

## BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot:

Asa Dodsworth & David Blake

2. Office sought (include office, jurisdiction, position/district number)

RSB Commissioner

3. What is your current occupation or elected office?

Asa: Sustainable Landscape Designer

Blake; RSB Commissioner

4. Are you the incumbent?

Asa: no

Dave: yes

tenants slate: yes

5. How long have you resided in this district and city?

Asa: life long, 30years, 4 of the early twenties in farming and artist collective, upstate NY

Dave Blake: 30 plus years.

slate combined 150 years estimated

## CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name:

Committee to Elect a Pro Tenant Slate

Address:

Kriss Worthington And Jesse Arreguin Campaign HQ

City, State, Zip:

Name of staff contact:

Campaign Phone:

Campaign Fax:

Campaign E-mail:

FPPC# got one.

OUR ISSUES (18-35 year olds)

Please answer the first five questions in 250 words or less

**1. Why are you running for Berkeley Rent Board, and what do you hope to accomplish?**

EARTHQUAKES:

1. Eliminate loophole for landlords to rental based on earthquake safety improvements. Earthquake Safety is a habitability issue, and you don't get to charge rent if your building violates habitability.

2. Fund Earthquake safety inspectors, just like San Francisco does, for the 100 most dangerous soft story buildings. Soft story buildings are four or more story building with large open spaces for parking or commercial space on the ground floor. The large open space compromises the structural safety of the building. They are a direct hazard for their tenants, and will consume the efforts of the police and fire emergency responders for the first 20 to 30 hours of a devastating earthquake.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL CHOICES FOR TENANTS:

1. Compost and Recycling in large apartment complex's. Landlords have not allowed or provided space for tenants of most large apartment complexes to have recycling and food waste composting services. This is currently legally required in San Francisco, and recycling has been made available to all tenants in Japan for decades.
2. Providing Recycling and Food waste composting to all tenants is simple first task in providing environmental choices to all tenants. To explore the many other options of legislation to allow tenants to participate in environmental preservation, I will work to establish a sub committee or RSB citizen commission on environmental participation for tenants, to collaborate with existing Berkeley citizen commissions: the Zero Waste Commission, and the Community Environmental Advisory Commission. If we can establish a Citizen Commission on environmental choices, composed of members appointed by the Rent Stabilization Board(RSB) then we can engaged the tenant community in the governance of the RSB. By bringing community members to the table to real develop policy, we are creating meaningful Community Outreach, and creating the Rent Stabilization Board Commissioner's of the future.

OUTREACH: If the tenants of Berkeley don't know about the rent stabilization board and their tenant rights, then they will not use the resources available to them, and exercises their rights. There are still many people who do not know about the protections Berkeley provides for tenants. Many of these are students who have recently moved to Berkeley. There are two elements I wish to develop.

1. Community Outreach: advertising is a start, but not enough. I host community dinners with my neighbors, within that social space the problems of one tenant can be shared with another that knows tenant rights. I would like the RSP to offer introductory trainings to tenants that organize themselves for an evening training. Berkeley Copwatch offers a 2-3 hour "Know Your Rights Trainings" at your home, apartment or community center to any person that gathers as few as six people for that purpose. Each person introduced to their rights becomes an advocate for their rights and their own rights and their communities rights. This would lay the ground work to begin engaging the public in the protection of their own rights. I would like the Rent Stabilization Program to offer a similar outreach service. The RSB is currently exploring a pilot program of Rent Stabilization Program Fellows, these are volunteers trained in the art and lore of State and Municipal Tenants Rights. This is a pilot program, which I work to make permanent so that RSP staff and their RSP fellows can begin comparable "Know Your Rights Trainings for Tenants".
2. Web Access to RSP Staff & Records: One savvy IT person can create a variety of web2.0 networks and interfaces for tenants & landlords to make contact with the RSP,

and to learn about their rights. These tools would lower the costs of making RSP programs and policies open and accessible. At the least the RSP could create a page or group on facebook, that would immediately make them more accessible to students. What I really want is an internet accessible database of property records that help you find out if your unit is rent controlled, registered, & up to code. We could use the database to identify additionally information valuable to tenants, like that the building is a Soft Story Structure that has not been inspected for Earthquake Safety, or whether or not the landlord provides recycling and composting. This database would additionally be a valuable tool for prospective tenants look up, prospective units. As such it would eliminate the potential for "confidence scams". A friend of mine placed a cash deposit on a lovely rental to someone who did not actually own that unit. She was lured into the scam on craigslist where there is no verification of who you are doing business with. And a posting board for the tenant community to make suggestions about what they would like the RSP to provide work on, and for landlords to share their perspective on how the programs work and are introduce to them.

### **Have you had previous experience with staff or elected members of the Rent Board?**

Asa Dodsworth has previously attempted to bring many friends to the Rent Stabilization Program staff to seek their support in addressing habitability issues with their landlords. In these cases he was the first person to tell them about there rights, and he found that If someone is already dis-empowered by a crisis with their landlord, it's too late to introduce most of them to their rights as tenants. Most people need to be informed about their rights before those rights are challenged in order to embolden them to exercise their rights.

Dave Blake is a sitting Commissioner, & their tenants conventions slate has a combined 17 years combined experience preserving tenants rights, through the fair application and review of RSP policy and enforcement. Kathy Harr has 12 years experience counselling and advocating for tenants SF Tenants rights organizations.

