

# ***SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN SERVICES NETWORK***

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## **CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE**

**Mayor, December 2003**

The following questionnaire focuses on issues related to poverty, housing, services and community-based nonprofit organizations. The sponsors of this questionnaire are:

- Council of Community Housing Organizations
- Faith-Based Community Organizations and Service Providers
- The San Francisco Human Services Network
- Senior Action Network
- Leo T. McCarthy Center for Public Service & the Common Good, University of San Francisco

The questionnaire was sent to all nine candidates for Mayor in September 2003. Below is the response from Supervisor Gavin Newsom, the winner of the December 9 run-off election and current Mayor of San Francisco.

### **(A) San Francisco Community / Quality of Life**

**(1) What is your opinion of the overall condition of the City and County of San Francisco (i.e. physical cleanliness, public health and safety, how services are managed)? What are the most important steps we need to take for the public and fiscal health of our City?**

**Newsom:** I am proud of San Francisco, but I see much that needs to be done. The level of suffering on our streets is astonishing, as a city our system for helping those who are on the streets has failed. To what extent is difficult to determine because we have no systems in place to track what is provided and to hold those tasked with providing services accountable. I have proposed specific programs to create accountability in city government, with my compstat, citistat and 311 initiatives. The most important step we can take for the public and fiscal health of our city is to create accountability.

**(2) Do you support or oppose the following November ballot measures? Why?**

- (a) **Proposition C: City Services Auditor**
- (b) **Proposition D: Small Business Commission**
- (c) **Proposition F: Target Early Retirement**
- (d) **Proposition G: Rainy Day Fund**
- (e) **Proposition I: Child Care for Low Income Families**
- (f) **Proposition J: Facilities for the Homeless**
- (g) **Proposition L: Minimum Wage**
- (h) **Proposition M: Aggressive Solicitation Ban**

**Newsom:**

- (a) **Proposition C: City Services Auditor - Yes**  
I support an increase in accountability in City Government
- (b) **Proposition D: Small Business Commission - Yes**

The current Small Business Advisory Commission is often ignored and neglected, this will ensure that small business have a voice in government.

- (c) **Proposition F: Target Early Retirement - Yes**  
It makes good financial and management sense, the city would save approximately \$85,000 per position removed from the budget.
- (d) **Proposition G: Rainy Day Fund - Yes**  
We should set aside money during good financial times.
- (e) **Proposition I: Child Care for Low Income Families - Yes**  
Child Care for low-income families could save money for the city over time.
- (f) **Proposition J: Facilities for the Homeless - No**  
This undefined measure is vague and leaves the City liable to legal attacks.
- (g) **Proposition L: Minimum Wage - Yes**
- (h) **Proposition M: Aggressive Solicitation Ban - Yes**  
While I do think that the city must enforce its anti-panhandling laws, I do not believe that panhandlers should be criminalized, particularly when so many panhandlers have mental health or substance abuse problems that affect their behavior. Rather than shuttling aggressive panhandlers into San Francisco's already overburdened criminal justice system, the city must create a system for referring people to appropriate social service providers.

(3) **Do you support or oppose California Proposition 54 (Racial Privacy Initiative)? Why?**

**Newsom:** I strongly oppose Proposition 54. Proposition 54 will hurt efforts to stop the spread of disease: breast cancer, heart disease, infant mortality, sickle-cell anemia, prostate cancer, AIDS, tuberculosis, cervical cancer. These are just a few of the health conditions that affect us differently depending on our race or ethnicity. The health exemption covers medical research, not basic public health data systems such as vital statistics, the source of much of our information about diseases and their effects on different racial and ethnic groups. The Information Ban takes this critical knowledge away from the medical community.

From lead poisoning to teen smoking, to suicide, the most effective and cost efficient prevention programs understand that public health risks affect communities. Racial and ethnic groups experience differences in treatment, have different rates of risk behavior, and respond to different prevention methods and messages. Health experts agree: race and ethnicity matter in prevention.

## **(B) San Francisco Budget**

- (1) **What kinds of measures would you support to increase City revenues, including creating or increasing each of the following:**
- (a) **Payroll tax**
  - (b) **Gross receipts tax**
  - (c) **City income tax**
  - (d) **Sales tax**
  - (e) **Real estate transfer tax**
  - (f) **Other revenue measures**

**Newsom:** My position on taxes is that they be for a specific program or service, they must not be punitive on any single group and the City must have a clear plan on how the money will be spent. I believe we need to increase revenue to the city, and the best way of doing that is not raising taxes but stimulating the economy and creating jobs. I am the only candidate with a specific economic

development plan that will make it a priority to speed construction of transit, infrastructure, and housing projects already in the pipeline, which would put more than a billion dollars into the local economy and create 15,000 jobs.

