

Return by: \_\_\_\_\_

**LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE  
ELECTIONS 2008**

Candidate's Name: Kriss Worthington  
Party Registration: Democrat  
Current Occupation: City Councilmember

14 Office Sought: California State Assembly Dist. #  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Incumbent: Loni Hancock

Name(s) of Opponent: Tony Thurmond, Phil Polakoff,  
Nancy Skinner

Committee I.D. Number: 1301557

Campaign Address: 2801 Hillegass Ave #1 Berkeley,  
CA 94705

Campaign Phone #: (510) 548-8796

Campaign's E-mail: kriss@dsp.com

Campaign Manager's Name: Mike Sheen

40,000 District Voter Registration: Dem. 150,000 Rep.  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other 60,000 (inc. 30,000

DTS)

Major Counties in District: Alameda and Contra

Costa

**Dear Legislative Candidate:**

If you would like to have your candidacy considered for endorsement by the California School Employees Association (CSEA), please respond to the following questions. (See attached CSEA Membership Profile.) In addition, please attach a copy of your biography, candidate photo, endorsements and other related information. Additional pages may be used as necessary. Please be sure your name appears at the top of each page. **This form can be sent to you via email by calling (800) 867-2026 x3624.**

***Please mail the completed questionnaire to ELECTIONS, 1127 11th Street, Suite 346, Sacramento, CA 95814. The due date is shown on the top of this page.***

Sincerely,

THE PACE COMMITTEE

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1. What public elected offices have you held?

<u>Office</u>	<u>Term</u>
<b>Berkeley City Council</b>	<b>1996 to Present</b>

2. CSEA is the largest classified employee union in the state, representing over 230,000 workers. What experience or background do you have dealing with classified school employees and/or CSEA? What have you done, specifically, to support classified employees and CSEA?

**At the Berkeley schools and in general, I have been supportive in union efforts during contract negotiations. Most of my experience has been with employees at the University of California campus, as it is the largest employer in Berkeley. I have actively supported UPTe, CUE, AFSCME, and equivalent organizations of classified employees there. At the Berkeley Unified School District, I have worked in a much less directly with those employees.**

3. What is your position on mandatory agency shop or fair share provisions for classified employees? Do you support mandatory or fair share agency shop provisions for classified and other public employees? Do you support mandatory agency shop elections at the request of the employee organizations?

**I support mandatory agency shop elections and provisions for public employees. Ultimately, I believe in a 100% union model, because other models allow some people to benefit from the union's work without being a part of the effort, and because it is more fair and it makes the union more effective at advocating for all the workers.**

4. Explain your position on contracting out, especially as it relates to school transportation, food service, maintenance programs and other public employee services. Do you support limits and/or bans on contracting out these public services?

**I am strongly opposed to the privatization of public services. Too often this has become a short-cut to save a little money in the short term, but you risk long term negative effects on individuals and the social and economic fabric of our society. I am also opposed to the long-term use of part-time temporary workers by state and local agencies. Part time temporary workers seem to frequently get extended beyond the brief temporary time they were originally intended to be hired, and they do not have the benefits or job security they deserve. Furthermore, as a state and as local governments, we should be working to ensure that our workers are invested in the services they provide to the public. At the City Council level, I have successfully fought to secure fair wages and benefits for City employees when the City Manager said there was no money. In addition to strongly opposing the contracting out of janitorial and security jobs, I have taken the**

lead in proposing that we bring work in house that has previously been contracted out. I have built a little momentum in this direction- while prior votes were 8-1, in the last two years I have been joined by two other council members voting against outside contracts and expressing support for my proposals to contracting.

5. What is your position on affirmative action, and what, if anything, have you done to promote your position?

I am a strong supporter of affirmative action programs in hiring, recruiting, contracting, and admissions. In 1996, I fought vigorously alongside community organizations against Proposition 209, and in 2003, I worked with those same organizations and students to oppose Proposition 54. However, Proposition 209 only banned the use of race and gender in making decisions around employment, admissions, and contracting. I believe that affirmative action encompasses the active recruitment and promotion of diversity that extends beyond a simple hiring decision alone.

