



**January 24<sup>th</sup> Assembly District 15 Candidate Housing Forum – Questions for Candidates**

*Please answer all 9 questions and return this document to [zach@twcmih.org](mailto:zach@twcmih.org) **no later than 5pm on Tuesday January 23<sup>rd</sup>** so we can collate the answers and distribute to attendees on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Please limit your response to each question to no more than 250 words – answers that exceed that limit will be truncated accordingly.*

*Thank you!*

Candidate Name: **Judy Appel**

1. In general terms, what do you think is the cause of the housing crisis? If you had to sum up your perspective on how we solve it in 1-2 sentences, what would it be?

**We haven't built enough housing to keep up with demand. To solve this, we need a regional approach to solving this crisis that includes reforming Costa Hawkins and building transit-oriented, green and affordable housing, in addition to increasing the overall housing stock.**

2. What's your position on SB 827?

**It is one creative approach that the legislature can take to incentivize housing near transit hubs, which will encourage more people to take advantage of public transit options. However, we need explicitly include affordable units in these projects in compliance with labor and environmental standards as well as address exclusionary zoning that adversely affects communities of color.**

3. What's the role of rent stabilization in solving the housing crisis?

**With the recent failure of AB1506 to get to the floor of the legislature, we need to repeal or reform Costa Hawkins to address our state's ongoing housing crisis. I am also open to exploring statewide efforts to encourage rent stabilization in municipalities that currently do not have it, while ensuring that local jurisdictions maintain control.**

4. Do you think the state has a role to play in regulating local zoning? What do we do about communities, like Marin or Atherton, who don't live up to their responsibility to create enough housing for everyone?

**Yes. Communities like Marin or Atherton are nearly exclusively zoned for single family homes which makes them walled communities of homogenous wealthy people. The state needs to address these communities' responsibility to increase density. Without a regional effort to solve the housing crisis, the housing crisis will continue, and we risk it also becoming a transportation crisis.**

5. What's the role of Prop 13 in the housing crisis and where do you stand on efforts to repeal commercial protections? Under what conditions would you support a similar initiative for residential property?

**I am a strong proponent of reforming Prop 13 through the Make it Fair split tax proposal. As the public education candidate, I plan to be a leader in the reform of Prop 13. I believe we need to end the supermajority requirement for all revenue generating proposals. Local governments need to regain the power to tax as they see fit, particularly as more and more responsibility for social programs has devolved from Sacramento back to the County level. At a minimum, we need to end the corporate tax giveaway, which allows commercial property owner to avoid paying their fair share of property taxes.**

6. What can we do in the short term to protect those who are at the highest risk of being displaced? How do we balance the needs of vulnerable communities with growth?

**I am most inspired by the work of the Bay Area Community Services (BACS) approach and as someone who spent significant time working with the Coalition on Homelessness, I believe their methods are most effective in combating homelessness. BACS conducts inreach to encampments, where they provide basic services with respect and dignity. Through this hard work, individuals get into transitional housing programs, like that at the Hotel Henry, where they work with each resident to find them permanent housing. The supports include work and supports for landlords. The result has been an 88% success in finding permanent housing for both newly and chronic homeless people within 4-6 months. This is the model I want to scale up. We also need to invest in programs that assist people before they become homeless so we can do everything we can to keep people in their homes. All of these services will require investment so we can give the homeless population the assistance they need to keep their homes or find affordable housing.**

Everyone agrees we need more funding for affordable housing. Where do you see that money coming from?

**We should explore bond measures as a source of income to build affordable housing, as well incentivizing financial institutions to finance affordable housing. We need to protect the CA low income housing tax credits funding and develop creative solutions to increasing these to get affordable housing built. In addition, developers need to be held accountable to the communities they want to serve to build affordable units.**

7. Do you support a higher percentage of units in new developments being affordable, even if it results in fewer new units built? Would you mitigate the loss of units?

**We need affordable housing and it's important that the municipalities that house white collar jobs contribute to building affordable units. Inclusionary ordinances are a way to address the housing crisis in the short term and integrate it into long-term planning as well as streamlining the process to approve affordable housing projects.**



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Candidate Name: Ben Bartlett

1. In general terms, what do you think is the cause of the housing crisis? If you had to sum up your perspective on how we solve it in 1-2 sentences, what would it be?

Skyrocketing property values and the demand for housing have brought forth record-breaking rents and rates of displacement, altering the economic and cultural landscapes of the East Bay as we know it. Currently, California is in need of 3.5 million new housing units to stem the state's housing problems. To solve this crisis, my housing plan calls for the 3 P's—Production, Preservation, and Protection—which addresses how to fund the production of more affordable housing, preserving structures and housing units that are already built, and stronger protections for tenants. California has seen a trifecta of population explosion, severe underproduction, and racist housing policies - and the solution is to radically address all three. More about my housing plan can be read in detail here: [www.benbartlettca.com/new-vision-housing-california](http://www.benbartlettca.com/new-vision-housing-california)

2. What's your position on SB 827?

Although I support housing production, I have concerns that SB 827 does not take an equitable approach to housing production, and could result in the mass displacement of renters all over the state.

