

SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN SERVICES NETWORK

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES **Board of Supervisors, November 2010 Election** **Winning Candidates' Responses**

The following questionnaire focuses on issues related to health, human services and community-based nonprofit organizations. The sponsor of this questionnaire is the San Francisco Human Services Network (HSN). HSN sent questionnaires to candidates in all of the districts. Below are the answers of the winning candidates in each district.

Election Winners:

District 2 – Mark Farrell
District 4 – Carmen Chu (did not submit response)
District 6 – Jane Kim (did not submit response)
District 8 – Scott Wiener
District 10 – Malia Cohen

(A) San Francisco Community

(1) In your opinion, what are the top three issues facing the City & County of San Francisco that you will prioritize as a Supervisor?

Farrell (D2):

- **Rebuilding our economy:** I believe City Hall should foster an environment for economic growth in San Francisco, and in particular within the small business community.
- **Public safety and emergency services:** District 2 has significant crime issues, and also is most vulnerable to a major earthquake. I believe we need to do everything possible to ensure San Francisco continues to have a robust public safety infrastructure.
- **Improving quality of life:** I believe we need to focus on finding effective solutions to issues that impact quality of life (public transportation, neighborhood schools) and the future of our City.

Wiener (D8): Transportation, particularly Muni, Public Safety, Access to health care

(2) What are the most important steps we need to take to improve the public health of our City?

Farrell (D2): I believe it all goes back to our City's ability to manage our financial resources. Once we get our budget under control, we can once again start to fund our public health services at appropriate levels which will have the greatest impact on our citizens in need of our public health infrastructure.

Wiener (D8): Continuing to expand access to health care, particularly primary and preventive care, through programs like Healthy San Francisco, nonprofit partners, and our system of primary care clinics. Educating young people about the importance of a healthy life style. Ensuring that our residents are taking full advantage of state and federal health coverage programs, which will improve access to health care and reduce the financial strain on our budget. Continue our strong commitment to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. Strengthen our services for the elderly, given our aging population

(3) What are the most important steps we need to take to improve the fiscal health of our City?

Farrell (D2):

1. Extend Proposition A from 2008 to create a much more long-term financial planning process
2. Eliminate inefficiencies in our City government. Currently salaries and benefits for our City employees eat up over 50% of our budget (and growing). This needs to be stabilized in order to provide funding for other necessary budget line items.
3. Create sustainable economic development and incentivize growth industries to locate businesses in San Francisco. Economic development and job growth will provide the critical tax revenue we need to fund important social services throughout San Francisco.

Wiener (D8): Achieving budget stability at the state level by eliminating the 2/3 budget requirement and reforming our state tax system, for example, by adopting a split property tax roll and restoring the vehicle license fee to its historic level. Stabilizing the boom/bust nature of our budget by strengthening our reserves and limiting one-time revenue to one-time expenses. Reform our system of set-asides by making it more difficult to enact new set-asides and providing the Board of Supervisors with an emergency valve to make limited exceptions to set-asides during bad economic times and with super-majority support

(4) Do you support or oppose the following November ballot measures?

	Farrell (D2)	Wiener (D8)
Prop E: Election Day Voter Registration	Oppose	Support
Prop I: Saturday Voting	Support	Support
Prop J: Setting Hotel Tax Clarification and Temporary Increase	Oppose	Oppose
Prop K: Hotel Tax Clarification and Temporary Definitions	Support	Support
Prop L: Sitting or Lying on Sidewalks	Support	Support

Prop M: Community Policing and Foot Patrols	Oppose	Oppose
Prop N: Real Property Transfer Tax	Oppose	Support
Prop 22: Prohibits the State from Taking Local Funds	Support	Support
Prop 24: Repeals Business Tax Breaks	Oppose	Support
Prop 25: Pass the State Budget by a Majority Vote	Support	Support
Prop 26: Requires Two-Thirds Vote for State to Increase Fees	Support	Oppose

Prop M: Community Policing and Foot Patrols

Farrell (D2): Note: I believe community policing has incredible potential in San Francisco, and Chief Gascon has embraced this practice (I serve on the Board of Directors at San Francisco SAFE, and have worked closely with various Police Captains on this issue), but I believe the Police Department, and Chief Gascon in particular, should be the people who decide where and when to allocate their resources. It is their job, and personally this epitomizes the Board of Supervisors meddling in an area they should stay clear of.

