



NATIONAL NURSES  
ORGANIZING COMMITTEE



CALIFORNIA  
NURSES  
ASSOCIATION

## CALIFORNIA NURSES ASSOCIATION LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for taking time to fill out this questionnaire. In order to better inform our membership about the candidates for statewide constitutional offices, the CNA-PAC Board of Trustees has requested candidates seeking endorsement to respond to the following questionnaire. Please use additional paper to complete any questions.

NAME: Kriss Worthington OFFICE: Assembly  
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CURRENT OFFICE (if applicable) Berkeley City  
Council \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Briefly describe your top priorities and the policy areas that will be of most interest to you.**

I will be a Democrat with a backbone, and advocate for the most progressive state budgets and policy possible. One of my goals would be to get a 100% rating on the CNA legislative scorecard. I am passionately committed to working on education, health care, environment, labor, and diversity, but I have also demonstrated that I can take on hundreds of projects and keep track of and follow through on them. My advocacy against implementation of the already-approved drastic prison expansion may help win us some delay in the horrible budget consequences that will come from operating the extra prison beds built to incarcerate many more minority youth for drug and minor offenses. My passion for education funding starts at preschool, includes strong commitment to vocational and career technical education, and goes all the way through to the Community College, CSU and UC systems. Another goal is to use the bully pulpit of the position to support social movements, disenfranchised people and to oppose racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, anti-immigrant and any and all forms of hate crimes, prejudice and discrimination. I will continue to speak out and stand up against I.C.E. raids and DEA raids. While I will be willing when it is necessary to be the "Barbara Lee speaks for me" solo principled progressive vote, I will

primarily seek to build coalitions to win. While I will actively give encouragement and support to progressive causes, my legislation itself will mostly focus on positive incremental improvements.

- 2. Currently more than 7 million Californians have no health insurance. The majority of California's uninsured work at jobs that provide no health benefits. If elected, how would you propose to solve this problem and how would you advance that solution in your office.**

Californians deserve universal access to high quality reasonably priced health care. Single Payer is the best tool to accomplish that goal. While we increase educational efforts to move California and the nation in that direction, we need to make incremental improvements along the way. Health insurance should be employer-paid and provide full coverage. I participated in the educational programs with BOCA, and leafleted "Sicko" showings. In the meantime, I support incremental policy solutions to get California toward that goal. For young adults, health coverage for part time employees could be a useful tool to move us closer. I am generally supportive of efforts to get there this year, but I am concerned about the individual mandate being included unless there are ways to assure affordability for all Californians young and old. However negotiations with the Republicans and big insurance companies can only go so far. We need to elect a Democratic governor who is a true ally on this issue, and we need legislators to take a more active role in continuing the fight.

- 3. Pensions, defined benefit plans, are under attack for replacement by defined contribution plans (401 K's etc.). What are your views on this and what should be done to provide Californians who retire with a livable pension?**

I oppose the take away proposals that threaten existing pension agreements. Employers who negotiated these benefits should follow through on their promises. We need to halt involuntary cash balance conversions and all other cutbacks in pension benefits, and we need to secure cost of living adjustments whenever possible. I have supported generous retirement benefits for police and fire employees because it was right for them, and also because I believe it establishes precedent to point to for other unions in future years. I have supported retirement benefits for part time workers, and opposed reductions to widow/spouse benefits. I have supported multiple efforts of the Pension Rights Center to promote fairer pension policies both on individual employers and on a

broader legislative level. I strongly support the Restoring Pension Promises to Workers Act of 2007 to close the merger and acquisition loophole and I am the sponsor of the City of Berkeley's support. We need to protect promised pensions when plans are changed or terminated, to safeguard 401(k) savings, and to establish an office of pension participant advocacy. I will continue to support shareholder resolutions and organized efforts within individual companies by employees, unions and community supporters.