My housing platform calls for protection of vulnerable populations while dramatically increasing housing production. That way, our housing needs will be met and our people will be protected. I look forward to the amended version of SB827.

3. What's the role of rent stabilization in solving the housing crisis?

The role of rent stabilization is to prevent rent prices from increasing and to make renting more affordable. We need stronger rent stabilization policies to prevent more cases of displacement. For example, in Berkeley I passed the tenants' opportunity to purchase act, a small sites program where we buy buildings and remove them from the market to stabilize rent prices, and established an anti-displacement public legal advocate. We need to institute tenant protections, including "just cause" eviction laws statewide. We need to fund anti-displacement resources, including legal services and financial counseling for low-income tenants and homeowners.

4. Do you think the state has a role to play in regulating local zoning? What do we do about communities, like Marin or Atherton, who don't live up to their responsibility to create enough housing for everyone?

Yes, the state should regulate zoning to make it easier for us to streamline the production of affordable housing.

To address communities who are not living up to their responsibility to create housing, I propose a carbon tax on single-family home neighborhoods as well as a "Cap and Trade" style mechanism to encourage housing production and integration for non-compliant municipalities.

5. What's the role of Prop 13 in the housing crisis and where do you stand on efforts to repeal commercial protections? Under what conditions would you support a similar initiative for residential property?

Prop 13 was first introduced into law in 1978 limiting property taxes to just 1% of the assessed property value resulting in a loss of funds for our education system, affordable housing, and other governmental expenditures.

I support efforts to repeal commercial protections and use those tax dollars to fund affordable housing, renewable energy infrastructure, public transit, healthcare, and public education. Commercial property owners need to pay their fair share.

I would be much more cautious with respect to residential property. I have big concerns about seniors on fixed incomes and about homeowners living on the margins or otherwise at risk of displacement. I recognize the inequities caused by Prop 13 in this context, but this is a much more complex issue and deserves a nuanced approach.

6. What can we do in the short term to protect those who are at the highest risk of being displaced? How do we balance the needs of vulnerable communities with growth?

In Berkeley I led or actively supported the following initiatives to protect those most vulnerable to displacement:

- Streamline by-right affordable housing
- Increase funding for anti-displacement programs such as eviction defense, housing retention funds, housing and financial counseling for low-income seniors
- Create the Small Sites Acquisition Program to create and preserve affordable housing
- Create the Tenants' Opportunity to Purchase Act to prevent displacement
- Create the Tenant Protection Ordinance to guard against tenant harassment
- Prohibit discrimination in rental housing based on the tenant's source of income
- Promote the construction of senior affordable housing
- Create an anti-displacement public legal advocate
- Work on increasing the number of ADUs

These policies could quickly be adopted statewide to prevent others from being displaced. We need to balance growth with the needs of vulnerable communities by ensuring we are building affordable housing units so those most at risk of displacement can have a place to call home.

7. Everyone agrees we need more funding for affordable housing. Where do you see that money coming from?

My housing plan calls for a cap and trade style mechanism, a carbon tax, and the creation of a state bank to fund affordable housing. The cap and trade mechanism would require counties and cities that are under-producing affordable housing to pay into a regional housing trust fund that would be used for funding housing production in areas that are willing to meet their affordable housing obligations. Furthermore, a carbon tax would be placed on land zoned for single family homes. Single-family homes contribute to a car-centric culture that increases sprawl and pollution and removes land that would otherwise be available for denser affordable development. Cities can choose to keep their R1 and R2 neighborhoods, but they would be obligated to pay a carbon tax and the revenue generated would be used for affordable housing initiatives. The carbon tax we propose would provide exemptions and other safeguards to prevent putting an undue burden on seniors, low-income families and those living on fixed incomes. Lastly, I call for the creation of a new, public, California State Bank. Rather than depositing the hundreds of billions of dollars of California's annual local and state tax revenues in private banks, California would create its own bank and put those funds to work for Californians by financing socially responsible projects and partnering with private lenders to drive down the cost of borrowing.

8. Do you support a higher percentage of units in new developments being affordable, even if it results in fewer new units built? Would you mitigate the loss of units?

No. I prefer to build more units and instead have developers pay into a housing trust fund, which could be used to generate more affordable housing. Ultimately, in order to achieve the scale of affordable housing needed, actual public funding for affordable housing will be required rather than relying on private developers.



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Candidate Name: Jovanka Beckles

1. In general terms, what do you think is the cause of the housing crisis? If you had to sum up your perspective on how we solve it in 1-2 sentences, what would it be?

Especially in the Bay Area, the rate of low-income housing development has failed to keep pace with the employment boom the region has experienced. The housing crisis continues to worsen as rents climb and the displaced tenants can no longer find affordable units available.

To solve the crisis we must build low-income housing units in the regions facing the steepest displacement. This development must focus on making the most of the available space.

2. What's your position on SB 827?

SB 827 takes into account the dire need for denser building in CA, as well as the environmental issue that we must build more near established transportation hubs to avoid extensive pollution and meet the 2040 greenhouse emission goals, but we cannot develop at the expense of tenant protections and local government control. We must ensure that new development truly benefits the local community, so SB 827 is a needed start to a conversation we must be having immediately.

