College Democrats at UCSC

Santa Cruz City Council Candidate Questionnaire

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| All questionnaires will be published publicly on the UCSCDems.com website  Must be completed and submitted by August 30th, 2020  Send completed, by email, to [BlueSlugs@gmail.com](mailto:BlueSlugs@gmail.com) |

1. **CANDIDATE IDENTIFICATION** 
   * Elected Office You Seek: Santa Cruz City Council
   * Candidate Name: Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson
   * Occupation/Profession: Grant Writer/Nonprofit Strategic Manager/Leadership Practitioner Coach
   * Email address (this is our preferred manner of communication unless you specify otherwise): shebreh4santacruz@gmail.com
   * Home/Office Phone:(831) 227-8228
   * Cell Phone: (831) 227-8228
   * Incumbent: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_X\_\_ No
   * Former campaigns for elected office, and their outcomes: NA
   * Appointed offices currently/formerly appointed to: Central California Alliance for Health-appointed/current; Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust-Board Chair/current
   * Organizations you are a member of: Central California Alliance for Health; Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust; Dignity Health’s Community Advisory Board’s Giving Committee, United Way of Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project and Community Impact Committee, and Pacific Elementary School Parents Club
2. **DEMOCRATIC AFFILIATION**
   * Approximate number of years as a registered Democrat? \_\_17\_\_\_ Santa Cruz County \_\_2\_\_\_ Elsewhere
   * Describe your involvement with the Democratic Party at the Local, State or National level over the last few years.

I have supported democratic candidates in local races including City Council, Board of Supervisors, School Superintendent. I have supported these races through serving on election committees, providing endorsements, and helping with fundraising.

1. **INFORMATIONAL QUESTIONS**

**General Questions**

1. **What are your main campaign priorities?**

My campaign priority issues include: Economic Vitality, Housing, Public Health, and Social Equity.

1. **What specific policy changes will you prioritize should you be elected?**

Economic Vitality-The COVID-19 pandemic is having significant economic impacts on community members, non-profits, and local businesses. If elected, I will work towards securing outside resources including capital from the State and Federal government. I will also explore foundation and other sources of funding for our local programs. This is a skill I have proven to success in accomplishing. I will also partner with our local financial institutions and local community foundations to explore programs such as microloans.

Housing, as a public health and social equity issue, is truly at the core of my campaign. By increasing affordable housing we will impact our community well-being and allow our teachers, fire fighters, seniors, young families and youth transitioning out of foster care a place to live in the community that they call home.**Housing protections are also important in particular during this time as we are impacted by the global pandemic.** If elected,I will focus on policies and programs that increase the needed mix of housing for our community in alignment with our Housing Element. We can do this through conscious growth that will allow for a diverse and inclusive community. I am interested in mixed use housing that will allow for walkable communities. This will have positive impacts on our environment and help us create a strong sense of community. It will also be important to provide protections to current renters. I will work to secure State resources for rental assistance and rent forgiveness programs related to COVID-19.

Public Health will be at the forefront of all policy and program decisions in the coming years due to the **COVID-19 pandemic.**Our city will be providing essential city resources such as managing waste-water, providing clean water, and picking up refuse, while figuring out how much and how to safely meet other community needs such as parks and recreation programs, and childcare for children and families. As our city navigates these essential city needs, we must ensure the safety of all community members by implementing recommendations of public health officials including face coverings and social distancing. We must also support populations who are at higher risk of contracting and suffering from the disease. While we are responding to these immediate needs, we must also look to building health and wellbeing for our city’s future. If elected,I will use the [Health in All Policies](https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/government/city-departments/city-manager/health-in-all-policies) framework, which I helped our city develop and implement in the last year, as a framework to help us make decisions. Health in All Policies is an approach to policy making that integrates health, equity and sustainability considerations across sectors.