4. **The health care industry is being rapidly transformed. Through mergers and acquisitions, hospitals, nursing homes, HMO's and other health care businesses may soon be operated by a small handful of giant firms. Public facilities and services are under-funded and facing privatization. For-profits are taking over community and public facilities. What measures would you take to require for-profit companies that acquire non-profit or public facilities or HMO's to repay communities to maintain health care services? Do you support measures which would require public and non-profit hospitals to provide services to the uninsured as a condition for receiving below market rate bond financing? If so, how would you enforce such a requirement from your office?**

YES, in the long term, public facilities and services can best be preserved from these corporate takeovers by comprehensive reform like single payer. I am the only candidate who has actively sponsored bills to support both SB840 AND SB1014, so there is a funding mechanism to make it happen. In the short term we must recognize that corporate takeovers are not a salvation but a stopgap measure. Whenever public resources are given to private corporations, we need to fight for the maximum community benefits we are legally entitled to demand. Since billions of dollars are being spent in tax exempt bonds there should be a public benefit explicitly required. There are bills like Jared Huffman's which require information on how to get to a zero lift policy. Whatever incremental bills such as this are possible I would support. Recently I was told that private hospitals are allowed to get below market rate bond financing. While I support public and non-profit hospitals having these requirements to provide services to the uninsured, there should be equal or greater expectations of for profit corporations

Public and non-profit facilities (and private ones as well) that benefit from public bonds have a responsibility and obligation to provide services for the uninsured. I would strongly support measures and legislation to require that essential health services that protect the uninsured and most vulnerable be included as a condition of receiving public funds.

- 5. The financial imperatives transforming the health care industry increasingly undermines the ability of clinicians to make health care decisions based strictly on the needs of their patients. Many hospitals have been reducing patient services, cutting staff and replacing RNs and other licensed caregivers with lesser trained staff under the guise of cost containment. Our members report reductions in the quality and standards of care across California. What steps would you pursue in your office to protect the quality of patient care? Would you support proposals to ensure that all health care facilities are safely and adequately staffed? Would you support measures to limit unsafe, premature discharges of patients or transfers from acute care hospitals to nursing homes or other sub-acute facilities? Would you support proposals to require more public reporting of health care quality data?**

Taking shortcuts at the cost of patients and nursing staff is unacceptable. Especially in a privatized health care environment, I support legislation that establishes or requires the establishment of hospital safety and care standards for patients. I was and continue to be supportive of measures such as SB 171, which would have required a safe patient lift policy at acute care hospitals. I also support regulations that would set minimum staffing standards so that nurses and hospital staff are not stretched beyond their limits, and patients are getting the quality of care they deserve. I agree that we should put limits on unsafe and premature patient discharges. As in many other industries, it will be important to collect health quality data so that we can take the appropriate steps to improve services in California. I support AB 2967, which would require public reporting of cost and quality by doctors, hospitals HMOs and others in the health care industry. I also support SB 1300 which would daylight important information on pricing and health care quality.

- 6. Registered Nurses are licensed by the State and the Board of Registered Nursing. Licensed Vocational Nurses are licensed by the State and the Board of Licensed Vocational Nursing. There are specific differences in the scope of practice of RNs and LVNs which define who does what relative to caring for patients. The differences in scope of practice are based upon education and knowledge. The health care industry often tries to save money by blurring the lines between scope of practice and arguing that LVNs or Medical Assistants can perform certain tasks such as putting medications into intravenous (IVs) or giving out medications without a physician in the office; which is outside their scope of practice. Would you support protecting patients by opposing attempts to undermine the RN scope of practice? How would you respond if another labor union or health care professional association tried to convince you that this practice is just RNs being elitist and arguing that this is nothing more than a union turf issue?**

We need to support our registered nurses against all of attacks at the federal and state level that are being waged. The NLRB's attempt to divide and conquer registered nurses against each other by defining some of them as

non-union supervisors is deplorable. At the state level, the repeated attempts to have RN work performed by other staff are a direct threat to the quality of patient care, as well as to the nurses and workers themselves. Instead of declaring that this work does not need to be done by nurses, the industry should be providing more resources to help individuals become RNs. To the charge of elitism, I would respond by explaining that increasing the training and helping more health care workers become RNs in the long term will improve the patient care and also improve the standard of living of the health care workers.

7. **What is your position on tax exempt status of large, chain, non-profit health care corporations who also have for profit subsidiaries who own acute care hospitals in California? What would you do, if elected, on this subject?**

Sutter Corporation is technically a non-profit corporation, but it frequently acts in the interests of highly-paid corporate executives rather than in the interests of their patients or employees. Since non-profit institutions are benefitting dramatically from their tax-exempt status, legislation should place higher expectations on them to provide community benefits and meet the health care needs of our state. I have stood in solidarity with CNA and SEIU-UHW on repeated occasions to demand greater corporate responsibility. Specifically in relation to for-profit subsidiaries, I would support any and all efforts to increase the pressure for accountability.

