

OREB Endorsement 2024-4

This is part of the OREB endorsement process. Please complete this form. Questions 7 through 40 require a **SHORT** (no more than 800 characters) explanation as part of your answer. Click the button below to start. There are 13 sections. After launching, please click the "NEXT" button at lower left to go to the next section. If you have concerns, please contact Carol Coyote or Michael Cheng.

Email *

robert.bulatao@gmail.com

I. Campaign information

1. Name

Robert Aguilar Bulatao

2. Preferred Pronouns

He/Him

3. Position Running For

City Council

4. Email Address

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5. Phone number

408-393-0384

6. Campaign website

www.RB4SanLeandro.com

II. Campaign finances and support

7. Who has contributed to your campaign?

Only individuals and myself so far.

8. Other than individual donations, who do and will you receive donations from? List all groups, unions, businesses (especially those doing business with the entity in which you seek to hold office).

Friends of the Filipino American Community PAC, Union City

9. Please list persons and organizations who have endorsed you.

Ro Khanna - State Representative Dr. Rod Daus-Magbual - Vice Mayor of Daly City Austin Tam - Dem Central Committee Barisha Spriggs - Dem Central Committee Jordan Pallen - Grand Master of Pallen's Martial Arts Lawrence Abbott - Community Activist Jacqueline Propps - Community Activist Ginny Madsen - Community Activist Elizabeth Kallquist - Community Activist Debra Lopez - San Leandro Commissioner as a resident Jennie Chang - San Leandro Commissioner as a resident Justin Lamb - San Leandro Commissioner as a resident Joseph Trujillo - San Leandro Commissioner as a resident Christine Liwag Dixon - Community organizer Rod Pulido - Filipino American Author Cameron Sasai - Vice Mayor of Pinole Emily Ramos - City Councilmember of Mountain View

10. Please list PACs, Super PACs, and independent expenditure committees supporting you.

Friends of the Filipino American Community PAC

11. List any/all industries, organizations and people that you will decline donations and endorsements from, please be inclusive.

I am running a progressive people's campaign. Given the stranglehold that realty interests and the police department have on San Leandro city politics, I will decline donations and endorsements from all developers and real estate advocates [California Apartment Association (CAA), George Wu & Trang Nguyen In addition, I will refuse donations from right-wing, anti-progressive, reactionary, extremist individuals and organizations.

III. Crime and law enforcement

12. What do you think about the use of force by police? What and when is appropriate and what is not?

The use of non-lethal means such as de-escalation, tasers, rubber bullets, and bean bag guns should be exercised before using live munitions. I think that the use of force is justified in some cases but the use of excessive force is never justified. If a suspect is armed and ready to fire with a firearm then it can be understandable to retaliate with similar force. Police involved shootings should be an uncommon occurrence. We've seen so police forces use any and all reasons to militarize and we must do what we can in order to prevent that trend in civilian policing.

13. Do you support banning private prisons? Please explain.

14. Do you support abolishing cash bail? Please explain.

Yes. Cash bail ends up hurting people who have not committed a crime. Often times people will serve more time while waiting for trial than they would have had they been convicted of a crime. This is inefficient, costly, and inhumane. We live in an age where we have the ability to contact people through automated phone calls, texts, and mail to remind them of their court dates. Cash bail turns into a punishment for only the poor.

15. Do you support decriminalizing (and/or legalizing) all drugs? Please explain.

Yes. Addiction is a mental health issue so we must work on treating the root of the issue. There are also many people serving long prison sentences for substances such as marijuana which leads to a downward spiral in their lives. Criminalization doesn't solve the issue, it only exacerbates it. A great example of a progressive move is the reclassification of marijuana to a schedule III drug from a schedule I drug

16. Do you oppose the use of capital punishment? Please explain.

Yes. Though some people may feel a moral justice in the execution of someone for a crime it doesn't undo whatever damages that person may have done. The cost of imprisoning someone is also less than executing someone. There's also the chance that a prisoner has been wrongfully committed so we must allow these people the opportunity to fight against an injustice committed against them. Public opinion has evolved to a majority of people being against capital punishment and we must evolve with the times.