Social Equity is something I will strive for as well. The movement for racial justice has exposed the systemic racial injustices throughout our country and here in our community. As an immigrant and woman of color, I stand in solidarity with the global uprising to declare that Black Lives Matter and to end the centuries of racism embedded in this country and beyond. I have experienced racial inequities in my home country of Iran, as a refugee in countries across Europe (as we were making our way to the U.S.) and here in the United States. These experiences have shaped who I am and impacted my career choices. I care deeply about equity and I strive for this in my every day. As a first step, I commit to actively reflecting on my own patterns of privilege and oppression. I know that efforts are already underway to address racial justice in our community. If elected, I will engage with existing efforts and identify what might be missing specifically in the City of Santa Cruz and in our partnerships with the County and nonprofits. I will work with Black people and people of color in our community and our systems leaders to ask the questions-What systems and cultural narratives are perpetuating inequities for black and people of color in our community? What needs to shift? Where are the opportunities for change? We will need to look upstream and think about all systems and program, beyond law enforcement and juvenile justice, this includes early care and education and services for children and families. In addition to engaging these systems, I will advocate with neighboring jurisdictions such as the County of Santa Cruz to amplify community-led solutions.

In order to accomplish these above stated commitments, I will take the following actions:

* I will listen to *ALL* community members and hold multiple perspectives so that together we can build a future in which *all* Santa Cruz residents live with equity and dignity.
* I will promote the use and implementation of *Health in all Policies* in policy and program decision making.
* I will create a space for youth and young adult leadership and voice to be uplifted to help us rebuild our community.
* I will activate cross-county partnerships to leverage resources.
* I will explore ways to diversify city funding.

While I don’t propose simple solutions to these challenging problems, I know that my lifelong career in public health, social work and community building will contribute to our city creating solutions.

**Affordable Housing**

1. **Scenario: As a council member, a housing development is being proposed that would create 100 new housing units. The development meets the minimum affordable housing requirement, but less than your desired number of affordable units.** 
   * **Would you approve the housing development even if it does not meet your personal preference for the number of affordable units created? Please elaborate.**

The job of councilmembers is to not just take abstract positions but to find out the economic realities of various development proposals. Developers will sometimes tell the Council that more affordable units are not feasible. This is sometimes not completely accurate I will work to educate myself about reading proformas in development proposals and seek advice from experts who support maximizing affordable housing construction to figure out “what the traffic will bear.” So sometimes I would vote for a housing project even if it didn’t meet my desires for affordability, but sometimes I would ask them to come back with a revised plan to increase the affordability of a project.

1. **What strategies and policies will you champion to increase affordable housing?**

Affordable housing is a public health and social equity issue impacting many other societal challenges. A healthy diverse community has a mixture of housing that is available for a variety of levels of income and groups such as seniors, single adults, families, service workers, professionals, laborers, public servants. More housing units also decrease commute time positively impacting the city’s climate action goals and impacting quality of life for workers.

Addressing accessibility and affordability will be key to the housing crisis we have here in Santa Cruz. As with many California Coastal communities, access to land is challenging.

An essential step is to inventory available land held by churches, schools, non-profits or individuals for affordable housing projects.

One opportunity is to prioritize affordable housing in planning for city owned land. This includes surface parking lots in the downtown area. I would also explore the current library site as a potential site for affordable housing. Building mixed use higher density housing, that is done thoughtfully so that we maintain the aesthetic sense of our community in the downtown area will be an important strategy to pursue.

I would also update our Corridor Plan which will allow for a large number of new housing units to be built along the City’s major transit corridors.

Additionally, there are two bills in the State Legislature, AB3308 and AB1486 that will make it easier for school districts to use public land and affordable housing tax credit funding to build homes specifically for their own teachers and employees. I will be proactive and work with our city and school districts to identify potential sites.

I will insist that the University provide new housing units (mostly on campus, but perhaps with some in town if supported financially by UCSC) for every additional new student they admit and for every new staff and faculty member that they hire.

The city council will also need to explore sources of funding to finance affordable housing projects. I will actively pursue State and Federal funding opportunities, something that I have had much success with, in my career as a grant writer. I will also explore use of the City’s Trust fund. When the economy is restored, I will also explore a bond measure, similar to 2018 Measure H that would be focused within the City of Santa Cruz.