(B) The Health and Human Services Nonprofit Sector

(1) In what ways have you shown leadership in supporting the nonprofit health and human services sector and low income, disadvantaged populations? Please identify any nonprofits where you worked, served on the Board of Directors, or played an active role.

Farrell (D2): For the past five years, I have served on the Board of Directors of San Francisco SAFE – a non-profit organization in San Francisco focused on neighborhood watch groups and community policing efforts throughout San Francisco, with a large presence in low income and disadvantaged communities. I have also served on the Board of Directors of Plan C for the past 1.5 years – a non-profit organization focused on promoting moderate, quality of life issues in San Francisco which have been largely ignored by the Board of Supervisors over the past 8 years.

Wiener (D8): I played a key leadership role in building the LGBT Community Center, serving as board co-chair, and saw the project from a hole in the ground through construction and the hiring of our first two executive directors. I was a member of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and handled many pro bono cases for LCCR, including defending indigent tenants from eviction and representing immigrants seeking asylum. I served on the national board of directors of the Human Rights Campaign, which plays an important role lobbying for the Ryan White Act and other HIV-related funding sources.

(2) Do you have any specific recommendations to improve the programs or services provided or funded by the City & County of San Francisco for low-income and homeless populations?

Farrell (D2): Breaking the cycle of poverty is not an easy task – no matter where you are in America. However, in San Francisco, I know we can break this cycle by (1) returning the City to economic prosperity that provides critical tax revenues to support social services programs and (2) treating homelessness – not as a crime – but as a wholesale problem within our current social service model. San Francisco services deal with the issues faced by homeless and low-income families in San Francisco. However, many of these services need to be combined to create a more efficient delivery system for our residents.

Wiener (D8): Nonprofits need to be as organized as possible during the budget process so that the nonprofit community has a full seat at the table as opposed to playing defense during the addback period. We also need to explore overhead-sharing arrangements to make sure that the highest possible percentage of taxpayer dollars are being spent on programs.

(3) The San Francisco Housing Element has identified the need for some 13,000 very low to moderate income homes, including: 3200 units of affordable accessible housing, 1500 units of affordable senior housing, and 5600 units of affordable multi-bedroom family housing. Given the declining level of federal and state financing for affordable housing development, how would you finance this level of affordable housing?

Farrell (D2): Again, we need to restructure the way our City does business and manages budget – resources are there if we take the time to create efficiencies in the system that will free up the dollars we need to continue to rebuild our affordable housing infrastructure. Chief among this is creating an environment where tax revenues can provide the additional tax revenues necessary for these projects.

Federal, state and local agencies can also create partnerships private companies to consider the financing options (freeing up credit sources) and other remedies to move these developments forward.

Wiener (D8): This is a very challenging area, given how expensive it is to build housing and the lack of financial resources. I support the inclusionary housing ordinance, which is part of the solution. We should consider allowing height or density bonuses in appropriate locations for developers who exceed the current affordability percentages or who otherwise contribute to affordable housing funds. We also need to support creative uses of the inclusionary housing ordinance such as the proposal by the AIDS Housing Alliance to build HIV-focused housing. .

(4) As Supervisor, through what mechanisms would you seek input from nonprofits when considering legislation that would affect agencies and the clients that they serve?

Farrell (D2): I am not sure what mechanism would be more effective than meeting directly with these agencies and soliciting their opinions on issues that affect them. As Supervisor, these agencies and organizations will have a place at the table during discussions of key legislation or during budget negotiations. These amazing groups serve many neighborhoods in and around District 2 and I believe, as such, have an important role to play in determining the direction of certain policies.

Wiener (D8): I will have an open door to nonprofits throughout the year, and particularly early in the budget process. I will meet regularly with nonprofit staff and will proactively seek input into City budgeting and policies.

(5) Do you feel that nonprofits receive adequate funding to meet the needs of the city and its vulnerable populations, and to ensure the health and sustainability of their organizations? If not, how would you address the need for more funding?