3. What's the role of rent stabilization in solving the housing crisis?

Rent control allows for tenants to live without the crushing stress of not knowing how much their housing might cost in the next year, or year after. It allows for stable neighborhoods without constant turnover and for tenants to truly invest in their living space.

4. Do you think the state has a role to play in regulating local zoning? What do we do about communities, like Marin or Atherton, who don't live up to their responsibility to create enough housing for everyone?

The state has a role to play in regulating local zoning to ensure that no one district is carrying an unfair burden, nor is another, like Marin or Atherton, failing to develop at the rate the state requires. The housing crisis we currently face did not happen overnight, years of failing to act on multiple housing issues landed us in our current predicament and state oversight of development, and failure to develop,

must be considered.

5. What's the role of Prop 13 in the housing crisis and where do you stand on efforts to repeal commercial protections? Under what conditions would you support a similar initiative for residential property?

Many believe that with our lack of inventory, Prop 13 is hurting the current housing crisis by locking homeowners into staying in their homes even if they wish to sell due to high taxation rates. As California commercial rental industry flourishes, but local tenants and low income homeowners suffer, we must look at how commercial rent taxes can help alleviate the current housing crisis. Each and every residential region and regulation has such a unique impact on the local housing environment I cannot say how I would support any repeal of residential property tax protections.

6. What can we do in the short term to protect those who are at the highest risk of being displaced? How do we balance the needs of vulnerable communities with growth?

Tenant protections in terms of Just Cause Eviction protections ensure the most vulnerable tenants in our area can remain in their homes. Landlords and real estate speculators who want to evict long time tenants to raise the rent should be outlawed from using immigration status as a threat, evicting with no cause or keeping the tenant from knowing their rights.

We must develop responsibly and logically to balance the needs of our most vulnerable tenants with the need for growth. This means utilizing local funds available to build senior and transition housing to stop the growth of our homeless encampments and not allow developers to build only luxury condos by transit under the myth of "trickle down development".

7. Everyone agrees we need more funding for affordable housing. Where do you see that money coming from?

The industries and businesses that are prospering as California continues to be such a desired place to live, work and visit, must pay their fair share to the working families and tenants that help their regions function. Companies currently so loosely regulated, like Airbnb and VRBO must have oversight and pay their fair share in taxes in the communities they affect. Commercial rent taxes should reflect the benefit of doing business in highly productive and lucrative regions. There is no golden egg that we can tap to fix the current housing crisis, each region will have find the revenue sources that make sense and are fair.

8. Do you support a higher percentage of units in new developments being affordable, even if it results in fewer new units built? Would you mitigate the loss of units?

It is crucial we focus on new development of affordable units. If that leads to developers producing fewer units then we must ensure that region's affordable unit threshold is up to date with the current need for development and continue to utilize public space for needed housing.



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Candidate Name: **DAN KALB**

1. In general terms, what do you think is the cause of the housing crisis? If you had to sum up your perspective on how we solve it in 1-2 sentences, what would it be?

Demand substantially exceeds supply in the much of the East Bay. Compounding that is the fact that those who are demanding housing can afford to pay very high prices (ownership or rental). We need to build more housing for people of upper middle, middle, moderate, low, very low, and extremely low income levels. Part of that is piecing together funds to help build below market housing to meet the tremendous needs in the below market income categories.

2. What's your position on SB 827?

I do not yet have a position on SB 827. It was just introduced and I fully expect the bill to be amended more than a few times over the next several months. I support the goal of more housing density near our transit hubs, and I think there are some good elements to this bill. There also may be some elements that need refining before final passage.

3. What's the role of rent stabilization in solving the housing crisis?

Rent stabilization is important to make sure people who live here in this part of the East Bay are not pushed out of their homes. We don't want a situation where people who work here can't afford to live anywhere near here. Rent stabilization, if properly enforced, can reduce displacement. If tenants are pushed out of their rent controlled residential unit, they will have to find a new place to live and pay whatever the market rate is at that time.

I am proud of my leadership and record of accomplishments to protect renters from being pushed out of their homes. I authored a companion ordinance in 2016 that will reduce future rent increases.



4. Do you think the state has a role to play in regulating local zoning? What do we do about communities, like Marin or Atherton, who don't live up to their responsibility to create enough housing for everyone?

Cities have a responsibility to make a genuine effort to build more housing based on the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) numbers provided by the State for the various income level categories. I believe that jurisdictions adjacent to each other should be able to pool their RHNA numbers and allow a jurisdiction to pay its neighbor to build the additional housing. We need to take a regional or sub-regional approach and not worry about every little town. Let's get the housing built.

I also support strengthening the SB 375 Sustainable Communities rules to make the goals enforceable by the state.

5. What's the role of Prop 13 in the housing crisis and where do you stand on efforts to repeal commercial protections? Under what conditions would you support a similar initiative for residential property?