Finally, the City’s Housing Blueprint and General Plan Housing Element will be utilized as guides to move us to our affordable housing goals.

1. **How will you balance approving new housing developments with maximizing affordable units?**

The City should maximize zoning that encourages more dense, affordable housing in our community. Some market housing needs to be in the mix to support young professionals and others that need housing in support of our local workforce, but we have a significant need for housing affordable to low-income and moderate- income residents.

I will pursue incentive programs that will generate the maximum amount of affordable housing that is feasible. Economic feasibility studies will be significant in decision making. Some incentives to explore include:

* Making some inclusionary housing units section 8--which allows for affordable units without lowering the rent for developers, making projects more economically feasible.
* Density bonus incentives--providing an increase in allowed dwelling units per acre, Floor Area Ratio or height, which often means that more housing units can be built on the site. Typically these incentive programs allow increases of between 10-20% over baseline permitted density in exchange for the provision of affordable housing.

**Policing in Santa Cruz**

The College Democrats at UCSC has previously written in support of getting cops off UCSC’s campus as the COLA strikes occurred in the beginning of 2020. You can read our full statement at [UCSCDems.com](http://ucscdems.com). After UCSC’s Black Student Union released demands to the UCSC Administration, the College Democrats at UCSC voted unanimously in support. Their demands included abolishing the UC Police Department at UCSC.

1. Do you support or oppose reducing the Santa Cruz Police Department’s budget and redistributing the funds to other city services?

Check one: Support \_\_\_X\_\_\_ (in concept) Oppose \_\_\_\_\_\_

* + **If yes, how much of a budget reduction and what departments would you prioritize in receiving increased funding?**

A holistic approach is necessary to address the systemic racial inequities that have been brought to surface in recent months. While law enforcement and criminal justice reform are essential to addressing racial injustices we must also examine other systems that perpetuate systemic racial inequities. This includes education and health.

There is a need for public safety *and* our city can and should implement policies and programs that make better use of our police force while decriminalizing the symptoms and manifestations of mental health and substance abuse. I do not support simply cutting the Police Department budget without addressing how important functions that the police department provides will be addressed. Some police functions would be better handled by other departments, such as health services, and, of course, in those situations, the Police Department budget would be reduced.

I have worked on the issue of behavioral for over two decades including securing grant funding to support community organizations that provide behavioral health services. When communities do not invest in these services, the results are criminalization of individuals experiencing mental health and substance abuse. Investing in experienced and trained clinical staff that can address these behaviors is essential. In the City of Santa Cruz, we have two clinical social workers that work with our local police department. We also have a probation ‘one stop shop’ center that provides clinical mental health support. I have successfully secured grant funds for these types of programs in our community. As an elected official, I would continue to support investments in upstream programs that divert individuals from the criminal justice system and connect them to much needed behavioral health care. This will take partnership with our local police department, Sheriff’s department, probation department, health services agency and community-based organizations. I have strong relationships with each of these entities and have helped strengthen partnerships between them in the past.

* + If no, what other reforms would you like to see enacted in the Santa Cruz Police Department?

1. **What specific changes would you like to see enacted for the Santa Cruz Police Department?**

I would like to see police training and supervision including around topics such as implicit bias and how to divert individuals from incarceration by working with mental health professionals. I would also advocate for reforming current California State laws that limit the ability of local communities to investigate, supervise, and discipline police involved in negative behavior.

1. **Do you support or oppose abolishing the Santa Cruz Police Department, in a way similar to Minneapolis? Please elaborate.**

Check one: Support \_\_\_\_\_\_ Oppose \_\_X\_\_\_\_

The Santa Cruz Police Department plays an important role in maintaining public safety. I would work with the current Mayor and Police Chief task force that includes Black community leaders to identify and implement changes in policies and practices that perpetuate racial injustices and redistribute funds to support prevention and diversion programming and staffing.