17. Should convicted felons and prison inmates be granted the right to vote? Please explain your view.

Yes. Regardless of whether they're a prisoner or not they should have the right to vote. They're still citizens of the country and just because they've messed up doesn't mean that they shouldn't be allowed their right to vote. If a felon is allowed to run for president then why isn't a felon allowed to vote? Also voting jurisdictions are allowed to claim prison populations for drawing up district borders, even though those populations are not allowed to vote, which gives fewer people more power, similar to the 3/5 compromise.

IV. Immigration

18. What is your view on immigrants and immigration? What new legislation is needed? And what laws should be removed?

I used to think, "My family came here legally so why can't others?" As I grew older I saw that it took decades to petition my other family members to come over here and realized that I was taught wrong. Putting families through unnecessarily long practices to stay together was wrong. It's a double standard for a country built on immigration & stolen land to deny others the same opportunities especially if the immigration is a means to escape conditions that this country has had a direct hand in creating. Amnesty must be given to those who've sought refuge here so that they won't be forced to live in fear. If we speed up the immigration process through the proper channels then we won't have a manufactured border crisis and we'll create a less fearful society.

V. Infrastructure issues

19. What kind of health care insurance system do you support? And why?

Single Payer healthcare is a necessity. At the age of 26 I was newly married and a massage therapist (who was returning to school to become a physical therapist). I only had health insurance through my wife's new job. When I went in for my next checkup, I was diagnosed with Chronic Myeloid Leukemia, a life long disease. With daily oral chemotherapy I was doing well but without insurance that medicine would have cost me \$20,000/month. In other countries with Single Payer healthcare that same drug is only around \$50/month. Our for-profit healthcare system needs to be reformed so that people don't die from corporate greed.

20. Do you support public banking? Why or why not?

I support public banking. Allowing big banks to have "too big to fail" powers has done nothing but exploit us. Public banking helps reduce the effects of economic downturns because now these banks aren't gambling with our money in bonds. This also creates a culture where a bank becomes a direct stakeholder in the health of the local businesses and economy.

21. Do you think public transit should be free?

Yes. This benefits the most vulnerable, takes cars off of the road, and lowers the wear & tear on roads. This in turn creates safer environments for bicyclists & pedestrians, redistributes money into public transportation rather than into big oil & insurance companies, and offsets carbon emissions. Transportation justice is an important factor in life that many don't think about.

VI. Labor

22. What do you think the minimum wage should be in California? Nationwide? What does a "living wage" mean to you?

Minimum wage should be a living wage. If we cannot build a system where workers at the base level of our economy aren't able to sustain themselves with food, shelter, transportation, and a chance to save for upward mobility (at the bare minimum) then we only have a system that thrives off of exploitation. The traditional model is not only immoral, but unsustainable. Any structure without a strong base is prone to collapse. If the cost of living rises then the minimum wage should adjust accordingly. Those powers that use this as an opportunity to price gouge while collecting record profits & blaming the poor are the problem. When less people are living in poverty and relying on the social safety net then we grow strong communities.

23. How would you protect workers not covered by the National Labor Relations Act?

I endorse a proposal akin to the 'National Worker Cooperative Development and Support Act,' introduced by Khanna and Bowman. We could adopt it as a model to safeguard vulnerable groups such as public-sector employees, agricultural and domestic workers, independent contractors, employees of a parent or spouse, workers at air and rail carriers governed by the Railway Labor Act, and supervisors.

24. Would you propose to tax the companies that rely upon contract workers? And how?

Large profitable corporations which rely on contract workers and do not pay them employee benefits, making the employees personally pay FICA or state unemployment taxes social security and medicare reap profit from this arrangement while the workers do not. This encourages misclassification of workers, creates an unfair labor market and promotes economic instability in the workforce. These corporations need to be taxed at higher rates relative to the proportion of contractors versus benefited employees. Implementing a surcharge on contract labor expenditures above a threshold or tightening criteria for worker classification would ensure that they pay their fair share of taxes.

VII. Housing

25. What are the causes of the housing crisis in California and the Bay Area?

The housing crisis in California began when housing became more of an investment and a profit generator instead of a place to live. This did not happen overnight. Not enough affordable housing has been built for the past 70 years. The inequities of redlining prevented many people from being able to buy a home even before the prices of homes skyrocketed. Too much wealth has been concentrated in too few individuals. The 2008 sub-prime mortgage crisis helped to burst the housing bubble and caused too many people to lose their homes. Rents started increasing at a rate far beyond incomes and evictions became commonplace. The covid 19 lockdown exacerbated everything as did the financial industry and current economic situation.