I strongly support reforming the commercial side of Prop. 13 so large businesses pay their fair share and I will be a leader in this effort. I understand that Prop. 13 on the residential side is impactful and creates inequities; however, I strongly believe that we need to get the commercial side of Prop. 13 overhauled before we have a debate about the residential side.

6. What can we do in the short term to protect those who are at the highest risk of being displaced? How do we balance the needs of vulnerable communities with growth?

We must strengthen our renter protection laws. At the state level, that means repealing or substantially modernizing the infamous Costa-Hawkins law. I support AB 1506 (Bloom, Bonta, Chiu).

I am proud to have been the author of Oakland's Tenant Protection Ordinance to discourage property owners from harassing their tenants out of their homes. I am also proud to have successfully championed funds from our city budget to pay for legal services to lower income renters at risk of displacement.

7. Everyone agrees we need more funding for affordable housing. Where do you see that money coming from?

I propose that we bring back Redevelopment with appropriate reforms as a way to get more housing and more below market housing built.

I supported SB 2 (Atkins) and SB 3 (Beall) to help provide funds for below market housing. I also campaigned for the County's affordable housing bond (A1). Funding for new affordable units generally is pieced together from multiple sources. I would support a tax credit at the state level to help with financing.

8. Do you support a higher percentage of units in new developments being affordable, even if it results in fewer new units built? Would you mitigate the loss of units?

Finding the sweet spot is a challenge and probably subjective at best. Nevertheless, I support inclusionary housing requirements as a way to get below market units built more quickly—and to have those units fully integrated into some of the apartment buildings in our neighborhoods. Quantity is important, but quality in terms of addressing the need for all income levels can't be ignored.



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Candidate Name: Andy Katz

1. In general terms, what do you think is the cause of the housing crisis? If you had to sum up your perspective on how we solve it in 1-2 sentences, what would it be?

The housing crisis first starts with a lack of supply to meet the demand. The Bay Area is a wonderful place to live, and our urban centers especially have fallen behind in housing production. As the central city, and “first-ring” suburbs become more in demand, we also see a crisis of people who work in the urban core unable to afford to live here. We need increased housing production at all income levels, especially in the urban core of the region.

2. What’s your position on SB 827?

I strongly support increased density near transit, and waiver of minimum parking requirements near transit. As a member of the Berkeley Zoning Adjustments Board for over 5 years, I voted to approve construction of over 2,500 units in transit-rich corridors after decades of little-to-no housing development. To earn my Master of City Planning degree, I wrote the TransForm policy report “It Takes a Transit Village” to change regional transportation policy to require upzoning in areas before new transportation infrastructure financing could be programmed by MTC.

This approach represents the principles of connecting land use and transportation that would improve utilization of transit infrastructure and add additional needed housing in the places where the transit services are best. However, as written, the bill does not consider place-specific circumstances that matter for building livable communities. In the Assembly, I will work with the author to implement this vision of fully utilized land in transit-rich areas in a way that works for cities and community planning.

3. What’s the role of rent stabilization in solving the housing crisis?

Rent stabilization plays an important role, especially in the short term. Stable rent allows for residents to remain in their homes during economic upswings, and avoid becoming priced out of their communities. It also allows for young professionals to save towards a down payment to eventually buy a home. We need a combination of tools, including new supply and rent stabilization in urban core cities to solve the housing crisis.

4. Do you think the state has a role to play in regulating local zoning? What do we do about communities, like Marin or Atherton, who don’t live up to their responsibility to create enough housing for everyone?

Yes. Communities that fail to meet their Regional Housing Needs Allocation should be subject to enforcement actions under SB 375. The RHNA alignment policy is a major paradigm shift in state and local government roles that has not yet been implemented because we are still within eight years of SCS adoption in most regions, including the Bay Area. I support the RHNA alignment, and believe it should be strengthened to clarify that it applies to the affordable housing splits adopted in most regions, and to specify applicable findings and remedies to guide Courts in enforcement actions. To promote proactive problem-solving, I support funding programs within ABAG and the Department of Housing and Community Development to play a facilitative and fact-finding role in advance of judicial intervention, so the planning process for more housing can move forward faster.

5. What's the role of Prop 13 in the housing crisis and where do you stand on efforts to repeal commercial protections? Under what conditions would you support a similar initiative for residential property?

Proposition 13 exacerbated the housing crisis by providing fiscal incentive for commercial and big-box retail property over housing. I strongly support repeal of commercial property protections under Prop 13 so we can better fund city and school services.

6. What can we do in the short term to protect those who are at the highest risk of being displaced? How do we balance the needs of vulnerable communities with growth?

I support just cause eviction policies, and funding legal assistance to all renters facing eviction. By providing for inclusionary housing policies, we can ensure that new market rate construction also brings resources for affordable housing, and that we can maintain the diversity of our communities.

7. Everyone agrees we need more funding for affordable housing. Where do you see that money coming from?

At the state level, I support the mechanism using document recording pursuant to SB 2, and the appropriate use of general fund revenue to bond for accelerated affordable housing development. State mandates for affordable housing production should result in local choices for revenue including (1) inclusionary housing paid by the private sector, (2) impact fees paid by the private sector and managed by the locality, and matched with financing syndicated through the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program, (3) a business license fee on rental property similar to Berkeley Measure U1, and (4) general funds or other special tax revenue.