1. **What do you envision for the future of our justice system?**

I support criminal justice reform and have worked on multiple projects with our local juvenile justice system to address disproportionate minority confinement and disproportionate percentages of youth of color in the criminal justice system. These projects include multi-pronged approaches that address systemic racial inequities by looking at and shifting policies and practices to address disproportionate rates of Black and Latinx youth and adults in our justice system; building the capacity of first responders, including police (for example, through implicit bias trainings), and increasing prevention, diversion, and treatment services (for example, a just secured a multi-million dollar grant that creates a hub for youth, in particular Latinx youth, to engage in prosocial activities while receiving prevention and diversion support).

I will work with Black people and People of color in our community, community-based organizations, system leaders and our local law enforcement to find solutions that work upstream, increase and expand our social service response, work towards continued criminal justice reform, while continuing to meet public safety needs.

**COVID-19 Pandemic**

1. **Do you support or oppose extending the eviction moratorium until the COVID-19 pandemic has ended? Please elaborate.**

Check one: Support \_\_X\_\_\_\_ Oppose \_\_\_\_\_\_

During these unprecedented times of COVID pandemic and now the CZU Lightening Complex Fires, we must ensure ways to keep all of our community members, including renters and homeowners, housed. As an elected official, I will advocate for and seek emergency relief funds from the State, Federal government and other outside sources to provide rental assistance including back rent payments. Additionally, we must take a holistic approach to supporting our residents and consider offsetting other costs associated with living in Santa Cruz, such as food security, utilities and childcare.

1. **Do you support or oppose erasing compounded rent debt accumulated through the COVID-19 pandemic? Please elaborate.**

Check one: Support \_\_X\_\_\_\_ Oppose \_\_\_\_\_\_

Again, during these times, it is essential to support all of our residents. Once an individual or family becomes unhoused, it is extremely difficult to get them housed again.

1. **Do you support or oppose canceling rent during the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic? Please elaborate.**

Check one: Support \_\_\_\_\_\_ Oppose \_\_\_X\_\_\_

We need to create policy solutions that allow for adjustments so that residents are not left without homes because of unemployment that has resulted from the pandemic, however a universal cancelling of rents would be unjust and harmful to about 3000 small landlords in Santa Cruz that own just one or a few small housing units. We must seek and secure government funds to subsidize rent gaps, so we are not putting the whole burden on the backs of small ‘mom and pop’ landlords. We must look at our local context and find solutions for all residents including renters and homeowners.

1. **What specific COVID relief policies/packages to students are you in support of?**

During periods when all classes at colleges and universities are being taught on-line, tuition and fees should be reduced. This is important not just for the students, but for the institution. It is not just to charge full fees and tuition for the clearly reduced quality of education being offered remotely. If the University and other colleges don’t reduce their tuition and fees, they risk losing enrollments and overall revenue.

1. **What policies and assistance do you support to expand our healthcare capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

Improving our healthcare capacity should be a priority whether we are in the middle of a pandemic or not. The artificial restrictions on access to medical school should be removed so that we can produce more physicians who are willing to focus on community medicine rather than becoming highly paid specialists. Government subsidies that pay medical school debt can be incentives for becoming community medicine physicians (as is the model for Teach for America).

Education pathways are also important. We must start early and support youth in pursuing healthcare professions by providing financial and educational support. This includes our schools implementing career pathway programs. I serve as the Board Chair of the Pajaro Valley Health Trust, a nonprofit organization in the Pajaro Valley that focuses on health equity. As part of its efforts, the Health Trust implements a grant giving program, which I am a committee member of. Each year, the Health Trust grants up to $20,000 in scholarships to high school students who are pursuing health careers. Additionally, this year the Health Trust became the holder of the Eiskamp endowment, which awarded over $46,000 to Cabrillo College students in the Allied Health programs. It is these types of investments and upstream thinking that we must continue with and expand upon.

Healthcare is a human right. During this time of global pandemic, we must rise up and protect the healthcare of all by providing free or drastically reduced cost healthcare. This will require government subsidies, which we can implement if we are willing to prioritize and refocus our resources.

