



AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

Northern
California

2024 Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Response: **Ahsha Safai**

1. WHAT WILL YOU DO TO ENSURE THAT SAN FRANCISCO FOLLOWS ITS OWN POLICY TO OFFER APPROPRIATE SHELTER TO UNHOUSED INDIVIDUALS PRIOR TO CITING OR ARRESTING PEOPLE?

To ensure San Francisco adheres to its policy of offering appropriate shelter to unhoused individuals before citing or arresting them, I will implement a strategy emphasizing accountability, transparency, and coordination.

Firstly, I will enhance data collection by reforming the "Point-In-Time Count" to provide more accurate, real-time information on our homeless population. This will guide better resource allocation and ensure timely shelter offers.

To address shelter capacity, my plan includes creating or leasing 2,600 beds, opening 5-10 new Safe Parking Sites, and converting 1,000 tourist hotel rooms into shelters. Any neighborhood enforcing a "No Camping" order will have sufficient shelter options available before enforcement.

For immediate shelter offers, I will direct the re-established Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services (MONS) to provide non-congregate shelter or safe parking the same day a "No Camping" zone is established. Enforcement will only occur once adequate alternatives are offered.

I will increase community and supervisor involvement to ensure genuine and adequate shelter offers, fostering trust and collaboration. Support services, including medical, dental, and benefit counseling, will be provided through initiatives like Project Homeless Connect.

Ongoing oversight will be a priority, with the Homelessness Oversight Commission auditing programs for efficiency and effectiveness. This approach will ensure that resources are used appropriately and that San Francisco demonstrates a commitment to dignified and effective solutions for our unhoused population.

2. HOW WILL YOU INCREASE EMERGENCY SHELTER AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN SAN FRANCISCO?

To increase emergency shelter and affordable housing in San Francisco, I will:

Expand Emergency Shelter Capacity:

- Secure additional funding and resources for shelters.
- Repurpose vacant properties and deploy mobile units for immediate needs.

Promote Affordable Housing Development:

- Streamline permitting processes and offer incentives to developers.
- Foster public-private partnerships to build affordable housing.

Strengthen Supportive Housing Programs:

- Increase funding for supportive services and expand Housing First initiatives.

Engage the Community:

- Regularly assess community needs and incorporate resident feedback into housing solutions.

These steps will address the urgent need for shelter and affordable housing, improving stability for San Francisco residents.

3. WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE ROLE OF ALTERNATIVE TO INCARCERATION AS A FORM OF ACCOUNTABILITY WHEN A PERSON IS ARRESTED?

Programs such as community service, probation, and restorative justice focus on repairing harm and supporting personal responsibility while minimizing the negative impacts of imprisonment on individuals and their families. Overall, these alternatives can greatly contribute to public safety and a more effective criminal justice system that focuses on accountability and rehabilitation, not just punishment.

Properly implemented alternatives can enhance public safety by targeting interventions and support services to those most in need. For instance, intensive supervision and monitoring programs, and sober housing can ensure that individuals are held to account and comply with the terms of their sentence while receiving necessary support to repair underlying issues and better reintegrate and contribute to society. Furthermore, these alternatives can also help reduce prison overcrowding and

associated costs, targeting underlying issues like substance abuse or mental health problems, and can lower recidivism rates.

4. WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ON ESTABLISHING A PROGRAM (SUCH AS CART) AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO POLICE CALLS TO RESPOND TO PEOPLE WHO ARE UNHOUSED, STRUGGLING WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE, OR IN MENTAL HEALTH CRISES THROUGH THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT? PLEASE EXPLAIN.

As Supervisor, I've supported funding for CART in the City's budget as an addition to the spectrum of services we provide. It must be a part of our response, as it offers a more effective and appropriate response that addresses the main issue of mental health by professionals trained specifically to handle these types of calls and not only police officers who are spread thin and are not mental health professionals. Having alternatives like CART is paramount to a city like San Francisco dealing with and adequately addressing the complexities of mental health crises on our streets.

5. SAN FRANCISCO MEASURE E SHIFTED CERTAIN POLICYMAKING AND OVERSIGHT POWERS RELATED TO POLICING AND SURVEILLANCE FROM THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND THE POLICE COMMISSION TO THE SAN FRANCISCO POLICE DEPARTMENT. WHAT SAFEGUARDS, OVERSIGHT OR REVISIONS WOULD YOU SUPPORT TO PROVIDE PROTECTIONS FOR THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE IN SAN FRANCISCO?

I would support provisions to ensure protections of privacy and proper use of surveillance technology. In addition, there is a very high risk in the police pursuit policy with an elevated risk of injury and low capture rates. We would need to strengthen the Department of Police Accountability to have true independence, enhance auditing and reporting requirements, and engage with impacted communities through public hearings, community meetings and working groups to ensure accountability and protect the rights of people in San Francisco.