26. What do you propose to protect renters? Please comment on laws/acts, such as Costa Hawkins and others, to be repealed, and added/legislated?

The passage of the Costa Hawkins Act in 1995 precipitated a change in the rental housing landscape that has created an ever widening arc of destruction. Lack of tenant protections has had a direct effect on the ever increasing number of unhoused Californians. The statewide California Tenant Protection Act (AB1482 of 2019) and its more recent amendment the California Homelessness Prevention Act (SB567 of 2023) both attempted to keep California renters in their homes by controlling how much rents can be raised and how tenants can be removed. Both pieces of legislation were hardwon in Sacramento against massive opposition by the profit-driven landlord & real estate lobbies. Housing as a human right needs to be enshrined in the California constitution just as the rights of homeowners are.

27. Do you support the repeal of all laws that criminalize or punish homeless persons? What will you do to protect our unhoused communities?

The recent Supreme Court decision sanctioning Grants Pass Oregon to fine and jail people without housing reflects the knee jerk reaction of many local jurisdictions to the growing unhoused population by criminalizing it. People need to be helped to stay in their homes, even if that home is a vehicle. Safe parking locations need to be supported at the local level by the government. Until there is enough safe and stable roofed shelter affordable to people with limited incomes, there needs to be humanitarian aid to people without a roof over their head. It is cheaper for jurisdictions to provide access to water, sanitation and protection from harassment than it is to fund the jails to house them as criminals. Houselessness cannot be a crime.

28. How do we provide/develop more affordable and low-cost housings?

Local electeds need to understand how non-profit housing is developed and put it to work for their communities. Housing has become a for profit industry which is only interested in building market rate housing for which is unaffordable to most. Since the 80's affordable housing has been financed by federal low income housing tax credits but this requires affordable housing developers to play long term and get most of their financing from banks intent on returning a profit. We need to find renewable ways for the government to fund affordable housing like the proposed by the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority on the November ballot where the government becomes like a public bank and whatever income is generated is put back into the bank to build and support more affordable housing.

29. Do you support social housing? How do you propose to create it?

Social housing is publicly backed, self-sustaining housing that accommodates a mix of household income ranges: It's NOT market driven and takes the profit motive out of a basic human need. The social housing infrastructure that is working in Vienna AND New York City took 50 years to develop but it is a model that benefits the entire community. The Social Housing Bill (SB555) was signed into California law in Feb of 2023 by the Governor but has not yet been fully funded. It lays out the State's 10 year plan overseen by the Department of Housing and Community Development to create housing sheltered from market forces and grow it to scale through acquisition and preservation of existing housing and production of new housing affordable to the lowest income residents.

VIII. Education

30. What is your opinion about charter schools?

While primarily motivated by the desire for high quality education for students, on balance, charter schools have not measured up to their promise. While excellent charter schools exist, the evidence clearly shows there is no inherent advantage to charter schools. The testing data demonstrates the same spread among charter schools as among public schools. Moreover, the creation and advocacy of charter schools has robbed public schools of vital resources: ADA funds, supplies, and facilities. Charter schools often practice "poaching" of students, and do not manage to serve a proportional number of special education, English-learners, and behaviourally-challenged students. Public schools have undergone "brain drain" to a degree and a concentration of more challenging students.

31. What is your opinion about no cost public college and university?

I believe no-cost higher education should be universal, including vocational training programs. It would seem as a nation we are a long way from realizing this ideal, so I support starting locally (county and state), in incremental steps (low, lower, no-cost). Private educational programs are not going anywhere and they will remain available to those with means. Thankfully, many private institutions provide excellent scholarship opportunities though not for all students. No-cost college provides an equitable means of educational access for all students and a much stronger society and economy as that capital is redistributed to businesses rather than exploitative lenders like Sallie Mae.

32. Do you support the cancellation of all student debt?

Yes! Student debt forgiveness will pay it forward as an investment in the ability of individuals to purchase goods, homes, grow families, and generate capital for all sorts of progressive initiatives. Moving forward, we need to set the interest on these types of loans at 0%. Loan sharks should not be setting public education policy. The reduction in education spending in the state of California (dating from the Reagan era and Proposition 13), and the concurrent rise in tuition costs have led to the current, deplorable state of public education. Most industrialized nations have free and/or reduced college. An educated populace leads to a healthier economy, community, nation, and world.