**(2) Where and how would you cut the City budget?**

**Newsom:** We need to learn to do more with less, and to work smarter. There are numerous changes we can make in this direction – the 311 non-emergency system, for example, which government more cost-efficient by reducing the costs on the 911 system and tracking information more efficiently.

In tough economic times, everyone has to feel pain of budget cuts. No one group should bear an undue amount of burden, but we must ensure that the most vulnerable San Franciscans are protected. I am committed to managing the city for performance and holding all of us accountable for effectively serving all San Franciscans.

**(3) What measures would you support to preserve and protect crucial safety-net services provided by health and human service nonprofits for vulnerable San Franciscans?**

**Newsom:** I am committed to ensuring that safety-net services are provided to San Franciscans. I see non-profits as a key component of ensuring that services are provided to vulnerable San Franciscans, since non-profits provide cost effective services and can leverage private money.

## **(C) Poverty and Homelessness**

**(1) What are the primary causes contributing to poverty and homelessness in San Francisco?**

**Newsom:** These are two separate issues. Poverty is caused by a lack of good jobs and affordable housing. Homelessness is caused by a break down in our social services infrastructure and the abuse of alcohol and drugs.

**(2) What are the major elements of your plan to address homelessness in San Francisco?**

**Newsom:** San Francisco's current system of addressing homelessness has failed. With 169 deaths of homeless people last year, San Francisco has the dubious distinction as a leader in the nation in the number of people dying on its streets. We must change, last year I traveled to New York and Chicago, two cities that have made some progress in addressing homelessness, and met with human services officials in those cities. After those meeting and dozens of meetings with local and regional experts, I introduced the Care Not Cash initiative.

While Care Not Cash has been stalled by the courts and at the Board of Supervisors, it has changed the terms of debate. A year ago it would have been unheard of for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to replace the cash grant to the homeless, even with housing and other services. Currently, three proposals along those lines are currently being debated by the Board and will be voted on in the next few weeks.

In addition to Care Not Cash, as a supervisor I have introduced 34 specific pieces of legislation regarding homelessness. Many of these proposals have been adopted by my colleagues and are being implemented by the city, some have been sent to the Local Homeless Coordinating Board for comment and recommendation. Some of the programs I have initiated include:

- Requesting that the Department of Human Services apply for a waiver from the federal government to allow the homeless to redeem food stamps at restaurants.

- The creation of a coordinated intake for single homeless adults.
- A resolution calling on the creation of a homeless death prevention report.
- The creation of a shelter bed vacancy report.
- Federal waiver for methadone-clinic and SRO reforms.

In addition to Care Not Cash and my other initiatives, earlier this year, I was proud to open the McMillan Sobriety Center. This pilot project is the result of collaborative efforts between the public and private sectors and will enable the City to provide better public health services for chronic public inebriates.

**(3) What is your position on last year’s Proposition N (Care Not Cash) and other similar measures?**

**Newsom:** I support implementing Care Not Cash as it was presented to and approved by voters in November 2002. On May 13, I presented a resolution calling for the Board of Supervisors to do so without delay.

**(4) How would you balance the needs of homeless and other poor people with the needs of downtown business and the tourist industry?**

**Newsom:** Homelessness and panhandling effects all business in San Francisco especially small business. It is the local storeowner that is most impacted by homelessness and panhandling. The issue is not economics or homelessness, the issue is panhandling and what behavior is appropriate and what is not. Certain behaviors on the part of panhandlers – abusive language, unwanted or inappropriate physical contact – should not be tolerated. I have authored legislation placing restrictions specifically on panhandling on median strips, at ATMs and at exits/entries to highways.

While I do think that the city must enforce its anti-panhandling laws, I do not believe that panhandlers should be criminalized, particularly when so many panhandlers have mental health or substance abuse problems that affect their behavior. Rather than shuttling aggressive panhandlers into San Francisco’s already overburdened criminal justice system, the city must create a system for referring people to appropriate social service providers.