1. **How will you support community needs during the COVID-19 pandemic and prevent budget austerity?**

We will be facing some of the most difficult financial crises of our times. I go into this city council race understanding the difficult decisions that will be put before us. I am committed to seeking outside sources of funds and leveraging partnerships to ensure that city employees and our residents are not adversely impacted.  One of the most important solutions is federal bailouts that support local government revenue shortfalls. The outcome of the November elections will have significant implications on how much support city, county, and state governments will receive.

In terms of areas to cut, I will explore reduction of capital expenditure before making employee cuts. I would take this opportunity to utilize the Health in All Policies--a quality of life framework, which I supported in developing and implementing, to guide this decision making. Health in All Policies is an approach to policy making that integrates health, equity and sustainability considerations across sectors. Health in All Policies provides a mechanism that ensures tax dollars are used effectively- investing in programs, services, and policies that prioritize quality of life for all.

Additionally, I have experience in designing projects and forging partnerships so that our community is successful in obtaining competitive grant funds. Through my grant work, I have secured over $30 million dollars over the last 15 years to address our community’s issues. I will use my skills of building partnerships, facilitating difficult conversations and seeking and securing competitive funding sources, and explore reduction of capital expenditures to address our city’s budget needs.

**Homelessness**

1. **What specific policy changes will you pursue to protect unhoused folks, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

I have had the opportunity to co-lead the County’s COVID-19 Emergency Response team supporting Transition Age Youth (18-24) secure a safe location to shelter in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. The combination of cross-county, cross jurisdiction, and public/nonprofit partnership has been successful in temporarily housing hundreds of individuals across our county. The project was able to house over 30 Transition Age Youth in a span of a few weeks. State donated trailers have also housed 17 Transition Age Youth (some including young parents). Through the support of nonprofit partners providing wrap around services, these youth and young adults have pursued permanent housing, employment and education goals. The city and county led outreach programs have increased engagement with hard to reach segments of the unhoused population and in some cases have set them on a pathway to shelter and safety. I will work to ensure these partnerships and programs continue during the COVID-19 pandemic and Shelter in Place order.

Our community has been able to utilize hotels for SIP purposes. There is an opportunity now with so many vacant businesses to utilize unproductive properties temporarily and create many housing alternatives for the unhoused. When the crisis is over, and businesses are, once again, looking for places to open or re-open, the property can be returned to the private market. As we are addressing the crisis at hand, we must think about long-term solutions to the homeless crisis, which is, fundamentally an issue of more affordable housing and programs to support people who have been forced out of the functioning mainstream economy*.*

1. **How will you work towards eliminating homelessness in Santa Cruz? What are previous examples of supporting our unhoused population?**

I have worked on the issue of homelessness over the last two decades. I have done this work through direct service, policy reform, strategic planning, project coordination and grant writing. My work has included: providing direct service to formerly homeless adults living in subsidized housing in the Tenderloin in San Francisco; working on policy reform in San Francisco; successfully acquiring multi-million dollar grants to address adult and youth homelessness in Santa Cruz; leading a community strategic planning process to develop strategies and solutions to address youth and young adult homelessness in Santa Cruz; supporting the coordination of project implementation; and securing multi-million dollar competitive grants.

As we rebuild our community from COVID and now the CZU Lightening Complex Fires, we must look ahead at addressing our homeless crisis. Continued City and County partnership is essential for any strategy. We can support our nonprofits by partnering to decrease their overheard (i.e. rent forgiveness programs) so that they may implement evidence based programs effectively and efficiently. The City must also support projects that help individuals get on a path towards permanent housing. This includes projects such as navigation centers. One of the most important roles that the City has is supporting the development of more affordable housing.

