

2012 Supervisor Candidate Survey Responses

DISTRICT 11

Based on survey distributed by CitiReport.com and responses received from candidates by October 1, 2012

Candidate

Avalos, John

Incumbent

ResponseReceived

| Q # | Category | Background | Question | Response | Comment |
|-----|--------------|--|---|----------|---------|
| 1 | Transparency | San Francisco still does not provide information on the Ethics Commission webpage or in press releases, etc. in any language other than English, while other jurisdictions like Los Angeles offer several non-English language options. | Will you sponsor or co-author a measure that requires Ethics information to be in more than just English and to accomplish this by July 1, 2013 so that it will be available for the next election? | Yes | |
| 2 | Transparency | San Francisco provides guides on ethics rules for campaigns and committees, but provides nothing to educate contributors on ethics laws affecting who may give, what reporting is required, and caps on contributions. Los Angeles has a web-based Guide for Contributors that could be a model for San Francisco. | Will you sponsor or co-author a measure that requires Ethics to create and post a Guide for Contributors by July 1, 2013 so that it will be available for the next election? | Yes | |
| 3 | Transparency | Los Angeles requires more public disclosure of independent expenditures than San Francisco. In LA reporting is required at a \$1,000 threshold while in San Francisco it is \$5,000. In LA there also are required disclosures of contributions of \$100 or more prior to the election. Today \$5,000 buys tens of thousands of Internet ads or hundreds of robo-calls, which mean SF voters lack basic information on campaign funding. | Will you sponsor or co-author a measure that requires Ethics to meet the same standard as Los Angeles by July 1, 2013 in time for the next election? | Yes | |
| 4 | Transparency | In July 2011, the Ethics Commission determined that current public disclosure requirements do not apply to committees formed to encourage someone to become a candidate, and only apply when a candidate has filed. The Commission asked that staff draft a measure to close this loophole, but the staff has taken no action and the Commission has never discussed it further. | Will you sponsor or co-author a measure that requires Ethics to institute public disclosure of political spending regardless of whether a candidate has filed or a ballot measure committee has formed by July 1, 2013 in time for the next election? | Yes | |

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| 5 | Transparency | San Francisco law banning contractors from making contributions has a large loophole that allows these same contractors to solicit contributions, to bundle them, or to serve on a "finance" committee. | Will you sponsor or co-author a measure that requires public disclosure of finance committee members by July 1, 2013 in time for the next election? | Yes |
| 6 | Transparency | The San Francisco Ethics Commission stopped providing public summaries of lobbyist activities two years ago, and has never provided a public listing of city officials who failed to file required Economic Disclosure Statements. Before 2005, the Commission issued detailed quarterly reports. Today the public only learns this information by searching Internet files. | Will you sponsor or co-author a measure that requires Ethics to make quarterly or regular releases with detailed summaries of lobbying, conflict of interest non-filers and political spending by July 1, 2013 in time for the next election? | Yes |
| 7 | Transparency | | N/A | N/A |
| 8 | Transparency | Last year the Ethics Commission asked the Board to approve changes to the city's public disclosures of campaign financing that would reduce the frequency of information and reduce reporting. Those changes remain waiting for further Board action. | Will you oppose any proposals that reduce public disclosure, its frequency, or otherwise provide less information and vote against those proposals? | Yes |
| 9 | Transparency | San Francisco's requirements that city decision-makers, including elected officials and commissioners, file annual statements of economic interest that can reveal financial conflicts. The city also requires city officials who sign contracts to provide the Ethics Commission of a list of all signed contracts within days of signing. To date, the Commission has resisted creating a system for electronic filing that would save money and provide substantially improved public access. | Will you sponsor or co-author a measure that requires Ethics to adopt electronic reporting and posting of all Statements of Economic Interest, including those filed at the Department level, and all reporting of signed contracts, by the end of 2013? | Yes |