**(D) The Health and Human Services Nonprofit Sector**

**Nonprofit contractors play a vital partnership role with the City in meeting the needs of disadvantaged San Franciscans. The San Francisco Human Services Network and the San Francisco Urban Institute recently conducted a survey of nonprofit health and human service contractors which revealed that:**

- **Nonprofit agencies, with sites reaching every neighborhood and community, had an aggregate budget of over \$773 million in fiscal year 2000-2001, including over \$313 million in City contracts.**
- **Providers matched the City’s contribution with over \$459 million in additional funds—leveraging every City dollar with an additional \$1.50 from other sources.**
- **With these funds, agencies achieve over 970,000 client contacts each year, providing services ranging from long-term case management to six-week job training programs to single-contact telephone hotline calls.**
- **Providers employ over 15,000 staff and enroll over 1000 “client trainees”.**

- (1) What would you do to improve the environment for nonprofit community-based agencies? How would you strengthen the City's relationship with its nonprofit partners? What mechanisms would you support through which nonprofits would have a more meaningful role in City policy and budgetary decisions that impact their agencies and the communities they serve?**

**Newsom:** As mayor, I will work to ensure that non-profits are major participants in creating and implementation of public policy in the areas of health and human services.

Non-profit representatives should be empowered by the Mayor to review and comment on major city initiatives in the area of health and human services. Non-profit providers should be represented on city commissions, task forces and departmental advisory Boards.

I understand the knowledge and expertise on service delivery issues of non-profit service providers, this is an asset that can be much better utilized in city decision-making.

- (2) How would you strike an appropriate balance between the need for nonprofit innovation and autonomy and the need for accountability? Do you believe that current oversight mechanisms (including City monitoring through the contracting process, nonprofit Boards of Directors and outside audits) are sufficient?**

**Newsom:** It is accurate to say that there are few departments in San Francisco that are subject to the degree of programmatic, administrative and fiscal review that govern the activities of nonprofits in San Francisco.

The City must work with nonprofits to create forms, review practices, data collection, and reporting that standard within departments and service areas and where practical throughout the City. We need a clear and consistent level of supervision, adequate training and standard practices for monitor contracts. In addition to these steps we need to create a formal procedure to solicit feedback from agencies on the monitoring process.

- (3) A Nonprofit Contracting Task Force, with equal representation from the City and nonprofit service providers, has been meeting for the past year. The Task Force recently submitted its final implementation plan to the Board of Supervisors. The plan includes milestones and timelines to accomplish 13 objectives that would balance the need for accountability with the need to streamline City contracting and monitoring for nonprofit services.**

(See:[http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/npcontractingtf/meetings/Full\\_Task\\_Force/supporting/2003/CNPCTF\\_BOS\\_RPT\\_06-26-03\(1\).PDF](http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/npcontractingtf/meetings/Full_Task_Force/supporting/2003/CNPCTF_BOS_RPT_06-26-03(1).PDF))

**As Mayor, what steps will you take to ensure implementation of the objectives in this report? How would you assure that your appointed Department heads will carry out these reforms with all diligence in their departments?**

**Newsom:** First I would require the Department heads I appointed to support these objectives, I would then mandate they implement these reforms and hold them accountable for meeting the objectives.

- (4) Under San Francisco's annual budget process, the City generally addresses the question and rate of nonprofit contractor cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) and cost-of-doing business adjustments (CODB) after funding other departmental requests, usually with funds identified by the Budget Analyst as cost savings. This process has led to nonprofit COLAs significantly below salary increases for City employees.**

**Do you support the following:**

- (a) **Annual COLAs for nonprofit contractors?**
- (b) **Contractor COLAs tied to the amount of the civil service COLA?**
- (c) **COLAs applied to all nonprofit contracts, or only those receiving general fund dollars?**
- (d) **Annual CODB adjustments in nonprofit contracts that reflect increases in the cost of operations as well as personnel?**

**How would you incorporate decision-making about COLAs into the budget process?**

**Newsom:**

- (a) Annual COLAs for nonprofit contractors? Within the constraints of the budget and if city department received a COLA.
- (b) Contractor COLAs tied to the amount of the civil service COLA? Yes, see my previous answer.
- (c) COLAs applied to all nonprofit contracts, or only those receiving general fund dollars? Yes, and I would apply the COLA on grant funding as well, within the constraints of the budget.
- (d) Annual CODB adjustments in nonprofit contracts that reflect increases in the cost of operations as well as personnel? Yes, within the constraints of the budget.