1. **Scenario: As a council member, there is a proposal to designate an overnight parking location for unhoused folks living in their vehicles. The location is close to a school and near residential zones, but does not violate any regulations. Some local residents meet with you and oppose the designation.** 
   * **What do you tell them?**

Need to balance public health impacts of community, neighbors and unhoused individuals

Overnight parking location may be better placed in locations such as church parking lots

The council must listen to the concerns of all residents and sort out which of their objections are founded and reasonable and which may be based in fear. It is important to acknowledge fear and at the same time provide accurate information to the community about the unhoused population (for example, according to the last Point in Time Count survey, the majority of those unhoused were living in Santa Cruz County when they became homeless-they are from our community). The council must also consider potential public health impacts to the community, neighbors and unhoused individuals from the proposed overnight location (i.e. are there hygiene stations available; what about sewage and waste). We must also anticipate behaviors that may be symptoms of mental health and substance use that impact quality of life for the neighborhood residents.**AND** we must find compassionate solutions to support our unhoused so that they may live with dignity. This includes finding safe spaces for the unhoused in our community that may be a better fit for overnight parking, such as church parking lots. We must also focus on programs such as navigation centers that connect individuals to resources and get them on a pathway towards permanent housing. Finally, we must focus on building more affordable housing.

* + **Would you support or oppose the designation? What other factors might you consider? Please elaborate.**

I would support a safe overnight vehicle space with adequate regulations and supervision of the parking areas that are in locations that have the least public health and quality of life impacts on neighborhoods.

1. **Do you support or oppose a housing-first approach to address homelessness? Please elaborate.**

Check one: Support \_\_X\_\_\_\_ Oppose \_\_\_\_\_\_

It has been more than adequately demonstrated by now, that unhoused individuals are not all alike and they have many and varied needs that need to be addressed. But virtually all of the programs to support that process are much more effective if the individuals are in stable housing first. Housing First an evidence-based trauma informed approach that puts an individual’s basic physical and emotional safety first by taking the stance that the housing is secure and that other behavioral requirements are at the individual’s discretion. There is a large and growing evidence base demonstrating that Housing First is an effective solution to homelessness. Housing First embraces a coordinated system of care at the micro, mezzo, and macro practice levels.

**UCSC-Centered Issues**

The College Democrats at UCSC has previously heard from a County representative regarding the potential negative impacts of UCSC’s Long-Range Development Plan on the Santa Cruz community and housing. The plan includes preparing to increase enrollment up to 28,000 students by 2040.

1. **Do you support or oppose UCSC’s long-range development plan (LRDP)?**

I oppose UCSC’s LRDP as it does not articulate how it will secure the resources that are necessary for growth before more students are invited to the campus and community. There may be some room for growth of the student body at UCSC, however, the University and their statewide network must plan for and provide adequate housing, teachers, classrooms, labs, transportation, recreation, and staff support, etc. before any more additional students are enrolled. The current plan proposes to bring students in first and then consider support for their enrollment, this could take decades and would no longer be relevant to the students currently enrolled. The LRDP as is will have significant negative impacts on the local community and UCSC students.

* + **If you do not, what actions or strategy would you take as a city council member to prevent the growth?**

I will build a coalition of students, community activists, parents, alumni, UC donors, and local and State legislators, to challenge the UC growth model. Local government has few levers to stop this growth without a major community effort to bring pressure on UC at the statewide level. The basis of the argument for growth is the need to educate students in California, and particularly underserved students. But the education they would get with UCSC growing before it has the resources to support that growth would be a debased education that will not actually help these students achieve their goals.

1. **If city council elections must transition to district elections, how would you redistrict the UCSC campus? What considerations will you take into account in preparing for this possible future?**

If redistricting does take place, we should do our best to create districts that are not gerrymandered with political aims but simply allow various neighborhoods, including the campus to have more intimate connection between the citizens and their representatives. I would work with experts and consultants to ensure an inclusive and transparent community process to determine the best way forward.

**Social Justice**

1. **What policies will you fight for in order to achieve greater racial justice in Santa Cruz? This issue spans across many issues we have asked about before, so we hope your answer is deep and nuanced as well.**

The movement for racial justice has exposed the systemic racial injustices throughout our country and here in our community. As an immigrant and woman of color, I stand in solidarity with the global uprising to declare that Black Lives Matter and to end the centuries of racism embedded in this country and beyond. I have experienced racial inequities in my home country of Iran, as a refugee in countries across Europe, and here in the United States. These experiences have shaped who I am and impacted my life choices. I care deeply about equity and dignity and I strive for this in my every day.  As a first step, I commit to actively reflecting on my own patterns of privilege and oppression.