8. Do you support a higher percentage of units in new developments being affordable, even if it results in fewer new units built? Would you mitigate the loss of units?

Municipal development standards should incent either market-rate or non-profit developers to build out a parcel to the maximum density feasible. Therefore, it's unlikely that a higher inclusionary percentage would result in fewer new units being built over the long run. What's important for stability in the housing pipeline is that localities consider feasibility of inclusionary requirements, and enact inclusionary requirements on a timeline that allows for the market participants to factor into project analysis and decision-making.



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Candidate Name: **Rochelle Pardue-Okimoto**

1. In general terms, what do you think is the cause of the housing crisis? If you had to sum up your perspective on how we solve it in 1-2 sentences, what would it be?  
We have fallen short of building the necessary housing required to keep up with our population growth statewide for over a decade. Affordability is a major piece and with working families being driven inland to afford a home we need to look at two issues – affordable housing in every city and tackling the issue of income distribution. We need a multifaceted approach – require developers to build affordable homes, push local governments to do more to fix this problem, more accessory dwelling units, more student housing and a plan to ensure that the state is putting bonds on the table for more than one year.
2. What's your position on SB 827? I would support this effort by Senator Wiener.
3. What's the role of rent stabilization in solving the housing crisis? This is a key piece. Families are being pushed out so landlords can sell homes to the highest bidder. I support the repeal of Costa-Hawkins.
4. Do you think the state has a role to play in regulating local zoning? What do we do about communities, like Marin or Atherton, who don't live up to their responsibility to create enough housing for everyone? The state can use both the carrot and the stick. We should use it to ensure that every community is doing their part. Nurses that work in Palo Alto should have to move to Tracy to afford a home.
5. What's the role of Prop 13 in the housing crisis and where do you stand on efforts to repeal commercial protections? Under what conditions would you support a similar initiative for residential property? There are several efforts to tweak or reform Prop 13 – I think we need to reform Prop 13 and ensure that corporations are not using the loophole to avoid paying their fair share. I am open to further changes to Prop 13, but believe we should focus on commercial property at this time.

6. What can we do in the short term to protect those who are at the highest risk of being displaced? How do we balance the needs of vulnerable communities with growth? We need to help renters who are being pushed out of their apartments. The way to balance growth is to ensure that every community is doing their part.
7. Everyone agrees we need more funding for affordable housing. Where do you see that money coming from? It will require a multi-year approach to state and local bonds. We need almost 200,000 homes a year, but we are far short of that number. We have started to make a dent with Senate Bill 2 that will generate around \$250 million a year toward affordable housing, but we have more work to do. I am happy to see a statewide bond on the ballot that will put \$4 Billion toward housing that will help a variety of folks in need.
8. Do you support a higher percentage of units in new developments being affordable, even if it results in fewer new units built? Would you mitigate the loss of units?  
I am not sure there is one law that can be passed to ensure that new affordable developments are being built in enough numbers to help all of those in need. I would support efforts to build more affordable units



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Candidate Name: Owen Poindexter

1. In general terms, what do you think is the cause of the housing crisis? If you had to sum up your perspective on how we solve it in 1-2 sentences, what would it be?

The housing crisis is caused by an influx of wealth into the area, a failure to build enough housing to address this change—which is in turn, a result of homeowners fighting new development and regulatory laws mismatched to our modern times—and a severe power imbalance between renters and owners that has kept regressive laws like the Costa Hawkins Act in place.

Solving the crisis starts with increasing supply, enacting better tenant protections and ensuring our transit system is equipped for a changing Bay Area. These measures will require an injection of funds, streamlining development, new legislation to protect renters, and ultimately, a culture change from NIMBYism to YIMBYism.

2. What's your position on SB 827?

SB 827 is a radical proposal, but we need radical proposals, and this would be a big step in the right direction. Would there be negative consequences? Of course. But we are already experiencing seriously negative consequences from our lack of density, namely high housing prices and displacement. Furthermore, easing of parking requirements near transit hubs looks toward a future where we may see greatly reduced car ownership.

That said, to have my full support, the bill would need to install a required minimum affordability percentage for new units, which municipalities could increase as they see fit.

3. What's the role of rent stabilization in solving the housing crisis?

Rent control is an urgent need, especially now while we work to increase housing supply. Relying solely on the market will lead to displacement in the short-term, so stronger rent control is needed ASAP. We also need to acknowledge the side-effects rent control can have, such as preventing people from moving when they otherwise would. New rent control laws should limit rent increases even when tenants change.

4. Do you think the state has a role to play in regulating local zoning? What do we do about communities, like Marin or Atherton, who don't live up to their responsibility to create enough housing for everyone?

Absolutely. Local control of housing supply has been a significant roadblock in creating the housing supply we need, and housing is a human right. The needs of the homeless, low-income and middle-income people should come before the aesthetics and lifestyle preferences of the affluent. As for what to do with noncompliant counties, we should employ a combination of streamlining measures that automatically approves development plans that meet certain state and local requirements, and penalties that feed into an affordable housing and mass transit development fund.

