

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 *

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I. Campaign information

1. Name

Charlene Wang

2. Preferred Pronouns

She/Her

3. Position Running For

Oakland City Council At Large

4. Email Address

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5. Phone number

510-560-3494

6. Campaign website

www.charleneforoakland.com

II. Campaign finances and support

7. Who has contributed to your campaign?

Over 400+ individual contributors. Many are former colleagues from my career in public service.

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).

So far, I've only received contributions and pledges from individuals.

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

Former Council President Pat Kernighan, Kathy Dwyer, Run for Something

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

N/A

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

I'll decline donations from corporate and fossil fuel PACs. I've released the most transparent, clear platform in this race.

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?

It should be a last resort when needed to protect the officer or innocents. I support robust de-escalation training, a culture of accountability through neutral investigations after wrong doing, and a model of policing that staffs departments to the extent necessary for officers to really get to know the neighborhoods they serve instead of being rushed from one crisis to the next.

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

Yes, it's a moral hazard for private companies to profit from peoples' imprisonment. Ultimately, we need to reduce underlying strain that pushes many people to crime; that means attracting blue collar renewable energy jobs, partnerships with the school district for workforce development, and making sure there are good jobs for people just getting home from prison.

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

I'm interested in exploring alternatives to cash bail. This isn't an issue I've studied in depth and isn't something Oakland's City Council has authority over.

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

The War on Drugs wreaked havoc on Oakland, especially Black and Latino communities. I support legal marijuana and the Emerald New Deal framework that ensures communities most impacted by the war on drugs have a chance to build wealth in the legal economy. Generally, I'm sympathetic to mental health and addiction treatment approaches to drugs. I support decriminalizing psychedelics with proven health benefits.

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

Yes, capital punishment is immoral.

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

Yes for felons who have served their time.

IV. Immigration

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

I was raised by immigrants. Oakland needs to ensure that its surveillance data and other city systems cannot be commandeered by a Trump administration that's pledged mass, militarized deportation. We also have a problem of distrust between our immigrant community and Oakland Police Department. I thanked Senator Skinner for sponsoring SB960, which allows police departments to hire DACA recipients. I'll ensure that Oakland takes advantage of this law to improve police service and make OPD better reflect our community's diversity.

V. Infrastructure issues

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

I support universal healthcare, including government based insurance plans, because health care is a baseline that enables all other aspirations.

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

Yes, it's a revenue generating measure that keeps money in our community and can counterbalance discriminatory lending practices we've seen from private banks. I applaud Councilmember Fife's work here and hope to partner with her on making this reality once elected.

21. Do you think public transit should be free?

Yes, and I worked in then-councilmember Michelle Wu's office to make this a reality for Boston. Fare free mass transit would be a great addition to my plans for cultural districts, modelled on Oakland's Chinatown, throughout the Town because it can help drive foot traffic towards small businesses.

VI. Labor

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

A living wage means that a full time job can cover rent, standard expenses, and leave some left over for savings and leisure. I haven't looked at the state or national economics, but I know that Oakland has one of the lowest minimum wages in the area and would work to raise it.

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

Oakland's City Attorney has won damages for egregious wage theft from hotel workers, who are covered by NLRB but are often temporary workers. I'd resource the City Attorney's office so they can go after abuse of workers not covered by the NLRB.

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

I'm open to learning more but have initial concerns that it would drive businesses out of Oakland.

VII. Housing

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

Our housing shortage drives up rents and prices people out of their communities. I'm very concerned by recent litigation against RealPage and other rental pricing algorithms that may be fixing prices; if we find out that rental platforms have been price fixing, Oakland will need to hold them accountable and protect consumers. Our broken coordinated entry system, which makes unhoused people wait unsheltered for years, is also a big part of the problem.

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?

I support repeal of Costa Hawkins. I also support the right to return, protections for tenants to conduct a home cooking operation from their apartment, requiring language appropriate forms be provided to tenants, legal aid, and anti-harassment and discrimination protections.

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

Compassionate outreach, backed by real help will reduce the need for these interactions. My focus will be on engaging our unhoused community, and trying to connect unhoused people seeking jobs with work the city needs to do like street cleaning, paving, park maintenance, and tree planting. When there are public safety issues, law enforcement encampment removal should only be a last resort, guided by clear notice, de-escalation procedures, and monitoring. It should also only occur if safe alternative housing options are available.

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

We need an "all hands on deck" approach to the housing crisis. Devoting public lands to social housing, upzoning with requirements for permanently affordable units, anti-displacement measures like right to return, and adding units by allowing homeowners to sell backyard ADUs to buyers are all parts of the solution. I will also explore tax credits for property owners for lowering rent to affordable levels, so we incentivize the conversion of market-rate units to below market rate units, particularly in neighborhoods that are seeing the most displacement.

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

This is an area I worked on at the DOT and am passionate about expanding. I fought DOT lawyers to ensure that money from the Reconnecting Communities Program, which was drafted to help reconnect communities that had been segregated by construction of the Interstate Highway System, could go towards community land trusts. One of Oakland's best opportunities for land trust social housing will be on the I-980. I have studied, developed, and led this type of project nationally and want to put that experience to work for Oakland. We have a generational opportunity to build social housing, reconnect disenfranchised communities, invest in parks and bike trails, and slash black carbon emissions that contribute to cancer, asthma, and premature death in West Oakland.

VIII. Education

30. What is your opinion about charter schools?

This is an issue for OUSD, not City Council. I personally support robust and dedicated funding for traditional public schools and think, when accountably governed, some charter schools can provide kids with great options.

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

I'm very supportive and think Oakland's Department of Workforce Development should partner with Laney and Merritt Colleges to help connect students with internships and jobs in Oakland.

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

Student debt burden is a big problem, but I'm also sympathetic to some of the fairness arguments by people who worked to avoid debt or did not attend college altogether. I think we need a middle ground that eases the debt burden but, as an Oakland City Councilmember, I would have no role

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

With a progressive tax.

34. Do you support "strengthening" Title IX?

Yes and I worked to strengthen Harvard Kennedy School's Title IX system when I served as class president.

IX. Environmental

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

A Green New Deal must set a rapid pathway to decarbonize our economy while uplifting vulnerable, environmental justice communities. In Oakland, I look at our new hydrogen fueling stations as a great example of this. They create good, blue collar jobs while reducing black carbon emissions that increase cancer, asthma, and other health risks in the flatlands. I'll fund dedicated grant writers so that Oakland can leverage Inflation Reduction Act funding, provide tax incentives to green manufacturing companies that move to Oakland, and advance partnerships with OUSD, Laney, and Merritt to train young people for jobs in the green economy.

36. Do you support banning fracking?

Yes

X. Election

37. Do you support public financing of elections?

Yes once we have our budget in order. I'm interested in exploring a tax on high dollar campaign contributions or independent expenditures to sustainably finance this. Money has too much influence in politics.

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

Yes, but we've done a bad job explaining it to voters and need to improve outreach and education.

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?

I was one of the Biden-Harris officials who signed the letter calling for ceasefire. I support a boycott of specific companies that advance illegal settlements in the West Bank settler economy. The US should press for ceasefire and a two-state solution.

XII. Anything else?

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

N/A

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