



EAST BAY YOUNG DEMOCRATS

## Questionnaire for Candidates Seeking Statewide Office

### BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot: **Kriss Worthington**
2. Office sought (include office, jurisdiction, position/district number) **State Assembly District 14**
3. Are you the incumbent? **No**
4. How long have you resided in this district and city? **18 years**
5. Is the office you seek partisan or nonpartisan? **Partisan**
6. If partisan, please indicate party: **Democratic Party**

### CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name:	Friends of Kriss Worthington
Address:	2808 Hillegass Ave., #1
City, State, Zip:	Berkeley, CA 94705
Name of staff contact:	Campaign Manager: Mike Sheen (510) 604-2776 Consultant: Doug Linney/The Next Generation (510) 444-4710 Fundraiser: Leslie Katz (former SF Supervisor) Events Coordinator: Barbara Taylor
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FPPC#	1301557

## ISSUES

1. Young people face special challenges to obtaining health insurance, and many go without. Do you support single-payer health care like the program proposed under SB 840? If yes, what steps can we take that are short of single-payer to improve health care in California? If not, what kind of solution would you support to solving the health care problem?

**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.**

2. California is in a budget crisis. Bonds need to be paid back with interest by the next generation. How will you help balance the state's budget without under-funding important programs and services like health care and education? Once elected, you will be forced to choose between many important programs, how will you evaluate what to cut and what to support?

**The budget is perhaps one of my favorite parts of the legislative process. As a City Councilmember, I have been able to carefully read and evaluate our city budget, and in the negotiation process, I have been able to take advantage of countless opportunities to secure funding for organizations and projects dedicated to enhancing health services and education in Berkeley. As an Assemblymember, I will continue my work with local and state agencies to evaluate their budget priorities. Certainly, I believe health care and education provide the most fundamental social services that our society needs, and they should not be treated the same as every other government function. The Governor's across-the-board budget cuts this year have been ridiculous, and they are a great example of governing without priorities.**

**We should also be looking at additional revenue streams. The Governor's veto of the vehicle license fee has cost the state billions of dollars annually. There has also been resistance to repeated attempt to close tax loopholes such as the yacht and aircraft loophole, where very wealthy individuals are able to exempt themselves from taxes associated with the purchase of yachts and personal aircraft.**

3. How would you use your elected office to improve public education and make higher education affordable and accessible for young people in California? We are especially concerned about the growing reliance on personal debt to finance higher education.

**EDUCATION will be my number one state priority. And higher education should be a right and not a privilege. Too many students are often finding themselves priced out of educational opportunities. And others find that they are not given the resources to stay competitive for state universities. When students are forced to work longer hours and take more personal debt to stay in school, they are increasingly detached from the educational and community environment. Financial aid should be a top priority in the**

state budget. We need to be looking for creative ways to generate and retain more money for students who need it.

**My city council district encompasses the UC Berkeley campus, and in my time as a councilmember, I have worked alongside students to lobby state legislators and the UC Board of Regents to prioritize higher education funding and to keep fees at all higher education institutions low and accessible for students. I am also a strong supporter of comprehensive admissions processes. Even with the passage of Proposition 209, state colleges and universities still have opportunities to improve their admissions and outreach practices to encourage more accessibility and diversity. As an Assemblymember, I would continue my work to build close relationship with students and seek every possible opportunity to ensure that their voices are at the table when issues affecting accessibility and affordability are before us.**

4. A woman's right to choose is under attack in our country and our state. How would you use your office to protect a woman's right to choose and expand access to reproductive health services?