5. What's the role of Prop 13 in the housing crisis and where do you stand on efforts to repeal commercial protections? Under what conditions would you support a similar initiative for residential property?

I support repeal of Prop 13's commercial protections and reform to the residential side. Politically I understand the desire to not take on two powerful constituencies at once, but from a policy perspective, we need to consider raising property taxes above 1%--perhaps through a land-value tax--and reassessing property values on a more regular schedule.

Prop 13 has dragged down our education system and our ability to invest in communities. The law needs wholesale reform.

6. What can we do in the short term to protect those who are at the highest risk of being displaced? How do we balance the needs of vulnerable communities with growth?

1) Repeal of Costa Hawkins and strong rent control, even when tenants change. 2) Identify and target the most vulnerable areas for displacement and introduce even stronger rent controls, at least until we reach our housing supply goals. 3) Universal right to legal representation for eviction cases. Tenants facing eviction rarely know their rights and there is a huge power imbalance against landlords in legal disputes. This simple, powerful change would prevent many evictions.

7. Everyone agrees we need more funding for affordable housing. Where do you see that money coming from?

We should create a short-term revenue source to rapidly grow our housing stock over the next 5-10 years. This could come from a temporary income tax increase, a temporary corporate tax increase, or bonds. The housing crisis is an emergency and warrants an injection of short-term funds. The need for this spending can be reassessed in five years.

8. Do you support a higher percentage of units in new developments being affordable, even if it results in fewer new units built? Would you mitigate the loss of units?

Yes, and this should be packaged with bills like SB 827 to allow for more development in areas where it makes the most sense to have increased density, such as near transit hubs. There is no reason why we can't promote development while also insisting on more affordable units.





**January 24<sup>th</sup> Assembly District 15 Candidate Housing Forum – Questions for Candidates**

*Please answer all 9 questions and return this document to [zach@twcmih.org](mailto:zach@twcmih.org) **no later than 5pm on Tuesday January 23<sup>rd</sup>** so we can collate the answers and distribute to attendees on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Please limit your response to each question to no more than 250 words – answers that exceed that limit will be truncated accordingly.*

*Thank you!*

Candidate Name: Cheryl Sudduth

1. In general terms, what do you think is the cause of the housing crisis? If you had to sum up your perspective on how we solve it in 1-2 sentences, what would it be?

During the Clinton Administration, requirements for obtaining home loans, especially 'jumbo' loans were eased with regards to stated income and proof thereof. Almost everyone y anyone qualified for home loans. Minority communities were disproportionately affected by unscrupulous real estate practices y predatory lending (for those seeking second mortgages or lines of credit). Many black y brown borrowers were three times more likely to receive risky loans than whites with similar credit scores. When borrowers were unable to pay back the loans, the lenders foreclosed on their properties y many found they owed much more than their homes were worth. When markets crashed in '08 and this inability to pay became a national issue, the foreclosure crisis was in full tilt. It has been estimated nearly 70%-80% of the Black community lost its wealth (mostly tied to their homes) during this period.

As well, the Obama Administration's HUD program which saw programs like Richmond's Crescent Park, Pullman Townhouses, Kennedy Manor (New Monterey Pines), The Hacienda house several hundred low-in one households each, expand the number of units in cities across the country. Then approx. 4y ago, HUD decided to get out of the business of playing overseer to Section 8 Housing and gave back the properties to the cities. Many cities, including the City of Richmond decided not to be landlords and sold the properties to private investors like John Stewart, who has become the area's largest holder of former HUD/Sec 8 units. He has since wielded his ownership like rent control in Oakland and been able to raise rent y limit number of units of section 8 instead creating mixed units of sec 8 y market rate buildings. The benefits to Richmond was \$7-9M and selling the properties 'as-is' without having to do repairs or maintenance. Stewart meanwhile made a deal in order to buy the units he would have to reduce the number of low-rate units y add many market rate units. They all contributed to the loss of low/cost units in the area.

In total, between 2000-2013, the Bay Area lost an estimated 200k low-cost units while gaining nearly twice as many low-cost households.

Solution: We could create sustainable communities which move away from the typical Section 8 environments where the only source of employment is big box like Target or Walmart to more vibrant community-based neighborhood models that will sustain communities to be trained y employed in that neighborhood. Mixed Used Housing Complexes - 10% Low, 20% Moderate, 70% market rate with businesses (grocers, small biz, dentist, small theatre, medical, bookstores, etc.) on the lower level, residential units above - with amenities y economic opportunities y easy access to transit for all.

2. What's your position on SB 827?

I would support 827 if the developments were chiefly devoted to address the needs of low and moderate income households. In this instance a mixed use complex in the nature of a 30-40-30 dynamic. The rationale is that many of the persons needing transit services are in the moderate to low income brackets. As well, seniors, people with *dis*Abilities,

single families, families with young children, etc. will likely need access more. I would also like to see fresh grocers, and neighborhood business included in the complex.