A holistic approach is necessary to address the systemic racial inequities that are embedded in multiple systems. This includes government, education, health, law enforcement, social services. The questions we need to ask include: What systems and cultural narratives are perpetuating inequities for black and people of color in our community? What needs to shift? Where are the opportunities for change?

The city must look internally at its own policies and practices. The Health in All Policies framework recently passed in the city is a framework that uses the lens of equity, sustainability, and health for all policy decision making. As part of the city’s efforts to implement Health in All Policies, equity trainings are being proposed for city employees, commissioners, and council members. I am committed to implementing this framework, which I supported the city in adopting, as an entry point to addressing our internal patterns and practices that perpetuate racial injustices.

I will also work with our police department and the racial justice Taskforce that has been developed to move forward with swift action in addressing policies and practices that perpetuate racial injustices and put in place upstream programs. This includes trainings for law enforcement staff such as implicit bias, and allocation of funds to social services.

I will also work with our school systems and public health systems to ensure alignment of our goals and efforts to address racial injustices. I recently worked with the County Probation Department and the County Office of Education in supporting their pilot program to prevent and divert Latinx youth from entering the criminal justice system. The pilot, Student Success Program, applies a targeted universalism approach that provides supports and resources to youth and families that have indicators that correlate to criminal justice involvement (such as absenteeism and suspensions). These are the types of programs that I will continue to support and align with our city efforts.

1. **What policy changes do you support that directly help transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming folks in Santa Cruz? How will you ensure your campaign is inclusive of transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming folks?**

I have worked with and supported local organizations that advance the rights of transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming individuals. I have and continue to learn a lot from my colleagues and implement practices in my own work to ensure authentic inclusion. This includes practices such as introductions in meetings that ask people to state their preferred pronouns; and selecting meeting spaces in which non-binary restrooms are available (when meetings were taking place in person pre-COVID). As a part of my campaign, I have and will continue to reach out to these colleagues inviting them to share their concerns, priorities, and insights. As I learn, I will identify the policies and best practices that might be missing that would support transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming individuals. I will pursue and advocate for these policies and best practices. As a first step, I would work on ensuring that these policies and practices are in place for the city departments and include trainings by our local experts and colleagues.

1. **What policies will you pursue locally to protect our climate? What work have you been involved with previously to protect our environment?**

I have supported the development and now implementation of the Health in All Policies framework, which includes environmental sustainability as one of its three pillars (the other two being equity and health). I have also worked with local organizations that advance climate action work, such as Ecology Action, providing leadership capacity building trainings for their staff.

As we think about climate protection, it will be important to demonstrate a strong nexus between COVID recovery, fire recovery and climate action. Our city can explore solutions that are interconnected including building out a green economy that generates well paying green businesses and jobs. Our city can also invest in rebuilding our downtown and our communities by investing in rooftop solar and business solar. New housing projects must include green infrastructure as part of the plans. Building density housing downtown will allow for people to live and work in the same place, creating walkable communities and decreasing carbon emissions.

I understand that our rate of new electric vehicle purchases are strong. This is something we can support through investing in electric vehicle charging stations throughout our city. We can also explore providing opportunities for one time use cars and ride shares for those who may have need for a vehicle from time to time. I would like our city to explore different ways to handle our organic waste through partnering with neighboring jurisdictions including the county.

I know there will be opportunities to explore more ideas as we develop our Climate Action Plan over the next year. It is critical to engage the community as we build our plan so that our efforts are community informed and relevant to our needs. This includes finding authentic and inclusive methods of outreach to those who are typically underrepresented.

\_\_\_\_\_Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_8/30/2020\_\_\_\_\_

Candidate Name Date