### **2. What are three or more issues that you consider important to tenants or landlords in Berkeley?**

- tenants: habitability, return of deposit, notice before inspections. Yes we can.
- landlords: respect, fair law practices, rental increases. Though we are a pro-tenant slate, we have pledged to enforce the law and listen to landlords' concerns to ensure that Berkeley is still a place that we can all call home.

### **3. What are your ideas for Rent Board outreach to or collaboration with young people?**

The greatest challenge facing the Rent Board is making it relevant to tenants who are under 50. A number of students move into Berkeley every year, with no knowledge of the unique tenants' protections that are afforded to them here, as well as state law governing deposits and habitability. Collectively, we have already worked with young people on numerous educational initiatives, from collaborating with the

Associated Students of the University of California, the residence halls, and student organizations on promoting outreach initiatives, to empowering more people to get involved in the governance of Berkeley through attendance at meetings or appointments to commissions. This year, the incumbents on the slate have worked hard to unveil a Student Outreach Plan for UC Berkeley students, which includes a Rent Board Fellows program that allows students to gain experience in rent law and counseling while receiving college credit. We are also working with students on a pilot program that would enhance recycling services in apartment buildings of nine or more units. We will continue to work with young people in and outside of the Rent Board by frequenting organizations such as EBYD and always listening to your input.

#### **4. Do you have any ideas to improve or expand state or local housing policies?**

-Explore the legality of support campaigns to bring rent control to other cities. There are not enough rent controlled cities to wield much clout on a state level. This necessitates creative thinking in how the RSP can secure it's future by establishing regional allies. It may be necessary to submit a modification of the charter to a citizen vote.

-Establish if there isn't already a clear network of tenant advocacy projects. The internet provides free "virtual" office and meeting space for Rent Stabilization Programs and tenant advocacy groups to exchange important information. This would be an important prototype for municipal governments to share their experiences, resolutions. Currently they largely depend on Newspapers to inform and activate residents to engage their council people. Imagine if we had up to date information about San Francisco's implementation of it's soft story ordinance. Or the successes and hurdles of expanding its residential recycling programs.

#### **5. How should the seismic retrofitting of the numerous soft story buildings in Berkeley be financed--through tenants, landlords, or the city?**

- Financed by the property owners, they are irresponsible for not addressing the health and safety needs of their tenants, and for securing the value of their property. They have had ample opportunity through either the years of rental income, or through sales tax refunds to bring their buildings up to modern Earth Quake Safety Code. Buildings constructed after the rent control ordinance are largely safe, and of low priority. Properties owned before the law have been producing rental income for at least 30 years, and ones purchased after have had the opportunity to use the Transfer Sales tax for earthquake safety improvements.

#### **6. Have you collaborated with young adults in your community work in the past (list specific examples)?**

All five of us consider ourselves young at heart, and one member of the slate (Asa Dodsworth) fits squarely within the 18-35 demographic. The greatest challenge facing the Rent Board is making it relevant to tenants who are under 50. A number of students move into Berkeley every year, with no knowledge of the unique tenants' protections that are afforded to them here, as well as state law governing deposits and habitability. Collectively, we have already worked with young people on numerous educational initiatives, from collaborating with the Associated Students of the University of California, the residence halls, and student organizations on promoting outreach initiatives, to empowering more people to get involved in the governance of Berkeley through attendance at meetings or appointments to commissions. This year, the incumbents on the slate have worked hard to unveil a Student Outreach Plan for UC Berkeley students, which includes a Rent Board Fellows program that allows students to gain experience in rent law and counseling while receiving college credit. We are also working with students on a pilot program that would enhance recycling services in apartment buildings of nine or more units. We

will continue to work with young people in and outside of the Rent Board by frequenting organizations such as EBYD and always listening to your input.

**How are young adults involved in your campaign?**

Young adults form the soul of our campaign. They are involved in every aspect of our operations, from website design, to our field operations, to participation in campaign strategy and getting out the vote. As young progressives are our base, we have attended a number of EBYD and Cal Dems functions and have inspired several members of these clubs to join us in this grassroots campaign.

**How will you continue to involve young activists in your work after you are elected? Please be specific.**

Along with Igor I'll be a beacon to invite their involvement. Igor has done a terrific job empowering fellow students to get engaged with RSP policy as his interns. He's got seven of them and is the only commissioner with interns. I believe that all commissioners could have interns to develop their potential scope of material to cover, and breadth perspective in understanding whats happening in the houses and apartments of Berkeley.

Students at cal have a very specific experience of Rent Control, many of them are gone in four years, and almost a quarter of them arrive fresh every year. A Citizen Commission on "Tenancy for Students" would fastrack information on the needs of the student community and how to reach them, to the RSB. It would create a mechanism wherein existing commissioners are required to partner with a students.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR YOUNG ADULTS**

Please describe in detail at least three of your accomplishments that have improved the lives of young adults. These examples should illustrate skills and capabilities that apply to the office you are seeking. These accomplishments may have occurred at any time in your personal, professional, or public life.

**EXPERIENCE**

Please list or describe your current and past activities in the community in which you have acquired skills that relate to the office you seek. Include your role in the activity and the year(s) in which you were involved. Involvement consists of many areas such as family, neighborhood, community, employment, or public life. Please explain how your experience would make you an effective advocate for young adults as an office holder. You may attach a resume and/or a list of endorsers here.