3. What's the role of rent stabilization in solving the housing crisis?

Homelessness is not organic; 70% of those on streets in SF were displaced from homes. It is imperative people have home security y rent stabilization is one way to make that happen. Homelessness y lack of sufficient, cost appropriate housing is a societal issue which costs each of us more. Rent stabilization helps people live in the area they work y helps prevent displacement.

4. Do you think the state has a role to play in regulating local zoning? What do we do about communities, like Marin or Atherton, who don't live up to their responsibility to create enough housing for everyone?

Yes, state must ensure local ordinances do not override the public's interest in ensuring housing equity. If local communities are not adhering to zoning regulations, regulatory fines y fees must be administered. Also impact fees to subsidize y balance a set of protections for citizens for overall economic y societal needs should be considered for those. Immunities not meeting a base set of principles to aid in meeting housing needs for all on an ongoing, forward basis.

5. What's the role of Prop 13 in the housing crisis and where do you stand on efforts to repeal commercial protections? Under what conditions would you support a similar initiative for residential property?

This 40yo proposition has its place y we should make any rollback applicable to businesses of a given size so defined small businesses are not unduly affected. I would like to see the term 'affordable' defined. I would support a similar initiative for residential properties of multi-unit properties, owners of multiple unit buildings (>4), etc.

6. What can we do in the short term to protect those who are at the highest risk of being displaced? How do we balance the needs of vulnerable communities with growth?

Create mixed use housing complexes with 10/20/70 mix where low/moderate/market rate households are able to be developed and long term area residents are not displaced in favor of those able/willing to pay what the market will bear. As well, Cease permitting landlords to get out of leases simply by paying impact or moving fees to displace renters y insist on hosting residents.

7. Everyone agrees we need more funding for affordable housing. Where do you see that money coming from?

Similar to the concept of the sponsored housing complex of Albany Village (UCBerkeley), I propose negotiating housing complex deals with various tech companies in a similar vein - Google Village, Apple Village, MicroSoft village, Genentech Village... - their employees have money y need homes with reasonable commutes, these East Bay communities have inventory and/or land to build and need the tax revenues. I would negotiate with them a shared deal.

8. Do you support a higher percentage of units in new developments being affordable, even if it results in fewer new units built? Would you mitigate the loss of units?

Yes, though I see a mixed use complex of 10% Low, 20% Moderate, 70% market rate which would be a net gain - not loss.



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*Thank you!*

Candidate Name: Buffy Wicks

1. In general terms, what do you think is the cause of the housing crisis? If you had to sum up your perspective on how we solve it in 1-2 sentences, what would it be?

I think the cause of our housing crisis stems from an inability to build enough housing at every income level to keep up with our economic and population growth, combined with a legacy of persistent and systemic racial discrimination in our housing policy that has resulted in continued and disproportionate impacts against communities of color. For too long, policymakers have not properly anticipated and thus woefully ignored how changes in our economy would affect housing needs. We need to put forth housing policy that is driven from a place of inclusion and with an eye towards the future, not the past.

I believe housing is a human right and that any effort to address our housing crisis and adhere to this fundamental value requires a bold, forward-looking vision, both/and policymaking approach, and strong commitment to racial equity for how we achieve housing for all. At the end of the day, I believe we need to build more housing at all income levels - that means advancing policies that increase funding for more affordable housing, reduce development costs, streamline permitting processes, reform land use rules, and unlock public land.

As Assemblywoman, I would champion three key approaches to address our crisis in the region: first, build more homes for low-income and middle-income families more quickly; second, protect existing tenants from displacement, especially seniors and people with disabilities; and third, grow in a smart way by building more homes in walkable, transit-oriented neighborhoods, so we can share our community while protecting our East Bay way of life.

2. What's your position on SB 827?

I believe the details of the legislation still need to be worked out, but in concept I support legislation that promotes housing density near public transportation while preserving affordability. I think it has the potential to not only address our housing crisis, but also maximize investments in transit and allow the state to achieve our environmental goals. Our housing crisis demands urgent action and bold leadership, and I think proposals like SB 827 are important and merit healthy debate and serious consideration.

3. What's the role of rent stabilization in solving the housing crisis?

I believe rent stabilization is an important component in solving the housing crisis. We must work to aggressively guard against displacement. Among other things, I think we should fix Costa-Hawkins. One potential reform could include a rolling date for buildings to come under local rent stabilization laws, as opposed to the 1995 fixed date. This would both empowers local municipalities to implement appropriate rent stabilization measures while also ensuring new housing can be financed and built to support community needs.

But we need to do more to guard against displacement.

We should significantly expand the renter tax credit. Currently the renter tax credit is a drop in the bucket - only resulting in \$60 for an individual and \$120 for a family. We should explore expanding this and also readjusting income levels of eligibility, so as to provide real relief for families paying increasingly high rents.

To prevent unscrupulous landlords from wrongly kicking tenants out of their homes, I would also push for state funding to provide legal assistance for low-income folks facing wrongful eviction. These types of measures would have no impact on landlords who play by the rules and would level the playing field for tenants who are being unfairly pushed out of their homes.