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| 10 | Pay-to-Play Politics | It is legal to walk into the Mayor's Office or anywhere at City Hall and give campaign contributions, but it is prohibited in Los Angeles, the State Capitol and the Nation's Capitol. It can be a contribution for a candidate or an officeholder's preferred ballot measure or other candidate. | Will you sponsor or coauthor a measure to close the San Francisco loophole to ban contributions being made in City offices to take effect by July 1, 2013 in time for the next election? | Yes | This is news to me I thought such a prohibition was already on the books. |
| 11 | Pay-to-Play Politics | Lobbyists are banned from making contributions to candidates and office holders in Los Angeles, and Board Analyst Harvey Rose suggests that San Francisco might consider enacting a similar ban. | Will you sponsor or coauthor a measure to close the San Francisco loophole to ban contributions from lobbyists to take effect by July 1, 2013 in time for the next election? | No | I have actually had minimal support from lobbyists and don't think I could write such legislation with a straight face. |
| 12 | Pay-to-Play Politics | City commissioners and city officers are banned from making contributions or soliciting contributions in Los Angeles, as noted by Board Analyst Harvey Rose. This serves to build public trust that pay-to-play politics are curbed. | Will you sponsor or coauthor a measure to close the San Francisco loophole that opens the door to pay-to-play politics as commissioners and city officials make or solicit contributions to take effect by July 1, 2013 in time for the next election? | No | |
| 13 | Pay-to-Play Politics | San Francisco bans contributions from those seeking city contracts but allows contributions from those seeking city permits for development and other projects. More than 90 percent of all City Hall lobbying is on behalf of those seeking permits. | Will you sponsor or coauthor a measure to close the San Francisco loophole to ban contributions from those seeking permit or other approvals and adopting the Los Angeles standard that covers a longer period to take effect by July 1, 2013 in time for the next election? | Yes | |

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| 14 Pay-to-Play Politics | Last year a state judge recommended that the Recreation and Park Commission adopt a policy prohibiting recommending a specific lobbyist to assist in winning a contract. However, the Commission never acted on this recommendation | Will you sponsor or coauthor a measure to close the San Francisco loophole to ban recommendations of specific lobbyists by any city commissioner or Department official for in all cases involving a prospective contract lobbyist to take effect by July 1, 2013 in time for the next election? | Yes |
| 15 Pay-to-Play Politics | San Francisco does not require all committees active in city elections to disclose the contributions they receive because it does not apply the law to committees formed at the state level like many industry and political organizations. They are free to spend in local candidate and ballot measure campaigns without disclosing their sources of funds | Will you sponsor or coauthor a measure to close the San Francisco loophole so that all funds spent to influence San Francisco candidate and ballot measure elections are publicly disclosed contribute to take take effect by July 1, 2013 in time for the next election? | Yes |
| 16 Cop or Cop-Out? | San Francisco's enforcement when good government laws are violated has been called uneven and arbitrary and even partial to entrenched interests. The Board Budget Analyst Harvey Rose compared enforcement in Los Angeles with San Francisco and found that Los Angeles heard 158% more cases than San Francisco, that Los Angeles dismissed only 19% while San Francisco dismissed 76%, and that Los Angeles issued higher fines. Last year the Civil Grand Jury recommended that the arbitrary application of fines would be lessened if violations fell within a recognized fine range. This year the Ethics Commission said a lack of staff meant it was not sending fines letters to any of the dozens of city officials who failed to comply with public disclosure requirement of their economic interests. | Will you sponsor or coauthor a measure to set fines within a specific range with a provision that fines outside that range be accompanied with a full public explanation for setting aside the guidelines, to take effect by July 1, 2013 in time for the next election? | Yes |

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17 Cop or Cop-Out? In Los Angeles penalties are also allowed for civil actions brought by citizens independent of an Ethics Commission investigation. In San Francisco, penalties can only be imposed as the result of Ethics Commission or court proceedings. Will you sponsor or coauthor a measure to close the San Francisco loophole to allow penalties for civil actions to take effect by July 1, 2013 in time for the next election? Yes

18 Cop or Cop-Out? The San Francisco City Attorney may not endorse candidates for office, but due to an oversight, the District Attorney may make endorsements. At the same time, the District Attorney has the authority to investigate and take action against candidates and campaigns, including those opposed to candidates and measures s/he supports. Will you sponsor or coauthor a measure to close the San Francisco loophole that allows the DA the ability to make endorsements and also conduct investigations into candidates and campaigns? Yes

19 Cop or Cop-Out? The City Attorney does not have the authority to enforce the city's ethics laws but must turn over any investigation to other officials who may or may not take action to enforce the city's laws. The City Attorney also does not have the authority to introduce laws or measures to the Board of Supervisors for their consideration without the approval of the mayor. Will you sponsor or coauthor a measure to allow the City Attorney to take enforcement actions when violations have occurred, as the City Attorney can do in other civil cases, and allow the City Attorney the authority to propose legislation for the Board's consideration without the mayor's approval? Yes

20 Cop or Cop-Out? San Francisco's lobbyist law underwent amendments during the past several years that have resulted in less public disclosure, more loopholes for contacting city officials without reporting the contacts, and non-existent enforcement. Will you sponsor or co-author a measure that gives San Francisco the strongest law on lobbying reporting and protects the public trust modeled on the best features that exist in other cities, the states or federal level by July 1, 2013 in time for the next election? Yes

Additional Information Provided by the Candidate

A lot of things I said I would do but more agree with. I could spend the next few years only doing the changes proposed here. My yes are more that I could agree to support if initiated elsewhere. There are probably things I could sponsor. It might be worth meeting after the election to discuss further action.