**I am an activist member of NARAL, NOW, NWPC, and the Center for Reproductive Rights. I actively follow through on NARAL action alerts and have initiated and sponsored many city bills to support choice. I lobby against anti-choice judicial appointees like Honaker currently. I participated in supporting and lobbying for the new Oakland bubble ordinance. I attend numerous pro-choice events like Roe v Wade anniversary programs and rallies. I was the first man in history honored by the Commission on the Status of Women for outstanding service on woman's issues. I speak out for choice and against sexism whenever it rears its ugly head. I initiated structural reforms to get more women hired, especially in Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments, and top management. I helped initiate a diversity study that revealed that some Council members appointed 70% men and lobbied them to give women a fair chance. After several years we reached 50% women appointees for the first time in Berkeley's history. ( We STILL have not YET reached 50% women in City hirings). Also, through CFRR, I have been involved in multiple international fights for reproductive freedom.**

5. Young people entering the workforce need good jobs with fair pay and benefits. Employers like Wal-Mart don't offer a bright future to young people in search of work. How will you use your office to create good jobs in your district and support a living wage in California?

**I sponsored the creation of economic development work sessions for the City to focus some attention on job creation. I also sponsored the living wage ordinance to try to get young people and low income earners a better chance to survive and thrive. I have supported expanding youth jobs and career training programs to prepare young people for the workforce. I have worked with almost 100 unions to organize workers and/or fight for contracts to get fairer pay and benefits. I have supported many young people starting small businesses including software startups that offered young people well paid jobs that they could bicycle too! At the state level I will work to advance these concepts and also support regulations that ensure that large corporations are not taking advantage of state resources and incentives at the expense of their workers.**

6. Housing affordability – both for first-time buyers and renters – is a big issue for young people in the Bay Area. We are especially interested in smart growth – building in ways that are conscious of the local environment, community, and infrastructure. How will you use your office to make housing more affordable for low and moderate-income young people? How will you help protect homeowners against predatory lending practices and sub-prime loans? Do you support inclusionary zoning? Do you support rent control?

Transit-oriented development and improved jobs/housing balance are central to both my City and County roles and would continue to be so at the state level. I support state bills such as SB375 to create preferred growth plans and help cities plan more transit options. Vehicle miles traveled can also be reduced by allowing workers to work at home and having child care close to employment centers.

I have been a leader in efforts to meet transit needs at the local level. I actively encouraged students to start the Class Pass Program against UC management's opposition. I wrote the proposal to start the Eco-Pass for city employees, against City management's opposition. I worked with a coalition to get an employee pass for UC employees. As a member of the San Pablo Policy Area Committee, I worked on the creation of the San Pablo Rapid Bus. I advocated for expanding the area covered to include Contra Costa County. As a member of the A.C. Transit Berkeley, Oakland, San Leandro Policy Area Committee, I helped create the Rapid Bus and am still trying to get an ecological and economical BRT implemented. At the Plans and Programs Committee for several years, and at the Planning Area Committee I have been a vigorous and successful advocate for increased transit funding. At the state level, I already lobbied strenuously against the Governor's transit cuts, and testified at the Assembly Committee hearing against them. I will continue to fight for T.O.D. incentives that give transit more riders. I will prioritize dedicated revenue streams for transit operational and maintenance funds.

On a policy level, I am a passionate supporter of inclusionary zoning and rent control as tools to preserve and promote affordable housing. On several occasions at the city level, I have fought to defend these requirements. But financial incentives need to address affordable housing to be truly effective. I have succeeded at getting up to a million dollars annually from the City General Fund for affordable housing. I have been active with the national coalition and we are close to getting a great federal Affordable Housing Trust Fund established. I have supported thousands of units of infill housing, and succeeded at getting over a thousand units of student housing built mostly in my district. I was told it was "political suicide" to support so much housing, but it is now built and generally appreciated. I have supported and will support more urban limit lines to protect farmers and farmland. At the state level, we should be working to make sure that the State maximizes its funds for affordable housing development. Proposition 1C most recently created a number of pots of funding for affordable housing development. But the regulations passed by the Legislature may allow for the use of some of this money to essentially subsidize market-rate housing at the expense of affordable units. We need to create incentives for developers to maximize the use of different funding sources in providing the affordable housing this state desperately needs.

