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Mayoral Questionnaire

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Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire

1. Do you believe the city's Ethics Commission is successful at its mission, or do you tend to agree with the Civil Grand Jury's conclusion that it is a "Sleeping Watchdog." What reforms will you support to strengthen the disclosure and enforcement of the city's ethics and good government laws?

I thought that the Civil Grand Jury had some good recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the Ethics Commission at completing its mission. The Ethics Commission's lack of enforcement of any sunshine violations, the lack of televising commission meetings to ensure greater transparency in its deliberations, the delays in immediate investigations, and the lack of a proper database to track issues are all issues that deserve the attention of reform efforts..

2. Will you vote in favor or against Proposition F to allow the Ethics Commission and Board to change the law on campaign consultants without voter approval?

I supported this measure as part of a unanimous vote at the Board of Supervisors.

3. Will you vote in favor or against Proposition E to allow the Board to amend or repeal ballot measures approved by voters from the mayor or four Board members?

I supported this measure at the Board of Supervisors.

4. Will you add funding for the Ethics Commission meetings to be televised like other city commissions?

Yes, I believe the Ethics Commission should be televised and would support funding for it.

5. Do you believe the city needs to strengthen protections for city worker whistleblowers against retaliation, as the Civil Grand Jury recommended?

I support strengthened protections for whistleblowers.

6. Will you introduce a measure to ban contributions from businesses that benefit financially from City decisions, including tax benefits, zoning variances and other

benefits similar to the voter-approved Proposition J (November 2000) passed but later altered?

Just as a company that receives a specific city contract is prohibited from making contributions to avoid the reality or perception of pay-to-play politics, I would be open to supporting a measure that would ban contributions from a business that specifically benefits financially from a city decision, as long as that decision is explicitly targeted for that particular business (for example, if an entire class of businesses was impacted by a tax or zoning law change, I don't think it's reasonable to ban contributions from all employees of any of those businesses).

7. Do you support the Ethics Commission's proposal to amend the city's pay-to-play law to allow contributions from contractors with the Redevelopment Agency, Treasure Island and other agencies because they claim the mayor and Board don't know who the contractors are?

I think all private sector city contractors should be subject to the application of the same law.

8. The Ethics Commission won amendments to the lobbyist law that means fewer businesses have to disclose their efforts. Do you believe that people with special access like former mayor Willie Brown or Rose Pak should have to register and report on their contacts with city officials?

I believe that under current law everyone who is paid to influence an elected official regarding a governmental decision should be registered as a lobbyist and should report contacts with city officials.

9. What steps will you take to ensure that your appointees attend commission meetings, file required public economic disclosure statements, and adhere to the city's Sunshine Ordinance? What standard will you use?

I would direct my Appointments Secretary to regularly review records of commission attendance, public disclosure and Sunshine information to ensure that my appointees are diligently and transparently serving the public, and ask for resignations of appointees who are not providing such service to the public.

10. What steps have you taken to improve transparency in city government and enforce good government laws?

Based on feedback provided by communities underrepresented on our city's commissions, as Supervisor, I successfully passed legislation that created a database of city commissioners and commission vacancies as they occurred in order to bring more transparency and foster the likelihood of more diversity in the appointments process.

In response to the myriad of confusing definitions and reporting requirements related to lobbyists, I successfully passed ethics legislation that simplifies and requires more regular

and online reporting of lobbying contacts of elected officials, so that the public can know easily and quickly exactly who is lobbying City Hall.

To address the needs of many residents for whom English is not their first language, I passed our city's Language Access Ordinance, which requires city departments to provide certain translated materials, including the meeting minutes of city boards and commissions. The recently-released first report on city compliance with the ordinance shows that we have a long way to go before all San Franciscans have full language access to the workings of our city government.