Farrell (D2): Absolutely not – and the reason is because San Francisco has not adequately planned for its financial future. If non-profits are to survive, they need to be part of the process in determining allocation of resources. In my capacity on the Board of San Francisco SAFE (which relies heavily on funding from the San Francisco Police Department), I have seen first-hand the difficulties of being dependent on funding from the City of San Francisco. In addition, we need to either combine or eliminate services which are duplicative and cost other non-profits resources they desperately need to meet client demands.

Wiener (D8): No, nonprofits do not receive adequate funding. However, at the moment, the City is not in a position to increase funding. We need to explore overhead-sharing arrangements so that nonprofits can do more with less.

(6) As Supervisor, what would you do to reform the City's current budget process of cuts and add-backs?

Farrell (D2): I believe our budget process needs a complete overhaul. Not only do we need longer-term financial planning in San Francisco, but also a reform to the antiquated process that takes place throughout each fiscal year. Without the detailed specifics, I believe any reform needs to incorporate the values of (1) transparency, (2) efficiency and (3) accountability. One specific item affecting non-profits is the City's contracting process – current contracts (both private and non-profit) must be reviewed to determine what efficiencies need to be made to put the City's fiscal house in order.

Wiener (D8): Nonprofits need to be even more organized than they already are and speak with a more unified voice early in the budget process. This may avoid the addback roller coaster that we experience every year.

(7) Would you incorporate decision-making about nonprofit cost-of-living-adjustments (COLA) and cost-of-doing-business (CODB) increases into the budget process? (See the appendix for more information.) Do you support annual CODB increases for nonprofit contractors? Should those increases reflect actual increases in the cost of operations?

Farrell (D2): Yes, provided that these non-profit contractors are fulfilling the obligations set forth in their contract with the City. We have a system in San Francisco where there are non-profits that receive millions of dollars from the City but are not fulfilling – in total – the mission of their organization.

Should those increase reflect actual increases in the cost of operations?

Yes, again with the caveat that these organizations are fulfilling their mission to the citizens of San Francisco. Again, in my capacity at San Francisco SAFE, which is dependent on the City of San Francisco for funding, and in particular in my capacity as the organization's Chief Financial Officer, we have had effective, although not nominal, budget cuts over the past 3 years. I believe we need to look at every restriction, rule and regulation which affects non-profits and ensure non-profit organizations and their staff receive all the support they need during these difficult economic times.

Wiener (D8): Yes, budget permitting we should allow reasonable COLA and CODB increases. At the moment, our budget situation does not permit that. We need to have a better long-term process for funding nonprofits, including more rational and global budget negotiations early in the process, appropriate overhead sharing to reduce administrative costs, and a fairer manner of compensating nonprofit staff.

(8) Should employees working on nonprofit city contracts earn wage rates that are comparable to civil service employees in similar job classifications? If so, what specific steps would you take to advance wage parity?

Farrell (D2): This is all case-specific – provided nonprofits are meeting wage and benefit requirements of their contracts, during these economic times I don't believe we should be looking to increase wages across the board.

Wiener (D8): Please see my response to #7. Ideally, there would be parity, but the City is not currently in a position to fund this parity.

(9) Many nonprofits urge San Francisco to undertake a longterm planning process that would guide the implementation of health and human services over the next 5 to 10 years, analyze and prioritize community needs and resources, ensure the sustainability of our system of care, and develop a plan that transcends the cyclical nature of the political process and individual department policies. What recommendations would you make to guide this planning process?

Farrell (D2):

1. Create a 5-10 year budget process here in San Francisco. Proposition A in 2008 took a step in the right direction, but did not go far enough. We need to create a much longer budget process – which will allow everyone receiving funding from our City to be more secure about their future funding sources.
2. Greater outreach towards vulnerable populations on issues of disease prevention, and long-term solutions to the housing and neighborhood environments of these communities.
3. Finally, any planning should include measurable benchmarks including where funding will be derived and how services will be delivered.

Wiener (D8): Please see my response to #7 for subjects that should be considered. In addition, we need to pay serious attention to the aging of our population, in general and with respect to specific needs like HIV services. Our aging population will have a dramatic impact on how to approach effective delivery of city and nonprofit services to the population.