The subprime mortgage crisis threatens to take millions of families out of their homes. I am supportive of legislation that places a moratorium on home foreclosures and allows individual homeowners to renegotiate their mortgage rates before a reset occurs on their adjustable rate mortgages. More importantly, I support efforts to increase the level of education about home financing and ways to prevent foreclosure. Banks, financial institutions and lenders need to take their share of responsibility in this crisis, and I would work to hold them accountable. I support current legislation in the Assembly to force lenders to publicly document and report on the status of their loans as a way to put pressure on these institutions to resolve rather than run away from the problem.

7. Global warming and environmental crisis threaten our state and our world. Major changes must be taken soon to limit the damage and transform the ways we produce and consume resources. What will you do to protect California from the impacts of climate change, and move the state in a more environmentally sustainable direction?

Some of the major steps I believe the State needs to take toward reducing greenhouse gases:

- Promote energy efficient land use patterns. (SB 375 is a very high priority.)
- Restructure AB 493 with adjusted rebates to buyers of low GHG-emitting vehicles and surcharges for the worst global warming contributors.
- Dramatically increase support for public transportation.
- Help develop cleaner transportation fuels.
- In addition to alternative fuels, we should promote alternative transportation options (and land use policies that support these options) such as bicycling and walking.
- Help create a market for plug in hybrids.
- Mandate more aerodynamic trucks.
- Increase conservation for residential buildings, including apartments.
- Increase conservation for commercial buildings and agriculture.
- Increase solar, wind, geothermal and biomass.
- Berkeley has begun the process of finding a way to loan people the money to convert their homes to solar energy. I think this is a good example of what we could do on the state if not the national level.
- Working through the Ca Air Resources Board and administrative agencies is as important as getting bills through the legislature itself.
- Work with Environmental Justice organizations to prioritize emission reductions over trading, and seek solutions to the issues of windfall profits, loopholes and hot spots before rushing forward with Carbon Trading.

Last year, many state legislators introduced bills to set green building standards in our State government facilities. While I think these efforts represented a good first step, commercial and residential green building standards statewide is also a partially achievable goal. AB 888 was a good proposal, as it dealt specifically with construction, but unfortunately it was vetoed. In the Assembly, I will push for a mandate on applying green building standards to private construction, both commercial and residential. If we ever want to take the truly bold action that is necessary and expected of our state to ensure a more sustainable environment, we are going to need to change the way we live and build.

As a member of numerous regional transportation committees, including ACTA, ACTIA, and ACCMA, I have been an outspoken supporter of linking land use and transportation, and creating financial incentives to that end. Every year for ten years, I have participated in TALC's events to keep informed on state and local efforts. Transit-oriented development and improved jobs/housing balance are central to both my City and County roles and would continue to be so at the state level.

When I first advocated for a retreat topic to cover these issues at the CMA eight years ago, there was some opposition and significant doubts. Within a few years we were getting unanimous votes for baby steps in this direction. I support state bills such as SB375 to create preferred growth plans and help cities plan more transit options. Vehicle miles traveled can also be reduced by allowing workers to work at home and having child care close to employment centers.

I have been a leader in efforts to meet transit needs at the local level. I actively encouraged students to start the Class Pass Program against UC management's opposition. I wrote the proposal to start the Eco-Pass for city employees, against City management's opposition. I worked with a coalition to get an employee pass for UC employees. As a member of the San Pablo Policy Area Committee, I worked on the creation of the San Pablo Rapid Bus. I advocated for expanding the area covered to include Contra Costa County. As a member of the A.C. Transit Berkeley, Oakland, San Leandro Policy Area Committee, I helped create the Rapid Bus and am still trying to get an

**ecological and economical BRT implemented. At the Plans and Programs Committee for several years, and at the Planning Area Committee I have been a vigorous and successful advocate for increased transit funding. At the state level, I already lobbied strenuously against the Governor's transit cuts, and testified at the Assembly Committee hearing against them. I will continue to fight for T.O.D. incentives that give transit more riders. I will prioritize dedicated revenue streams for transit operational and maintenance funds.**

8. Some of us in this club have in one way or another been impacted by gun violence. How would you seek to address this issue? Please be specific.

