

Candidate Questionnaire

From: Santa Cruz for Bernie

To: Candidates for Local Races in the March 5, 2024 Primary Election

Santa Cruz for Bernie, with over 2,000 politically active members in the Central Coast region, requests that you complete this questionnaire so we can provide guidance to our membership in the upcoming important Primary Election in March.

Because SC4B members widely support policy proposals promoted by Senator Bernie Sanders, some of those topics are reflected in this questionnaire. (See berniesanders.com/issues)

(Just start typing after the >> cue)

1. Your full name >> **Akin Babatola**
2. Your city and county of residence >> **Santa Cruz City, Santa Cruz County**
3. Office you are seeking >> **Central Committee Santa Cruz County Democratic Party, 3rd District**
4. Length of residence in your current District >> **10 years**
5. Your occupation or avocation >> **Scientist-Manager; City of Santa Cruz Laboratory & Environmental Compliance Manager City of Santa Cruz.**
6. Significant memberships, affiliations, and leadership positions held (political, labor union, public service, etc.) >>
 - **Current Chair OE3 Mid Managers Union City of Santa Cruz;**
 - **Life Member NAACP;**
 - **Ex Executive Board Member, Santa Cruz NAACP;**
 - **Member Bay Area Chapter 100 Black Men;**
 - **E-Board SCC Democratic Party (incumbent)**
 - **Santa Cruz Delegate CADEM;**
 - **Past Board Chair Santa Cruz Salvation Army;**
 - **Co-Chair Ways and Means Committee Santa Cruz Democratic Party**
7. In what political campaigns, organizations, and movements have you been active, and what role did you play? >>
 - **Active donor and supporter of the Squad;**
 - **Supporter and donor to Obama/Biden campaigns;**
 - **Phone banking for Swing left;**
 - **Post card writing for Democratic candidates; and**
 - **Phone and monetary support for the Georgia Democratic party's Senate Candidates and Stacey Abrams.**
8. Which policy proposals championed by Bernie Sanders are you most passionate about? >> **Most passionate about Universal Health Care (Medicare for All/One payer)**
9. What actions would you take at the local level in support of single-payer healthcare including a national Medicare for All and a state CalCare plan? >> **I have attended rallies locally and distributed literature in my residential community and I am willing to host area meetings in my district for purposes of promotion of the cause; and to join efforts with others willing to do the same.**
10. What bold and transformative policy proposals would you support to address the climate crisis at the local, state and national levels? >> **I have spoken at national environmental conferences to this issue, and I have continuously advocated integrating scientific tools to reorient the economy. I will support the policies (at State and Local levels) to redefine compliance with environmental standards in building; in procurement; and in enforcement of environmental justice. Insisting on protocols that integrate calculations of costs and consequences of method choices on their aggregate effects. It is wasteful and unhelpful to throw empirical methods into regulations and**

prescribe them to address issues that are beyond their scope. To this end USEPA has to be emboldened in ways that insulate it from the challenges of revisionism and the inertia of poorly conceived antecedents in a world that is assaulted with unanticipated anthropogenic consequences.

11. What policy proposals would you support that address the issue of growing income/wealth inequality? >> **Foremost has to be the abolition of regressive taxation; followed by a fiat that limits the aggregate tax limit on the working poor. Illustrative of this would be that the aggregate taxes for a family with < \$80k in this county must be pegged below 20% of their take home. This may mean free use of toll roads at a certain limit; free tuition at State institutions without additional financial qualifications etc.**

12. What policy proposals would you support that address our local housing and homelessness crises? >> **Revisiting the City structure design including relocation of City service facilities including its biggest utilities to raise funds and redesigning the urban corridor for density and transportation purposes. Revisiting the dizzying qualifications of "affordable" housing.**

13. What measures would you support to foster union jobs? (e.g. adopt project labor agreements with local hire and apprenticeship training requirements; invest in fully staffed public sector workforce.) >>

- **I support the ongoing initiative at the City Council level as initiated introduced in December;**
- **I have proposed and supported the integration of staff input into the budget planning at the City of Santa Cruz. This is intended to provide the opportunities to integrate residual resources into budgeting to free funding for staff compensation and development rather than the default of budgeting for expensive consultancy contracts. I have demonstrated this stark value difference continuously in my employment at the City.**
- **However, this is needed more so at the General Services at the City and County.**
- **Broader implementation of these will strengthen pay for Union workers; reduce outflow of limited financial resources and provide resources for local trainees and interns.**

14. If you were eligible, did you vote for Bernie Sanders in the Primary Election 2016? *Yes or No* >> **Yes**

In 2020? *Yes or No* >> **No, the imperatives were clear that the Democratic party had weaker options at this time and the threat of fascism required consolidation behind the leading Democratic Party candidate.**

15. If elected, what do you realistically hope to accomplish during your term of office? >> **I intend to continue to sensitize the Party to:**

- **The urgency of local Civil service restructure and its potential influence in this critical need.**
- **The systemic inequities including racist practices and the need to implement a Civil service commission at the City and County levels either jointly or separately; and to speak to**
- **Truly progressive systems course and causes.**

16. Give an example of when you spoke truth to power. Who were the players, what were the stakes, and what did you do? >> **The nature of my work affords numerous such opportunities including leading the change at the national level to allow the replacement of prescriptive inefficient methods in environmental analyses, especially for relatively poorly resourced municipalities. In the case of Santa Cruz I led the implementation of methods in our permits through challenging the imposed methods so that since 2005 the lab erstwhile known as the Wastewater Lab has been able to support all of the City's environmental challenges on the SLR; Cowell and other beaches; the Landfill and the nearshore. The transformation required challenging the structure and the incumbents. I was strongly supported by the City Manager but challenged strongly by the incumbents at the City and the County. I initiate the (free to the community) collection of unwanted pharmaceuticals and sharps in 2007 against strong internal challenges beginning in 2005. Again, I had the strategic support of Dick Wilson, the City Manager and State Rep Joe**

Simitian. These illustrations of 'speaking truth to power' are selected among several and they illustrate the purpose of the speech is to attain the right progressive goals and that alliances, strategic alliances are needed beyond 'speaking'!

17. Are you running in coordination with any other local candidate? >> I converse with other candidates, I do not think there is an effective coalition of similarly minded candidates at this point.

18. Why should members of Santa Cruz for Bernie vote for you to be their elected representative? (max 50 words) >> I seek your endorsement based upon my effective track record of progressive professional work which has demonstrated a lifelong dialectical approach to progressive thinking. In street language Progressiveness is in my DNA, and I know the difference between canvassing for progressive support as a populist and practicing progressive politics dialectically. This is both the record of my scientific career and my popular politics. You may have a lot of loud voices but you will not have a more authentic political progressive to endorse.

Thanks for this opportunity.

enhance

Please return your completed questionnaire to santacruz4bernie@gmail.com by December 17, 2023.

Thank you for your participation in this democratic process of candidate endorsement.