8. **Technology is being widely applied to many sectors in society. It is often marketed as beneficial and worthy of new investment by private and public funding. One example, touch/computer voting machines sound good; but have limitations and deficits; yet many states rushed right out to invest in them. The same is true for medical technology in the health care field. Electronic charting; e-ICUs and many other applications are being marketed to providers and elected leaders by the hi-tech sector. What do you think should be done by government to assess and study these technologies before they are implemented in the health field?**

Technology provides the potential for increased efficiency, but it often comes with a price. I believe that medical technology, much like voting technology, should be carefully examined and placed through a certification process. When employers are considering new technology, they should be required to seriously evaluate the experience of the hands-on employees (nurses and all other health care workers). Research and development funding for new technologies is an acceptable use of government resources, but improving the wages and benefits for nurses and health care workers who provide the direct service, is a much higher priority. Shortages of nurses and staff can be better addressed by increasing compensation rather than simply investing in technology to take away the jobs.

9. **Hospital mergers have produced an epidemic of emergency room closures and consolidations that threaten the public's access to essential health services. Do you support laws that would declare emergency services to be "essential public services" similar to police and fire and provide funding to keep emergency departments and trauma centers open that are able to meet certain criteria, including providing care to the uninsured and indigent? If so, how would you assist this effort in your office?**

Given the lack of universal health care, emergency room services provide the necessary safety net for this state's most vulnerable citizens. When private funding to emergency services is reduced without providing the support to people who end up there, it is just irresponsible. I support legislation that would make emergency services "essential public services" while working to ensure that we are relieving the burden of unnecessary visits to the emergency room through expansion of health care. I believe it is essential to look at this issue from a budgetary standpoint and to come up with creative ways to mitigate the impact of merging hospitals. Both private and public hospitals and medical facilities have a fundamental responsibility to provide care that every Californian deserves. In the event of mergers and downsizing, that responsibility must ensure that patients are not left suffering as a result.

10. **Would you support workers who are attempting to win union recognition or union contracts from recalcitrant employers by:**

- (a) **Honoring (refusing to cross) union picket lines?**  Yes  No

I have always supported picket lines, and I have made a point to support workers by showing up to and helping to take a shift at hundreds of picket lines. Most recently, I have worked with nurses and hospital workers at the Sutter medical center where nurses are striking for good benefits and safe patient care.

- (b) **Supporting union boycotts?**  Yes  No

As a City Councilmember, I have not only supported boycotts, but I have worked with organizers to use my public status to begin conversations with and put pressure on management to do the right thing. Most recently, I have worked to support workers at the Woodfin and Claremont hotels as well as those who were unjustly fired from Berkeley Honda during a change of management.

- (c) **Publicly speaking or writing in support of union organizing drives and contract campaigns?**

Yes  No

I have publicly spoken at hundred of union rallies in support of organizing drives and contract campaigns, and I have written and sponsored legislation in support of workers in their various struggles. As an Assemblymember, I would continue to use my position and my

resources in the most effective way possible to support the efforts of workers who want to organize.

**Have you ever crossed a union picket line?** \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_X\_\_ No

If yes, please explain.

**11. Do you support a woman's right to make her own decision regarding her reproductive health, including the right to choose an abortion?**

Yes, I strongly support reproductive rights. A woman's right to choose is a fundamental moral and legal right. Not only have I stood up in support of choice but I have opposed the numerous disgusting attacks on girls and women disguised as parental notification, such as Proposition 85. Most recently, I am actively discouraging people from signing the misnamed "Sarah's Law". I even persuaded one petition circulator to stop circulating it! Back in September 2007, I sponsored opposition to the sexual abuse reporting act (Initiative 1249). And recently, I sponsored City opposition to the nomination of Richard Honaker. In addition to taking City government action, I also activate others to lobby as well through speaking at organizations or flyering to interested individuals. I have actively opposed numerous other anti-choice judicial nominees. I signed on and showed up to support Oakland's creation of a program to protect women being harassed when entering a clinic.