**Currently I am working on an amendment to a state bill to allow family members to be notified before guns are sold into their households, like they do in Hawaii.**

9. California's prison system is in a tailspin that threatens public safety and raises the risk of fiscal disaster. And yet, by 2012, California will become the first large state to spend more on prisons than on public higher education. What will you do to reverse the system's problems and shift focus from incarceration to education and rehabilitation?

**Massive criminalization of young people for minor drug offenses is one senseless cause of overcrowding. This should be treated as a health issue, not a prison issue. We need the availability of detoxification expanded. I have been vocally opposed to the Legislature's decision to pass AB 900. A number of possibilities are available to reverse the trend of prison spending. We should be doing everything we can to avoid increasing prison spending period. The budget process should really reflect our state's values, and I believe education should be first on that list. Education spending, or the lack thereof, is almost directly linked to increases in prison spending. Much like the debate on healthcare, I agree with most policy experts who advise that it is far cheaper and morally more responsible to spend money on prevention, early education programs, and academic opportunities for children so that they are not tracked into a life that leads to incarceration.**

**Additionally, the bulk of our prison spending should not be directed toward prison expansions but rather crucial services that prisoners need in order to avoid the revolving door of recidivism. I will fight to make sure that the money we do put into prisons is being directed toward transitional assistance and rehabilitation. I will also strongly advocate for programs that pair our corrections department with other state agencies such as Housing and Community Development and Health and Human Services, so that the information each agency has on these individuals is coordinated. It is important and that we are not simply dumping inmates back onto the streets without adequate stability, but rather ensuring that they are given housing, mental health counseling, and social services to avoid returning into the criminal justice system.**

10. California has failing levees that affect not only the residents near the levees, but much of the state that relies upon the Delta for drinking water. What would you do to protect and strengthen the levees? What if anything should the legislature do to discourage or stop the building of homes in flood plains?

**Aggressive conservation is most important. Working on a consensus plan to fund over 1,000 miles of levee repair that could gain both parties' votes is more logical than repeatedly promoting dams. I also support restrictions and penalties to allowing development on floodplains. Just like I support producer responsibility for corporate decisions that produce pollution, I believe government entities should be responsible for the negative effects of their anti-environmental decisions.**

11. California needs to start planning now for a water shortage in the not-too-distant future. How do you think the state should tackle this problem? Do you believe in creating more reservoirs? Do you support a peripheral canal to divert water to Southern California?

**Dams are bad for the environment and bad for the budget. Conservation is much more economically and ecologically sensible. Water recycling is another valuable tool. Groundwater storage is central to long term plans. SB 820 and SB 1640 provided for increased reporting on groundwater usage to help us plan better. Unfortunately, both were vetoed. Nonetheless, some combination of these three tools offers the most promising possibilities for environmentally and economically sound water planning.**

12. If you could pass just one bill in your first year in office, what would it be, and why?

**Idealistically if not constrained by whether it would win, I would choose Campaign Finance Reform or Clean Money because this reform really opens the door to education and human needs, labor, health, environmental and other reforms. Somewhat more potentially practical, I would really choose whatever is the best possible bill to increase education funding, probably related to reducing the 2/3 requirement for ALL education related funding to 55%.**

13. (Assembly only) As a new legislator inexperienced in the inner workings of the Capitol, name someone you will look to for advice and explain why. Explain how you will go about deciding who to hire for your key staff positions.

**As a first-year legislator, I would commit myself to do the research necessary to understand the workings of the Capitol. This includes talking to key organizations such as labor unions, education advocates, environmental advisors, and most importantly, key finance/budgeting experts. As a Councilmember, I have prided myself on working closely with and bringing stakeholder groups to the discussion for countless policy decisions. In selecting staff, I would continue my commitment to hiring a diverse and multi-talented staff with in-depth knowledge of the policy and political discussions happening in both Sacramento as well as in the District.**

14. (Senate only): Which legislator do you see as a model for how a state Senator should conduct herself? Why?

