charter schools. I don't think it's the right thing to allow wealthy people to divert funds out of the public school system. We should instead make the public school system work as well for wealthy students as it does for everyone else.

The Student should drive the learning. If a student excels, we need to build a pathway for them to soak up as much knowledge as they are capable of. If a student learns more slowly, we need to find a way to give them the tools they need to succeed.

We shouldn't be holding back some students because other students may feel inadequate. Each student's aptitude should determine their trajectory.

Charter schools offer a way to target curriculum and methodologies to specific students. This is often seen as some sort of elitism, but it needn't be that way. We should do this as much for the student who shows an aptitude for art as we do the student who shows an aptitude for math.



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If we dispense with our lowest common denominator or one-size-fits-all approach to education, we can make public schools the preferred option.

0. Do you believe that SFUSD should focus on teaching core competencies like reading, writing, mathematics, and science, rather than identity politics and class conflict?

I don't have a problem with schools addressing social issues, but they shouldn't be the primary focus.

Students should learn to respect one another. I don't see this as identity politics or class anti-discrimination—I see this as maintaining social order.

Expecting people (of any age) to respect each other is reasonable, but we don't have to impose our will or viewpoint in order to accomplish that.

0. San Francisco must build more than 80,000 housing units before 2030 to comply with state law. In 2023, only 2,204 units were completed. What does the City need to do to ensure that the remaining units are built on time?

We need a uniform planning code (one was developed over 10 years ago and is ready for approval but Aaron Peskin had it squashed). In addition we need to dispense with the myriad ways for people to stop construction projects. If it meets the new uniform planning code, then you get to build it.

In addition we need to streamline DBI and planning.

According to the National Association of Home Builders, it takes an average of 28 months to build a highrise, while it takes 18-24 months to build a more moderate height complex.

I'm a proponent of the "parisization" approach. We can keep highrises to the parts of the city we already have and the rest of the city we shift heights up to 6-8 stories.

With a uniform planning code and streamlined planning and dbi, we can reach our housing mandate with ease. Assuming, of course, we can convince financiers and builders to invest here. Streamlining will make it more cost effective to build in SF... the Rising Tide initiative will clean up the streets to make SF a desirable place to visit, live and work.

0. Do you support the closure of certain roadways to car traffic for the purpose of creating pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly parkways? If so, how would you determine which roadways should be closed?

I'm all for making SF pedestrian and bike safe and for more efficient public transportation, but we all have to live here and until we can provide a viable alternative to vehicles, simply making it more painful to drive isn't reasonable. It's the Stick approach.



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Where it makes sense, I like protected bike lanes. But I don't support reducing traffic lanes or taking away parking spaces businesses depend on to make room for bikes.

As a specific example, a bike lane in the middle of Valencia wasn't useful, we could have built a bike lane on South Van Ness or Folsom Streets which would have offered cyclists a safer and just as direct path through the mission without impacting businesses or other traffic.

So I support win-win solutions whenever possible—an approach that seems foreign to those who currently run our city.

----- letter to POA -----

Esteemed members of the POA,

You can find out more about my work history here: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/keithfreedman/>

Here are some relevant highlights of my background:

I began my career in defense technology and one of my first projects was creating a tank simulator for the Army. The goal was to use technology to enhance effectiveness and reduce risk to people laying their lives on the line to serve their country. I still hold to this goal. I support the use of technology to make you more effective at your jobs and reduce the risk of harm or loss of life.

I started a small business in SF almost a decade ago. This past February my business was burglarized. The footage allowed detectives to quickly identify the primary suspect who was arrested and is now working her way through the court system. The detective spent hours pouring through the footage to identify suspects. Had we had the same facial recognition software as any Vegas casino that time could have been better used solving other cases.

On more than one occasion, I was asked to provide footage to assist in cases involving kidnapping, burglary, and assault outside my business. I had previously enrolled my personal home ring camera in the police sharing program before Amazon discontinued it.

It's not only ironic that the technology capital of the world under invests in technology for our own police, it's criminal. But of course, that's not the only thing, or even the main thing containing our police force, it's our policies. As a member of the public, a business owner, and past member of the SFPD Small Business Security Advisory Council it is clear to me that we have one of the best and most highly motivated police forces in the country. My experience with



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officers is that they all want to do the work of policing, but are frustrated that they're not allowed to effectively do the job. Word has spread and we can't recruit new cadets because they don't want to go into law enforcement with an agency where they'll just sit on their hands.

We cannot reduce crime when our officers are the ones in handcuffs.

As Mayor, I am committed to making SFPD one of the most technologically advanced police forces in the nation, that our officers are empowered to do their jobs, and to housing the homeless so you can spend your time focussed on protecting and serving the community.

I thank you all for your service to San Francisco and I hope I can serve with you as Mayor. Your endorsement will go along way to helping me win in November.

You can read more about my position on crime here: <https://mayor.keithfreedman.com/issues/crime/>

Keith Freedman  
For A Safer San Francisco