At the City Council, I have fought hard over the last 11 years to ensure diversity in City hiring and Councilmember-appointed commission positions. Each year, my office sponsors a diversity study to illustrate our progress but also the long way we still need to go to actively encourage more Asian, Latino and African American involvement in our City's commissions. I am proud to have the most ethnically diverse and age-diverse commissioners of any Councilmember in the City of Berkeley. Additionally, I have supported efforts to hire a diverse workforce at all levels. At a regional level, as a member of CMA, ACTA and ACTIA, I have worked with women and minority-owned businesses to improve the position of small businesses in the contracting process.

6. Due to the rising cost of housing, many classified employees cannot afford to live in or near the districts where they work. Currently, school bond funds are available to assist teachers and administrators to attain housing. Do you support providing classified school employees equal access to these funds?

YES. I support providing more resources for all school employees to be able to afford a home in the same community where they work and serve. I believe that these school bonds can be expanded to help alleviate pressures for classified school employees, but in general, I am a proponent of making sure that the State maximize the use of its housing-related bonds to incentivize truly affordable housing for the workforce. At the local level, I have been able to find creative ways to help fund and incentivize affordable housing development. Despite doubts that it could be done, I have successfully sponsored and passed legislation to guarantee \$1 million annually from the General Fund to be used through our Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

7. What is your position on school vouchers?

**I oppose school vouchers, which divert money from public schools to private schools. On multiple occasions, I have opposed ballot measures as well as legislation, which would be financially damaging to public schools as well as raise issues of separation of church and state. I am a strong advocate for equal access to quality public education, and I oppose attempts to privatize education at the expense of our public schools.**

8. Do you support state funding to provide staff development and training for classified school employees? Do you support mandatory in-service training days for classified staff?

**Yes, I support maximizing all possible state funding to provide staff development and training for ALL employees, because it is critical to fostering a healthy learning environment. I support maximizing the resources available to provide trainings that are desired by the employees. I unequivocally support voluntary in-service training days, and I support mandatory training only if they are supported or approved by the union.**

9. What is your position on the use of volunteers in schools? Do you support the use of school volunteers to perform capital projects or other work currently performed by classified workers?

**As a policy, I do not believe school volunteers should be asked to perform duties of any hired staff or classified school employees. I do however feel that every attempt should be made to recruit parent and community volunteers, when desired by the teachers, to take a larger role in cultivating the learning environment for our children.**

10. What is your position on the use of binding arbitration to resolve labor disputes and dismissals in school districts?

**I would oppose forcing binding arbitration on a union. However, in a situation where a union would like arbitration, I support the use of third-party arbitrators as an option if negotiations break down or management refuses to continue a discussion.**

11. Do you support public employees' right to strike?

**Public employees' rights are limited by federal law. However, I support the efforts of all workers, including public employees to strike and leverage their power over management. I would not vote for an injunction against a strike, should one occur.**

12. Within the context of education reform, name three specific areas where classified employees should play a significant role.

The most important area that school employees can play a role is in the preparation of the school budget. At the city level, I have been actively working with the city manager to make sure that he consults with the classified employees in determining what is practical, realistic, and positive for the schools in making budget decisions. Workers' firsthand experience of the school, the community, and the individuals involved has provided an invaluable resource for the budget process. They are usually the ones best suited to understanding the human impact of a budget cut. This inclusive model is a good one to replicate in most work environments.

Additionally, I believe school employees can play a significant role in improving working conditions and school safety. As full-time staff, many of these individuals are best suited to understand what improvements can be made to the physical environment for both employees and students.

13. What is your position on the use of short-term, temporary, and intermittent employees in the public service, rather than the hiring of permanent employees?

I am opposed to the long-term use of part-time temporary workers by state and local agencies. Part time temporary workers seem to frequently get extended beyond the brief temporary time they were originally intended to be hired, and they do not have the benefits or job security they deserve. We should not allow these shortcuts to be taken as they often have far worse long term effects on the workforce. Furthermore, as a state and as local governments, we should be working to ensure that our workers are invested in the services they provide to the public.