4. Do you think the state has a role to play in regulating local zoning? What do we do about communities, like Marin or Atherton, who don't live up to their responsibility to create enough housing for everyone?

Yes, California does have a role to play in regulating local zoning. Some communities are simply not living up to their responsibility to create enough housing for everyone or have engaged in exclusionary zoning that disproportionately impacts communities of color. These actions have exacerbated our housing crisis.

5. What's the role of Prop 13 in the housing crisis and where do you stand on efforts to repeal commercial protections? Under what conditions would you support a similar initiative for residential property?

Prop 13 impacts the housing crisis by creating a disincentive for people to move within the community. Homeowners who would otherwise relocate locally or downsize can't afford to lose their property tax rates, and it stagnates the overall housing market. I strongly support Prop 13 reform, requiring commercial properties (with a small business carve out) to pay property taxes at their market rate. Doing so will generate an additional \$11.4 billions in revenue which can be used to finance more affordable housing, as well as investments in local schools, roads, and other public services.

6. What can we do in the short term to protect those who are at the highest risk of being displaced? How do we balance the needs of vulnerable communities with growth?

First and foremost, we need more funds for affordable housing. I believe the passage of the housing package last fall was a critical development, and I would actively explore other ways for financing and speeding up the development of affordable housing (e.g. Prop 13 reform). Secondly, too many members of our diverse communities - from artists to restaurant workers, teachers to seniors - are being displaced now. I will work to reform Costa-Hawkins, significantly expand the renter tax credit, and support legal assistance for renters to fight against unfair evictions.

I firmly believe that addressing the needs of vulnerable communities with growth doesn't have to be a zero-sum game. Indeed, our overall lack of housing has only exacerbated the circumstances of these communities, and increasing the housing stock for all income levels can help change that. If we're to comprehensively address our state's housing crisis, we must have a both/and approach to policy making and problem solving.

7. Everyone agrees we need more funding for affordable housing. Where do you see that money coming from?

Successfully passing Prop 13 reform could be a major revenue source for affordable housing. Other ideas include having a California State Infrastructure to fund affordable housing and purchase housing stock during economic downturns that can be converted to affordable units. I also support David Chiu's bill to end tax breaks for second homes mortgage deduction and instead apply those funds to affordable housing and would be interested in other creative ways to fund affordable housing.

8. Do you support a higher percentage of units in new developments being affordable, even if it results in fewer new units built? Would you mitigate the loss of units?

I would support the best percentage of affordable units in new developments that yields the highest number of units overall built in aggregate, and I would also explore implementing tax breaks and other measures to increase those percentages while still making it worthwhile for more homes to be built. And, as I've mentioned above, I would work hard to identify other measures to increase funding overall for affordable housing throughout the state.

Chart of AD-15 Candidate Positions on Key Housing Bills					
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[illegible]

	Judy Appel	Ben Bartlett	Jovanka Beckles	Dan Kalb	Andy Katz	Rochelle Pardue-Okimoto	Owen Poindexter	Cheryl Sudduth	Buffy Wicks
SB35	✓	✓	✓	O	?	✓	✓	O ?	✓
SB167	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	✓	✓	✓
SB2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
AB 1506 (Costa Hawkins Repeal)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
SB831	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Prop 13 "Split roll" (Ballot Initiative)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	O ?	✓
SB828	✓	✓	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SB827	?	?	?	?	?	✓	?	O ?	?

<b>Key:</b>	
X	No
✓	Yes
?	Yes, if amended
O	Abstain

2017

2018

**SB 35** became state law last year. It says that cities not meeting their housing need threshold must streamline approval for projects that meet local zoning requirements.

**SB 167** became law last year. It would make it easier to enforce the Housing Accountability Act, which prevents local governments from denying development projects that don't violate local zoning laws and comply with the city's general plan.

**SB 2** became law last year. It creates a permanent stream of funding for affordable housing development by creating a new fee on certain real estate filings. It would raise about \$250 million per year.

**AB 1506** was an Assembly bill to fully repeal Costa-Hawkins. Costa-Hawkins is the state law that bans rent control on buildings built after 1995 and all single-family homes.

**SB 831** is current proposed legislation that would encourage the addition of accessory dwelling units (otherwise known as "granny flats" or "in-law units") to our housing stock.

**The Prop 13 Split Roll Ballot Initiative** would add a measure to the 2018 statewide ballot to remove Prop 13 protections for commercial and industrial properties. Prop 13 was passed in 1978 and pegs the property taxes landowners pay to the value of the property when it was purchased. Prop 13 has severely reduced available revenue for public education, local services, and affordable housing production. This ballot initiative would NOT change property tax rules as they apply to residential properties. Current estimates say repealing the commercial and industrial protections would net \$11b per year in new tax revenue.

**SB 827** is current proposed legislation that would prohibit local governments from limiting density development within ½ mile of train stations or ¼ of high-frequency bus routes.

**SB 828** is current proposed legislation that would change the methodology for how the Real Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) is calculated. RHNA sets the number of housing units each municipality is required to build to meet the state's housing need. Many view the current process as inadequate and undercounts the true amount of housing needed.