

Questionnaire for Candidates for Oakland City Council

BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot: Patricia Kernighan
2. Office sought: Oakland City Councilmember, District 2
3. What is your current occupation or elected office?
Oakland City Councilmember, District 2
4. Are you the incumbent? Yes
5. How long have you resided in this district and city? 27 years

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name:	Pat Kernighan for City Council 2010
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FPPC#	1321395

OUR ISSUES (18-35 year olds)

Please answer the first six questions in 250 words or less

1. What are your top three priorities if you are elected to the City Council?

Reducing crime, creating jobs and making City government more effective.

My goal is to make Oakland a great place to live and work. It is a wonderful community already in many ways, but is challenged with respect to crime and lack of jobs for all residents. My priorities to achieve my vision for Oakland are: to stimulate economic development that creates good jobs and restores our tax base, to provide safe neighborhoods for families to raise their children, and to continue providing the city services that are essential to preserving a healthy community, including libraries, parks, police and emergency services. Just about everyone running for public office in Oakland shares these goals. The challenge is to be able to deliver on these goals given the financial crisis that the City is experiencing.

2. Oakland is facing a tremendous budget crisis. This July the City Council voted to lay off some police officers to address the budget crisis. What was or would have been your position on this issue as a city council member, and what other measures do you think the city can and should take to deal with the massive budget deficit?

The City's budget deficit is a product of two major factors. One is the recent precipitous drop of tax revenues due to the collapse of the housing market and general economy. The other is decades of City Council budget decisions that failed to look at long-term costs such as employee pensions and cost of maintaining infrastructure such as roads and sewers. (Decades before I was in office.)

In the long term, the solution is to stimulate the local economy and thus increase our tax base. However, this is not likely to happen fast enough to solve the immediate budget deficit. There is no easy or "creative" way out of this budget crisis. We need a combination of cost-cutting and raising new taxes to balance the budget. I supported putting several tax measures on the ballot because I know that some new revenues will be necessary to avoid drastic cuts to basic public services. I also know that the tax measures likely to pass will not cover the whole deficit so we will still need to cut some programs and positions. I would prefer that employee unions would agree to shared concessions that would avoid laying-off staff, but that must be bargained over. This city desperately needs a professional and talented City manager who can help re-design our systems and make them more efficient.

3. What are your positions on the parcel tax (Measure X) and the police staffing requirements (Measure Y) on the November ballot?

I strongly support the Measure Y revision. If it passes, voters will continue to pay the \$90 per year that they have paid for the last eight years. If the voters do not agree to amend Measure Y, the City will no longer be able to collect the annual \$20 M that has been funding the violence prevention programs, about 60 police officers and some firefighters. A loss of \$20 M on top of the already huge deficit would be devastating to

the police department and city services in general. Another 125 police officers positions would have to be cut if the Measure Y amendment does not pass.

As to the \$360 per year parcel tax, I am not making a recommendation one way or the other. I personally will vote for it, because it is worth it to me to pay a dollar a day to have a fully staffed police department. However, I realize that many homeowners have lost their jobs or are on fixed incomes and cannot afford this large a tax increase. Most polls are indicating that the parcel tax has little chance of receiving two-thirds of the vote, so I think we should plan on having to balance the budget without it.

4. Young adults and students are facing a terrible job market. What would you do as a city councilmember to fight for sustainable and well-paying jobs for all of Oakland's residents, but especially young people?

I have been fighting for sustainable and well-paying jobs through the decisions I have made regarding future development of the Oakland Army Base and by protecting existing good jobs in our industrial areas. I also am the Council's representative on the Workforce Investment Board where I am fighting to re-structure the oversight of the job-training dollars. We can use these federal dollars to better effect.

Though it is great to bring union jobs to Oakland, I also support bringing retail businesses to Oakland, even though they are not top-paying jobs. They are still jobs and there are many young people for whom these jobs would be a good opportunity and way to get started in the workforce.

5. Violence has plagued the city of Oakland for too long. Too often the victims and perpetrators of crime are young people, and the crime prevention efforts do not address the root causes of violence in our community. What steps would you take to increase public safety throughout Oakland?

The programs of Measure Y has shown that a combination of law enforcement coupled with violence prevention and intervention programs *can* reduce crime. It is a carrot AND stick approach—offering positives like counseling, job training and jobs at the same time as law enforcement is putting pressure on the offender to shape up or go to jail. Actually, we know what works to decrease crime and we have been doing it—the problem is that the amount of resources for these programs is much smaller than the need. I absolutely agree that addressing the root causes of crime—poverty, violent neighborhoods, lack of access to quality education, and inadequate parenting—is the long term answer. The challenge is getting enough funding to address those issues.

Regarding law enforcement, we also see that community policing works. The model of having direct communication between the residents and police department via a “Problem-Solving Officer” has been working well. The PSO attends neighborhood meetings and helps target police resources to the problems that neighborhoods identify.

6. Oakland has a Transit First policy. What would you do to implement this policy and encourage transit, bicycling, and walking for city residents? What would you do to decrease car usage and increase alternative transit use by city employees?