## **WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

1. Have you collaborated with young people in your community work in the past (list specific examples)? How are young people involved in your campaign, and specifically, what type of relationship will you and your campaign have with our club and our membership?

**YES! As a Councilmember with the distinct privilege of having young people comprise almost half of my constituency, I have prided myself on working with a diverse range of people. To that end, I have worked extensively alongside young people and students to achieve countless goals. I have also appointed over 80 students to city commissions, more than any councilmember in Berkeley's history! And my commissioners in general have not only been energetic and effective, but have often been at the forefront of pushing for policy improvements throughout the city. To name a few successes from collaboration with young people:**

- **Helped students win 1,000 additional beds of student housing on the UC campus, even though the previous chancellor said none were needed.**
- **Appointed over 80 students to City commissions more than all City Councilmembers in Berkeley's history!**

- Helped elect 2 students currently on the City's rent Board.
- Campaigned actively for student candidates for Berkeley's School Board and City Council.
- Worked with over 200 students changing City policy on late-night hours, and succeeded in getting many businesses near campus to stay open later.
- Defeated efforts to move elections to the summer when students and young people were not in town, and supported Instant Run-Off (IRV) elections to avoid the dramatic downturn in youth turnout in runoffs during finals and holidays.
- Supported students who wrote a proposal for public finance of elections in Berkeley.
- In a City where racial diversity is often more a buzzword than a reality, I have advocated strongly for reaching out to EVERYONE and have appointed the most Asians, the most Latinos, and the most young people.

**Building on my relationships with young people, I plan on actively including them and the energy they bring to my campaigns. I have hired Mike Sheen, a young person, to coordinate my campaign because of the energy he brings as well as the commitment we share in involving a diverse range of individuals in our campaign. In this race, I hope to once again have the privilege of receiving support from the East Bay Young Democrats, and I hope to work closely with EBYD as I have in past campaigns.**

2. After you are elected, how will you continue to involve young activists in your work? What should be the proper relationship between you and the grassroots if you are elected to office?

**I believe that it is vitally important to include and invite young people into the political process as often as possible. On a City Council that has often forgotten about the energy and passion that young people bring to the table, I have tried to actively recruit people of all ages to take a larger role in making our world a better place. I have committed to not only bringing young people into campaign work, but also allowing them to develop their skills through policy work, whether it be on commissions or as hired staff to my office. I hope to continue these trends as an Assemblymember. I will also work hard to ensure that I stay connected to groups like yours so that your voices are heard in policy discussions that have very big impacts on people young and old.**

3. Please describe in detail at least two of your accomplishments that have improved the lives of young people. These examples should illustrate skills and abilities that apply to the office you are seeking. These accomplishments may have occurred at any time in your personal, professional, or public life.

**One accomplishment was working with students to create a group called Students for Housing. We were facing a housing crisis and news stories were reporting a student sleeping in a BART station! Admittedly that particular case was rare but it helped to galvanize efforts to get over 1,000 beds of student housing built. When we started organizing, the Chancellor said there was no need to build any more beds. After over a dozen educational programs, and several rallies UC agreed to build a few hundred beds. We continued the campaign, including a camp out on the Chancellor's front lawn. I camped out with the students in my pajamas with a teddy bear and had a lot of fun as well as used the publicity to persuade the administration to build over 1,000 beds. Although I did not have direct say over the University, I used my elected official status to help students get attention and resources to further their goals.**

**Another accomplishment for and with young people has been our diversity studies done with students on City hiring and/or appointments. By revealing the dramatic lack of representation of students and young people in general, we have created pressure which has more than quadrupled youth representation on City commissions. These are the prime**

entry level positions to getting things done in local government, and many of these youth have been elected chair or vice chair by people three or four times their age. Multiple youth originally serving in appointed positions here have gone on to get elected to local government positions.

We were also able to help the expansion of health coverage to very young people. I wrote the budget funding proposal for a racial disparity study and specific solutions. One solution was a door to door effort to sign up families with young children into state coverage they did not know was available.