How would you incorporate decision-making about COLAs into the budget process? I would link the COLA's in civil service contracts to those of nonprofit contractors.

**(5) The growing disparity in wage rates between nonprofit and City human service employees leads to difficulty in recruiting and retaining nonprofit staff. Should employees of contracting nonprofit agencies earn wage rates that are comparable to civil service employees in similar job classifications? What steps would you take to advance wage parity?**

**Newsom:** I understand that nonprofit agencies work on a different budgeting and performance system than City agencies. As mayor I will be focused on outcomes and work to ensure that nonprofit agencies have the resources necessary to perform the contracted task and will let them determine the appropriate wages to pay their contract-civil employees.

**(6) What social and health services should be provided by City employees, and what should the City contract out to nonprofits? On what criteria should these decisions be based? Some City policy-makers have recently made the assertion that there are "too many nonprofits". Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?**

**Newsom:** I would not limit the range of services that could be contracted out to nonprofits. In general, I believe that the City should contract with nonprofits to provide services when it is necessary to move in a timely manner, to leverage outside resources and because nonprofits tend to be closer to the communities they serve than the City. I also believe that when it is demonstrable that a nonprofit is better positioned than the City to provide a service, the service should be contracted out.

I don't agree with the "too many nonprofits" assertion. I believe that more nonprofits will create more competition in providing services and this will lead to better services at the best cost to the city.

## **(E) Housing and Services**

**(1) The San Francisco 2003 draft Housing Element has identified the need for some 13,000 very low to moderate income homes by June 2006, including: 3200 units of affordable accessible**

**housing, 1500 units of affordable senior housing, and 5600 units of affordable multi-bedroom family housing. As Mayor, given the declining level of federal and state financing for affordable housing development, how would you finance this level of affordable housing?**

**Newsom:** Two of the main city sources for affordable housing funds are the hotel tax and the Redevelopment Agency tax increment. Therefore, if we are to maintain and increase these sources of funds for affordable housing we need to do what we can to increase the tourist/convention attractiveness of our city and we need to be sure that the developments in Redevelopment Project Areas will generate a tax increment.

San Francisco voters have twice been presented with requests to fund bonds for affordable housing. The first request passed and the second request failed. We should consider asking the voters if they would approve another bond measure for affordable housing.

Part of the affordable, inclusionary units in ownership developments will require substantial down payments. Sometimes it is the down payment requirement and not the monthly mortgage requirement that is the bottleneck. Currently the city has a modest program of down payment assistance in return for sharing in the increase value of the home when it is sold or refinanced. Given the relatively low risk in such investments, since home values in San Francisco continue to increase, I believe that we should study a revenue bond authorization for such assistance.

We have to do what we can to see that the housing in Mission Bay is built in an orderly and timely manner. We have push the Navy to move forward with the clean-up of Hunter's Point Ship Yard so that housing can be built. We have to look at the remaining public housing sites and see which ones can be rebuilt at higher densities; certainly Sunnyvale could be rebuilt at a higher density just as North Beach is being rebuilt at a higher density. I would support non-profit organizations developing and managing of these rebuilt, higher density public housing developments.

**(2) This year, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, through its tax-increment bond program, will provide some \$60 million in affordable housing financing. How much of this money should be spent on developing permanently affordable housing? How much on temporary leases in Single Room Occupancy hotels?**

**Newsom:** All things being equal, we should not use capital funds from bonds to pay for operating income items such as leases. If there is a temporary, short-term issue that needs to be addressed, we might consider violating this principal of sound finance.

**(3) The Chamber of Commerce is urging the creation of a program to accelerate housing for the "workforce" through density bonuses and guaranteed fast-track approvals. The Chamber defines eligibility as households earning 120% of area median income (currently \$109,000 for a household of four in San Francisco), i.e. housing that would be affordable to less than 6% of the projected workforce. Do you favor granting developers these bonuses and guarantees?**

**Newsom:** Yes. I am the principal sponsor of this workforce housing initiative. As I mentioned, our task is to provide housing opportunities for all income groups. This proposal is addressing the needs of a group that is above the income limits of most affordable housing programs and below the income to own most of the housing in San Francisco. This proposal is designed for working families that are currently leaving San Francisco because they cannot afford to purchase a home. I believe that we must give these families a chance to purchase a home and stay in San Francisco.

Since this measure has an automatic sunset in 2013, voters will be able to look at what has been accomplished and decide if we want to continue the program.