I have been working on “Complete Streets” streetscape improvements in two neighborhoods in my district, Chinatown and Lakeshore. We are creating infrastructure that is conducive to walking, biking and using public transit. I have actively supported building out bike lanes as fast as our money allows. The huge improvement projects at Lake Merritt will dramatically increase pedestrian and bicycle access in that area and I’ve been the leader of those projects for eight years.

As to City employee transportation, I was the Councilmember who proposed ending the practice of free parking for downtown employees. Offering free parking is the exact opposite of the Transit First policy—it actually incentivizes driving a car because there is no subsidy for those who use public transit to get to work. I also proposed that the City Administrator work with AC Transit to offer a yearly discounted pass for all City employees. That proposal was adopted by the Finance Committee and Council and is being worked on by the City Administration.

7. Have you collaborated with young adults in your community work in the past (list specific examples)? How are young adults involved in your campaign? How will you continue to involve young activists in your work after you are elected? Please be specific.

Young adults have been part of most of my community work, along with people of other ages as well. Neighborhood revitalization organizations that I work with in the Parkway area and the Grandlake area have a lot of young people involved, as do several of the neighborhood crime prevention councils that I work with, such as in the Bella Vista neighborhood and east of the Lake. I am currently collaborating with a coalition of young adults in organizations who are working on starting a teen center in Chinatown.

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.

I advocated for several sources of funding that built the Eastside Arts Alliance’s new building on International Blvd. The new facility greatly expanded ESA’s ability to provide quality programs for teens and young adults.

I single-handedly negotiated with the parties to bring the Trader Joe’s to Lakeshore Avenue. That store is especially popular with young adults and has been an asset to a lot of young people who live nearby.

On the City Council, I was a strong supporter of the Fox Theater restoration project, even in the face of a lot of opposition and controversy. That has proved to be a good decision for the city. The Fox has been a major catalyst for the revitalization of downtown and creating an entertainment district that appeals to young adults.

While I was Chief of Staff to Danny Wan, I hired and mentored two young men in the City Council office for several years who have gone on to bigger and better things. Paul Tran went on to graduate school in creative writing and is now working with a non-profit

that works toward the empowerment of Asian communities. Chris Tom went on to get joint degrees in law and public policy at Columbia and Princeton, and has just come back to the Bay Area.

My foremost contribution to the lives of young adults was raising two of them. I am the proud mom of two wonderful young women. Hannah is working as a lawyer in New York City and Ariel just started a job as a transportation planner in Seattle. Hannah was an active volunteer on my last campaign and this time she is going to phone voters from her cell phone in NY.

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.

When I was 24 and living in Seattle, I was the Co-Coordinator of a coalition called the Feminist Coordinating Council. Almost every women's organization in Seattle participated in this group. The goal was to create more consensus and areas of common effort among feminist organizations. It was an exciting and very challenging experience to try to forge consensus among groups as disparate as the League of University Women and Trotskyist cadres. Ultimately, the group disbanded because the political schisms were too deep, but over a period of two years, I learned a lot about working with people of widely diverging views and trying to find common ground.

I am an attorney and that has proved very useful in understanding the complex issues, both legislative and legal, that are faced by policy makers of a large city. I also worked as a Legal Aid attorney, representing very low income people. The experience of being a professional advocate for people who have not had a voice in matters that affect their lives has also been very applicable to the duties of being a City Council member.

The experience of raising my two daughters in Oakland and being an active volunteer in Oakland public schools has also been a motivating force for the work that I do on the Council. I understand the desires and challenges faced by many other families and expectations that they have of their City government.

Finally, having been a Councilmember for the past five years has given me a deep understanding of what works and what does not work in the City government and why. I started this work, as everyone does, with the notion that as a smart, motivated person I could whip this bureaucracy into shape in no time. I learned that it takes more than good intentions to make change in an organization of this complexity and institutionalized problems. It takes knowledge, experience and persistence as well. That is why I am still engaged in the quest to make our City government do a better job of serving its citizens.

I will continue to work at this until the City operates with the efficiency and integrity that its citizens deserve.

I would be honored to have the support and endorsement of the East Bay Young Dems.

ENDORSERS – RE-ELECT PAT KERNIGHAN TO OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL 2010

Electeds

Attorney General Jerry Brown
Senator Loni Hancock
Assemblymember Mary Hayashi
Assemblymember Nancy Skinner
Alameda County Supervisor Alice Lai-Bitker
Alameda County Supervisor-elect Wilma Chan
Oakland City Council President Jane Brunner
Oakland City Councilmember Larry Reid
Former Oakland Councilmember Henry Chang
School Board member David Kakishiba
School Board member Jody London
School Board member Gary Yee
AC Transit Boardmember Elsa Ortiz
AC Transit Boardmember Christian Peeples
Oakland Planning Commissioner Doug Boxer

Organizations

Building and Construction Trades Council of Alameda County
United Brotherhood of Carpenters, Local 713
OakPAC - Oakland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce
Professional and Technical Engineers, Local 21
Oakland Builders Alliance