## **EXPERIENCE**

Please list or describe your current and past activities in the community in which you have acquired skills that relate to the office you seek. Include your role in the activity and the year(s) in which you were involved. Involvement consists of many areas such as family, neighborhood, community, employment, or public life. You may also list any endorsements you have received.

Elected offices currently/previously held: **Berkeley City Councilmember – Elected four times (in 1996, 1998, 2002, and 2006)**

Other campaigns for elected office: **Twice elected President of Wilmington College Student Government Association**

Appointed offices currently/previously held:

- **Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (CMA)** – Plans and Programs Committee, Administration and Legislation Committee, Planning Area Committee,
- **AC Transit: Berkeley-Oakland-San Leandro Major Investment Study** Policy Committee
- **Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)** – City of Berkeley Alternate
- **League of California Cities** – City of Berkeley Delegate
- **San Pablo Avenue Policy Steering Committee** – Member
- **Alameda County Transportation Authority/Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTA/ACTIA)** – Alameda County Alternate
- **Alameda County Waste Management Authority (StopWaste)** – Member
- **City of Berkeley** – Vice Mayor, Telegraph Committee (Chair), Downtown Committee (Vice-Chair), Parks Committee, Eco-Pass Committee (Chair), Rules Committee (Chair), Joint City/Library Board Selection Committee (Chair), Housing Authority, Redevelopment Agency, Civic Improvement Corporation, and Holocaust Remembrance Day Planning Committee (Chair)

Current/Prior union membership: **Worked with UAW to organize factory in Pennsylvania where I worked as a youth, but we did not win recognition and we were fired.**

Other organizations I belong to: **AARP, ACLU, Asian Pacific American Democratic Caucus of Alameda County, BCA, BWOPA, California Democratic Party Disabilities Caucus, CalPirg, Center for Reproductive Rights, Common Cause, Contemporary Jewish Museum, Democrats with Disabilities, East Bay for Democracy, East Bay LGBT Dems, El Cerrito Democratic Club, Environment California, Equality California, Gray Panthers, HRC, John George Democratic Club, Lamorinda Democratic Club, Latino Democratic Club, League of Conservation Voters, Magnes Museum, MGO, NAACP, NARAL, NOW, NWPC, Planned Parenthood, Progressive Democrats of the East Bay, Save the Bay, Sierra Club, Wellstone Democratic Club, WILPF**

**Brief Biography:**

**Childhood:** Lived in foster homes until adopted at age 11. Volunteered for Multiple Sclerosis Society, and Cystic Fibrosis Society. Met a guidance counselor who educated me that in order to help people you need political change as well as social service. Reading and hearing about Martin Luther King Jr and the Civil Rights movement and the peace movement inspired me to volunteer for the Gene McCarthy and Hubert Humphrey for President campaigns. Ran away at age 15 to stop being beaten, was homeless, and learned to live independently. Volunteered with the UFW boycott, earned \$5.00 per week while living in boycott house in Jersey City N.J., Later did summer internship with UFW at LaPaz. Set a goal of traveling to every state and every country in the world. Visited 49 states and 57 countries before settling happily into the Bay Area.

**College:** Volunteered for dozens of liberal activist groups, twice elected Student Government President.

**Work:** Served as a day care teacher, and as manager or Executive Director of non-profit groups including home for mentally retarded adults, shelter for homeless women, youth hostel, housing co-ops, food co-op, neighborhood development association, and U.C. student housing co-op.

**Community Service:** Sierra Club Northern Alameda Chair, Bay Chapter Ex-Comm; NAACP Board; NOW Board; Telegraph Area Assoc E.D. and Public Safety Chair; Safe Neighborhood Committee; Neighborhood Watch Captain; League of Women Voters Action Committee. First man ever to be recognized by the Commission on the Status of Women for outstanding service to the women of Berkeley.

**Elected:** Four times to City Council, won millions of dollars for community services and fair contracts for City employees, appointed and hired many Asians, Latinos and African Americans and lobbied others to be more inclusive of all our diversity.

Endorsements: see attached.