

## 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](https://berniesanders.com/issues))

*(Just start typing after the >> cue)*

1. Your full name >> **Jenni Veitch-Olson**
2. Your city and county of residence >> **Watsonville, Santa Cruz County**
3. Office you are seeking >> **SCC Democratic Central Committee District 4 representative**
4. Length of residence in your current District >> **11 years**
5. Your occupation or avocation >> **Planned Parenthood Mar Monte Senior Director of Institutional Giving**
6. Significant memberships, affiliations, and leadership positions held (political, labor union, public service, etc.) >>
  - **SCC Democratic Central Committee Vice-Chair (currently)**
  - **SCC DCC Endorsement Committee Chair (currently)**
  - **SCC DCC District 4 member and alternate since 2018**
  - **Watsonville Planning Commission Immediate Past Chair and member since 2018**
  - **Pajaro Valley Cesar Chavez Democratic Club member**
  - **Watsonville Downtown Specific Plan Advisory Committee member**
  - **Watsonville General Plan Update Advisory Committee member**
  - **Pajaro Valley Pride volunteer grant writer**
  - **Emerge California alumna (2019)**
  - **University of Wisconsin, Madison Graduate Worker Union TAA/AFT Local 3220 member (2003-2008)**
7. In what political campaigns, organizations, and movements have you been active, and what role did you play? >>
  - **Felipe Hernandez for County Supervisor 2022 and 2018 - precinct walker**
  - **No on Measure D - precinct walker**
  - **California Proposition 1 - precinct walker**
  - **Vanessa Quiroz-Carter for Watsonville City Council 2020 and 2021 - precinct walker**
  - **Jenni Veitch-Olson for Watsonville City Council 2018 - I ran for the City Council District 2 seat in the special election in 2018. I lost the race by 27 votes. To this day, I am proud and honored to have been endorsed by the Monterey Bay Central Labor Council, Carpenters Local #505, IBEW Local #234, Monterey/Santa Cruz County Building Trades Council, Operating Engineers 3, SEIU 521, Sheet Metal Workers Local #104, the SCC Democratic Central Committee, the Pajaro Valley Cesar Chavez Democratic Club, GLBT Alliance of Santa Cruz County, and BAYMEC.**
8. Which policy proposals championed by Bernie Sanders are you most passionate about? >>
  - **Medicare for All - Health care is a human right. Abortion should be enshrined in our Constitution. The Hyde and Helms amendments must be repealed.**
  - **A Welcoming and Safe America for All - DACA needs to be reinstated and expanded. End cruel and inhumane deportation programs and reunite separated families.**

- **College for All - Attaining a higher education, including trade school, should not be a burden. Higher education should be accessible, especially to BIPOC. Eliminate all student debt.**

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? >> **In the absence of Medicare for All, I work for Planned Parenthood Mar Monte because I believe that access to comprehensive health care for all people is a human right. I look forward to the day when my agency is no longer a stopgap health care provider. I have in the past and will continue to contact my elected representatives to urge them to support guaranteed health care for all people, and I will work to elect champions for health care.**

10. What bold and transformative policy proposals would you support to address the climate crisis at the local, state and national levels? >> **I support the Green New Deal. I support sustainable transportation and multi-modal alternatives both locally and nationally. I drive an electric vehicle, and support an expansion of the nationwide network of universal charging stations as well as local incentives to business owners to install more chargers throughout our county. My husband is a bicycle commuter, and I support finishing the rail and trail project as well as creating safe bike routes in all communities. We need to continue to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels for transportation.**

11. What policy proposals would you support that address the issue of growing income/wealth inequality? >> **I support significantly increasing taxes for the extremely wealthy, and establishing stronger enforcement policies so that the extremely wealthy do not evade paying these taxes. I also support eliminating student debt and past-due medical debt.**

12. What policy proposals would you support that address our local housing and homelessness crises? >> **I support policies that would streamline the permitting process and lower fees for ADUs and affordable units. I also support workforce housing projects such as partnerships between school districts and jurisdictions to keep workers housed in the communities where they work. Our unhoused community members deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. I support more pilot tiny home projects such as the one behind Westview Presbyterian Church in Watsonville.**

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 adopting project labor agreements with local hires and apprentice training requirements, investing in a fully staffed public sector workforce, and affording workers the opportunity to choose a union.**

14. If you were eligible, did you vote for Bernie Sanders in the Primary Election 2016? *Yes or No* >> **No. It was important to me to support a woman.**

In 2020? *Yes or No* >> **No. I supported and campaigned for Elizabeth Warren.**

15. If elected, what do you realistically hope to accomplish during your term of office? >> **In the time that I have served, the SCC Democratic Central Committee has become more aligned with the Progressive movement, and I want to continue this ideological shift through my continued leadership as the Vice-Chair. I will also continue to build Watsonville's representation on the Committee, and support policies/bylaws changes that bring greater representation to marginalized groups.**

16. Give an example of when you spoke truth to power. Who were the players, what were the stakes, and what did you do? >> **In July 2023, the Watsonville Planning Commission held a public hearing to consider a Special Use Permit for a Starbucks Coffeehouse drive-through only facility on Freedom Blvd. If approved, this new facility would be the sixth Starbucks and fifth drive-through location in Watsonville. This proposed new facility is adjacent to the empty Kmart shopping center, a parcel that has been identified by the City as a potential redevelopment site for mixed use housing. I listened to community members speak against this new Starbucks, for reasoning including not wanting another corporate giant chain coffeehouse, wanting more locally-owned businesses, not**

wanting a drive-through only facility that perpetuates our reliance on single vehicle transportation, and wanting to “slow down” and wait to see if redevelopment of that area was possible. Many of my concerns about this project were echoed in these public comments. In deliberation, I stated that approving another drive-through only Starbucks was not consistent with the livable, walkable, local business plan that our community had developed. I did not approve the special use permit. I was the lone dissenting vote. While this vote did not turn out as I had hoped, I did stand firm in my belief that a thriving Watsonville without solely corporate interest is still indeed possible and not that far away.

17. Are you running in coordination with any other local candidate? >> **No**

18. Why should members of Santa Cruz for Bernie vote for you to be their elected representative? (*max 50 words*) >> **As the first elected DCC Executive Committee member from Watsonville, I have worked a progressive voice into the leadership of the local Democratic party. It is equitable, just, and critical that Watsonville continues to have a voice in the leadership of our party. I would be honored to receive your endorsement.**

Please return your completed questionnaire to [santacruz4bernie@gmail.com](mailto:santacruz4bernie@gmail.com) by December 17, 2023.

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