## 12. What other endorsements do you have?

### Organizations:

Sierra Club  
Equality California  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
State Council  
International Association of Machinists,  
Local 1546  
Berkeley Firefighters Association, Local 1227  
Engineers and Scientists of California, Local  
20  
Teamsters Joint Council 7  
Progressive Democrats of the East Bay  
Cal Berkeley Democrats  
Berkeley Daily Planet

### Elected Officials

Mark Leno, Assemblymember  
Robert Lieber, Albany Mayor  
Farid Javandel, Albany City Councilmember  
Marjorie Atkinson, Albany City  
Councilmember  
Max Anderson, Berkeley City  
Councilmember  
Darryl Moore, Berkeley City Councilmember  
Dona Spring, Berkeley City Councilmember  
Don Jelinek, Former Berkeley City  
Councilmember  
Ken Bukowski, Emeryville Mayor  
Ruth Atkin, Emeryville City Councilmember  
Kevin Dowling, Hayward City  
Councilmember  
Larry Reid, Oakland City Councilmember  
Mark Green, Union City Mayor  
Tom Ammiano, San Francisco Supervisor  
Bevan Dufty, San Francisco Supervisor  
Gerardo Sandoval, San Francisco Supervisor  
Leslie Katz, Former San Francisco Supervisor  
Jose Cisneros, San Francisco Treasurer  
Elsa Ortiz, AC Transit Board Member  
Doug Linney, East Bay MUD Board Member  
John Selawsky, Berkeley School Board Chair  
Rio Bauce, Berkeley School Board Member  
Jesse L. Arreguin, Berkeley Rent Board Chair  
Dave Blake, Berkeley Rent Board Member  
Howard Chong, Berkeley Rent Board  
Member  
Jack Harrison, Berkeley Rent Board Member  
Jason Overman, Berkeley Rent Board  
Member  
Lisa Stephens, Berkeley Rent Board Member  
Eleanor Walden, Berkeley Rent Board

Member  
Pamela Webster, Berkeley Rent Board  
Member  
Selma Spector, Fmr. Berkeley Rent Board  
Member  
Van Nguyen, ASUC Berkeley President  
Taylor Allbright, ASUC Berkeley Executive VP  
Danny Montes, ASUC External VP, President  
UC Student Association

### Appointed Officials:

Bonnie Hughes, Former Civic Arts  
Commissioner  
Sunny Jha, Health Commissioner  
Igor Tregub, Labor Commission Chair  
Candace Nisby, Labor Commissioner  
Russell Kilday-Hicks, Former Labor  
Commission Chair  
Michael Diehl, Mental Health Commissioner  
Phoebe Anne Sorgen, Peace and Justice  
Commissioner  
Diana Bohn, Peace and Justice  
Commissioner  
Stephanie K. Thomas, Peace and Justice  
Commissioner  
Eric Chan, Personnel Commissioner  
Gene S. Poschman, Planning Commissioner  
Patricia Dacey, Planning Commissioner  
Nancy Holland, Public Works Commission  
Chair  
Yvonne Prevo, Public Works Commissioner  
Sara Shumer, Public Works Commissioner  
Denisha M. DeLane, former  
Telecommunications Commissioner  
David Tam, Zero Waste Commission Vice  
Chair  
Natalie Nava, Zero Waste Commissioner

### Religious Leaders:

Rev. Jeff Johnson  
Rev. Marvis Peoples  
Rev. Edwina Perez-Santiago  
Rev. Belinda Thomas  
Rev. Mark Wilson

### Other Community Leaders:

Dolores Huerta, co-founder, United  
Farmworkers  
Margie Adam, Singer/Songwriter/Activist

Nancy Carleton, Halcyon Neighborhood  
Association  
Pat Cody, Co-founder, Cody's Books  
Adrienne Bank, Co-founder of Youth  
Emergency Assistance Hostel (YEAH!)  
Anna de Leon, Owner, Anna's Jazz Island  
Kent A. Lewandowski, Sierra Club  
Levin Sy, Treasurer, Asian Pacific American  
Labor Alliance  
Sally Hindman, Executive Director, YaYa  
California  
Sean Dugar, President, NAACP Youth  
Council

\*titles for identification purposes onl

Questions: 916-491-3230

Return to:

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OR FAX TO: 916-446-3880, or

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