33. How do you propose to make universal public pre-K free?

Nothing has greater return-on-investment than pre-K education. The benefits of promoting socialization of children, academic readiness, and childcare relief are incalculable. California is half-way to implementing universal TK to its 400K 4 year olds by the 2025-26 school year. Existing limitations include facilities (e.g. toilets) and staffing. Currently available FREE pre-K programs include the California State Preschool Program (CSPP), Head Start, and Transitional Kindergarten, supported through state and federal funds. I believe education is a function of the state government, and expansion of the state budget should be effected by increasing the tax rate for individuals with income in excess of \$500,000 in our progressive tax system.

34. Do you support "strengthening" Title IX?

Our very own Alameda County DA Pamela Price served as lead plaintiff in the very first sexual harassment suit: Alexander (Price) v. Yale (1977). We've come a long way but not nearly far enough. The mores of our sexist society have only slowly changed over the course of the past nearly 50 years. Title IX has never met its original promise due to lack of resources and inadequate implementation. We need Title IX to protect women, and LGBTQ+ individuals in particular, at a time when sexual assaults on campuses (at all levels) run rampant. At the same time, I will defend against the use of Title IX as an attack on trans individuals in athletics and other endeavors.

IX. Environmental

35. What do you think, broadly, a “Green New Deal” should contain?

I endorse the Green New Deal Resolution (federal legislation) introduced in by Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Edward Markey in 2019. There are many great things being proposed such as guaranteeing work with family-sustaining wages, providing the basic necessities of life (shelter and a clean environment), resources for accessible higher education, fixing our infrastructure, becoming energy efficient, and more. It’s very forward thinking in regards to many environmental factors that we need to address to maintain a habitable planet. What I would like to add to this would be a green desalination plan: one where we invest in desalination plants and properly dispose of or find a way to harness the byproduct of desalination.

36. Do you support banning fracking?

Climate change represents the greatest existential threat of our age. Fracking must be banned as soon as possible. Fracking poisons groundwater while releasing large quantities of methane into the atmosphere (an estimated 6.5 million metric tons per year, or upwards of 10% or more of all methane production). As a greenhouse gas, methane is almost 30 times more effective at trapping heat than carbon dioxide, making it significantly more potent in contributing to global warming. The practice of fracking has extended the life of the fossil fuels industry to the deadly detriment of our planet.

X. Election

37. Do you support public financing of elections?

Electability should not be a function of personal wealth and special interests. Public financing makes possible the candidacies of a much broader range of qualified candidates, representing more diverse communities, with greater public interests. This is one of the reasons why addressing San Leandro’s city charter to transition us towards district-site elections rather than the expensive at-large voting we have is an agenda point for me. If we want to reduce the influence of big money on our electoral politics then we have to make it an unviable, inefficient practice. This is how the people get representation and become engaged with local politics.

38. Do you support ranked choice voting for your office, and in general?

Yes, RCV encourages participation by a wider field of non-traditional candidates, discourages “machine-politics” and hand-picked successors, encourages consensus politics, and helps to break the political stranglehold of the two major parties. This also reduces the cost of elections if a primary isn’t necessary. Even though I like RCV there are a few things that need to be done. In San Leandro I’ve seen many voters confused by their ballots due to being unfamiliar with RCV. I’ve heard of some voters having their ballots thrown out due to incorrectly filling out and I don’t blame them because those ballots can look daunting without a walkthrough. So there needs to be a multilingual PSA to educate voters on how to fill out their ballots.

XI. US foreign policy

39. Do you support the international campaign of BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions)? And what should the US policy be on Palestine/Israel?

Yes, I support BDS. We have spent Trillions of dollars to create that military presence in the Middle East for our ongoing oil wars. We continue to fund another genocide and develop on stolen land while we have people here living on the streets due to our own housing crisis, unable to afford medical bills, go into inescapable debt due to the unnecessarily high cost of education, and have to deal with crumbling infrastructure. The US should not fund Israel and just take care of its own people. If the US wants to continue to invest in Israel then there must be a permanent ceasefire, a safe return of all hostages (including the over 10,000 Palestinian hostages held by Israel), a free Palestine, Netanyahu facing trial for war crimes, and a return to the 1967 borders at the bare minimum.

XII. Anything else?

40. And if you have chosen not to answer some questions, please explain why.

N/A

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