14. What is your position on educating illegal immigrants?

Education is a cornerstone for democracy in this country. I believe that all children are entitled to an equal right and equal access to education, regardless of immigration status. I support efforts to educate undocumented immigrants and help them to achieve the same success as other children in the state. Undocumented children often find themselves unable to attain the same educational success or financial assistance in their pursuit of higher education simply because of their status, which is often a result of a decision out of their control. We should not be penalizing children or criminalizing youth as a result of the lack of policies that address the larger causes that put them in these situations.

15. What was your position on proposals to place strict percentage limits on spending for administration of schools in order to spend more in classrooms?

**I don't like the concept of strict percentage limits. However, in a given situation, if the unions feel that this is the best or only solution to forcing more money into the classrooms, I would support it. I believe this is also a situation that can be avoided given a more inclusive budget process.**

16. Do you support changing public employee retirement plans from defined benefit plans to defined contribution plans for current and/or new employees?

**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.**

17. What is your position on health care reform? What are your specific proposals to fix the broken health care system?

**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. As an advocate of single payer, I participated in the educational programs with BOCA, and leafleted Sicko showings.**

18. Do you support or oppose designating a classified employee appointment on the State Board of Education and/or the Community College Board of Governors?

**Support. I think a person who actually works at the school brings a valuable perspective that is often left out of elected or appointed boards. I believe good governance requires that all stakeholders are given a seat at the table.**

19. For the November 2005 Special Election, what were your positions on the following

initiatives, and how did you promote your position?

**In 2005, I strongly opposed ALL of the Governor's attacks on education and working families. I was very involved then as I always am in educating voters including students and senior citizens on the impacts that the various propositions would have at the local and state levels.**

- **Proposition 74 – Public School Teachers. Waiting Period for Permanent Status. Dismissal.  
OPPOSE. This proposition would have added even more uncertainty and instability for public school teachers who are underpaid as it is.**
  
- **Proposition 75 – Public Employee Union Dues. Restrictions on Political Contributions. Employee Consent Requirement.  
OPPOSE. Another Schwarzenegger attack, this was a hypocritical attempt to silence working voices while doing nothing to limit the power of corporations over the political process.**
  
- **Proposition 76 – State Spending and School Funding Limits.  
OPPOSE.**
  
- **Proposition 77 – Redistricting. Initiative Constitutional Amendment.  
OPPOSE.**
  
- **Proposition 78 – Discounts on Prescription Drugs.  
OPPOSE. This proposal was ineffective at providing truly affordable prescriptions, as it had no accountability on pharmaceutical companies. It was also being supported by the pharmaceutical industry as an alternative to Proposition 78.**
  
- **Proposition 79 – Prescription Drug Discounts. State-Negotiated Rebates.  
Support. This was the better of the two prescription drug propositions.**

20. As a candidate, will you seek or accept an endorsement or contribution from the JOBS PAC?

**I believe in attending and dialoguing with the Chamber of Commerce and business groups, but given my progressive politics, they display no interest in funding or endorsing my campaigns. I do have support from many minority businesses and green businesses, and I have a strong track record of working to ensure that good labor practices and successful economic development must coexist.**

21. What union endorsements has your candidacy received?

Name: Kriss

Worthington

District # 14

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**So far, the only local to endorse anyone in this race has endorsed our campaign early: International Association of Machinists, Local 1546.**

- 22. Please assess your candidacy as compared to the other candidates. Be specific in your comparison.

**I am the most progressive and activist candidate in this race, and I have the ability to work with others to get progressive things done, and to be actively supporting dozens of important causes simultaneously. One study shows I had a 98% success rate with introducing progressive policy and getting it approved. I have also hired and appointed the most racially diverse team of people, including a good percentage of traditionally underrepresented groups in Berkeley, such as Asians and Pacific Islanders, Latinos and young people.**

- 23. Will you seek this office even if a term limit initiative is passed?

**I did not intend to run had Proposition 93 passed.**

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*Please attach the geographical boundaries and a list of the cities and counties in your legislative district, or the district for which you are seeking office.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature

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 Date

Attachment: CSEA Membership Profile

*Revised 2/07*

**California School Employees Association**