**(4) What are your plans to protect over 450 tenants of affordable units in the Trinity Plaza Apartments who are facing possible eviction and displacement for market rate housing towers?**

**Newsom:** It is in the city's interest to see that this underused site is rebuilt with more units so that more individuals can walk to work and so that the city's tax base is increased. There is no question that the site should be redeveloped. Of course, considering the importance that such redevelopment would have on all of the Mid Market Area, the planning department has to pay close attention to any proposed new development.

If the rebuilt development contains 1400 dwelling units, there would be a long-term obligation of 168 affordable units and if the new development had 2000 units, the obligation would be 240 affordable units. I would encourage the developer to use tax exempt bond financing which would result in 280 to 400 (i.e., 20% of the units) being affordable. And furthermore, I believe we should move forward with creating a Mid Market Redevelopment Area that includes this site which would result in a substantial part of the new tax revenues being earmarked for additional affordable housing.

If this rebuilding goes ahead what should be done with the relocation of the tenants in the existing 377 units? Residents should be considered as three different groups. The first group consists of those who move into the existing development after the developer has submitted a proposal to the planning department. These residents should be put on notice that the city is considering a redevelopment and that they may have to move. Considering that it will take several years all entitlement and building permits to be approved, anywhere from one third to two thirds of the residents will have moved into the existing the development knowing that this could be a short-term location. I'm not convinced that those who moved into the existing units knowing that redevelopment was possible should be given any new or special treatment.

The second group consists of those long-term residents who meet the income levels of the various city funded affordable housing units. If the city desires that it is desirable to move forward, we should treat the relocation of these households in the affordable income levels in a special manner. I would consider giving any household that has to move because of a city approved development the ability to go to the head of the line in new city funded affordable housing developments.

And now there is the smaller third group of long term residents whose incomes are above the limits of the various city affordable housing programs. I think we should consider requiring some sort of time specific subsidy that relates to the number of years the resident has been at the existing building and the income of the resident. Before we begin to negotiate terms for those individuals who can afford market rate housing, we need to know more about the number of households that might fit into this category.

**(5) Several studies have recommended that San Francisco's juvenile justice system develop more community-based alternatives to incarceration. What is your position on juvenile crime? On community-based alternatives? Would you close Log Cabin Ranch?**

**Newsom:** The City's failure to develop and implement community-based detention alternatives has been noted in at least six major reports. In addition to the damaging effects on our youth, the inability to develop and utilize detention alternatives results in unnecessary public expense and ensures that fewer resources will be available for more comprehensive longer-term interventions.

Because of concerns about Log Cabin Ranch, Judges have been reluctant to sentence juvenile offenders to this facility. This has lead to a decreasing population; a longstanding proposal has been to move the operations of Log Cabin Ranch to a nonprofit organization. This would improve the quality issues and allow the access of state funds for the operation of the Ranch. While opposed by some in

the Juvenile Probation Department, I believe that this step should be seriously considered and with the appropriate input from the effected communities.

**(6) The Mayor must work with the Police Chief and District Attorney around quality of life crimes and juvenile crime. How will these issues impact your selection of a Police Chief? Are you supporting a candidate for District Attorney, and if so, whom and why?**

**Newsom:** I have announced my plan for reforming the police department based on the Compstat model used throughout the country. My selection of a Police Chief will be someone who can implement this system here in San Francisco. I am not supporting a candidate for District Attorney.

**(7) What is your vision for how the City should plan to absorb federal cuts to the Ryan White Care Act?**

**Newsom:** The Ryan White Care Act created what amounts to a separate system of care for those patients with HIV/AIDS. As these federal funds are cut the City will need to integrate this system of care into existing programs. This will allow us to continue providing the maximum amount of service for the longest possible time. As one of the cities most affected by the AIDS epidemic we must fight for reauthorization of the Ryan White Care Act before it expires in 2005.

**(8) What plans do you have to invest in substance abuse treatment-on-demand services to increase access and capacity?**

**Newsom:** I am a strong advocate for increased access to substance abuse treatment. San Francisco has one of the highest rates of drug addiction in the nation. As a member of the Board of Supervisors, I have fought for treatment-on-demand. As a city we have made great strides in providing services on demand. We need to do more, the Care Not Cash implementation plan, which was to have been presented to the Board of Supervisors until the courts delayed the implementation of Care Not Cash, would have funded a wide range of drug treatment services. I believe we need to continue to look for the means to increase investing into capacity for treatment-on-demand services.