

Democratic Party of Sacramento County
Questionnaire for 2019 CDP Chair Candidates

NOTICE: Your answers provided on this questionnaire will be made available to DPSC members and may become public.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Candidate Name	Kimberly Ellis
Campaign Contact Person	Steve Belhumeur
Campaign Email	hello@voteforkimberly.org
Campaign Phone Number	310-975-9677
Anticipated Budget	\$500,000
Funds Raised to Date	\$350,000
Website & Social Media Handles	https://www.voteforkimberly.org/ https://www.facebook.com/RealKimberlyE/

Demographic Information (optional):

Racial/Ethnic Identity	African-American
Gender Identity/Pronouns	Female/She/Her
LGBTQ?	no
Veteran?	no
Young Democrat (35 or under)?	no
Union Member?	no

Please list all Democratic Party organizations (e.g., clubs, caucuses, state or local party, etc.) to which you belong or in which you have held a leadership position, and what position you held:

Democratic Organization	Position Held	Duration
Black Women Organized for Political Action	Member	Since 2016
African-American Caucus Women's Caucus	Member, Executive Board Member	Since 2015
Democratic Women of Monterey County	Member	since 2017

ISSUE QUESTIONS (Please provide concise, responsive answers).

1. What specific policies will you implement to end harassment and retaliation, sexual or otherwise, within the CDP; including holding accountable those who enabled abuse under the previous Chair?

Most pressing for the CDP is addressing the toxic culture and managing the pending litigation and public relations challenges. The CDP is in shambles with respect to legal liability, leadership vacuum, fundraising and public reputation.

It's critical that we address the toxic culture that created these issues and build an organization that is inclusive and safe for all.

I support an independent investigation to review what has taken place with respect to the latest lawsuit. Knowing the history between the current law firm retained by the Party and a current employee and former plaintiff, it would seem best if the Party retains counsel other than the firm that represented the individual she accused of assault when she was a minor. In addition, hiring independent counselors for anyone needing it seems like a basic service the party ought to offer.

Though we don't know all the facts right now, it's obvious that a top to bottom review needs to be conducted with an analysis of where we need to augment, expand and/or establish a system that puts into place best practices adopted by organizations that have been more proactive with respect to these issues. We ought to consider an independent 'Truth, Accountability, and Reconciliation' Commission for instance, to help all affected by the revelations of sexual assault, harassment and bullying.

My administration will include a newly created position - the Head of People and Culture. We can shepherd a new era of accountability by first establishing a channel of communication, then seeing to it that the importance of comfort and safety of all Party members, employees and volunteers is made known throughout the party, down to the local level. A delegate handbook with 'rules of the road' and expected behavior articulated in plain language is a good start. At every level, the party must be engaged on this issue.

2. What is your specific plan for increasing outreach, engagement, and voter turnout, and which constituency groups would you prioritize?

Today's California Democratic Party must do more... be more... mean more... in the lives of everyday voters. No longer can we simply be focused on winning elections; we have a responsibility to stand shoulder-to-shoulder in solidarity for progressive change that moves everyone forward together.

This means meeting voters where they are at. NPP registration in California continues to outpace Democratic registration – telling us that younger people and new voters are much less likely to identify with the Party, meaning they don't see their interest being represented by us. That's a problem.

Our Party's future is the new American majority: single women, people of color and millennials. These three groups of voters are the most important demographically for turning out wins in future races.

However, we need a more holistic approach to voter engagement... as outlined in our vision below.

OUR VISION: Substance. Style. Solidarity. A 21st Century Democratic Party

Substance: The California Democratic Party cannot merely stand for obtuse and broad social value statements. We have an obligation to take on substantive work addressing policy changes in Medicare-for-All, Prop 13 Reform, Affordable Housing and so much more.

Style: Style isn't simply visual and verbal window dressing. It's our approach in tone, delivery and aesthetic. If we don't evolve to meet the times, be willing to meet people where they're at, and make the CDP meaningful and yes, cool, our Party will become irrelevant.

Solidarity: For far too long, we on the Left have segregated ourselves by issue: Pro-Choice; the Environment; Black Lives Matter; LGBTQ+; Labor, etc. We label ourselves and others in a way that divides us, meanwhile the other side is united in philosophy. While having genuine respect for the rich diversity of identities that make up our Party, it's time to rededicate ourselves to finding common ground and creating a new era of solidarity - understanding that we're all in this together.

3. As Chair, how would you balance the preferences of delegates, elected officials, donors, and organizational allies (e.g., organized labor) in deciding which candidates to endorse and where to invest CDP resources once they are endorsed?

I would predicate my decisions on how closely they are aligned with our values as expressed though our platform and a consensus by community support. There has to be on the ground knowledge about relevant issues surrounding those campaigns and as well as enthusiasm, in order for the chance of challenging the status quo to succeed.

4. As Chair, will you implement a policy of banning contributions from specific contributors or classes of contributors (e.g., oil companies, Walmart, charter schools, private prisons, etc.), and what would be your standard for choosing which contributions to ban? As a candidate for Chair, do you reject contributions from any aforementioned sources?

As a candidate for Chair, I do not accept contributions from the aforementioned types of donors. In fact, I sent an email blast earlier in the campaign which addressed this issue:

“At Team Ellis, our fundraising philosophy is simple and straight forward... we believe in publicly financed elections and the eradication of big money in politics. But until this goal is achieved, we believe it is our responsibility to take as many dollars from as many people as we can - BUT - to never take any dollar that comes with strings attached.

Practically speaking, this means our campaign will only seek out and solicit individual donors or political organizations whose values are aligned with our own. Our experience in fundraising teaches us that corporations and corporate PACs generally never give political money unless they want something in return - and since we don't believe in pay to play - our campaign has no intention of receiving any corporate donations.

But should the world's best corporate citizen come along and want to help us turn a Republican seat into a reliably progressive district for the next couple decades by banking all the costs out of the goodness of its heart without expecting anything in return, then our campaign is willing to talk... well, just as long as they're not charter schools, tobacco and oil companies, the private prison industry, big Pharma and the like. Thanks but no thanks; donations from them are non-starters for our campaign."

As Chair, I would implement a policy in keeping with our philosophy as a campaign. I believe as a Party how we raise and spend money sets a value statement for our base. In other words, no contributions from the aforementioned types of donors.

5. What specific actions would you take to: resolve infighting between elected Democrats and Democratic activists, mitigate disagreements over policy or endorsements, and unify the party after a contentious primary?

There will always be conflict as not all sides are going to agree on policy, approach or candidates. However, I believe the greatest initiator of conflict and what creates lasting and divisive fissures is when there's an appearance (or evidence) that the deck has been stacked against democratic participation. When PLEO appointments are dropped-in to change the outcome of a pre-endorsement caucus or paid voters are bused into ADEM election, the sourness that comes the feeling of being cheating makes it incredibly difficult for the Party to heal and come back together. The best way (as Chair) to ensure we remain whole as a Party is to ensure that there's a level playing field for all, and the appealing authority (often the CRC) makes fair and credible rulings.

6. What is your plan for holding elected Democrats and Democratic candidates accountable in the following common-place situations:
 - A Democratic elected official or candidate endorses a Republican competing against a Democrat endorsed by the Democratic Party in a partisan or non-partisan race;

To be clear, any solution would require bylaw changes. However, I favor stripping DSCC delegate status for that cycle for any elected official who commits such an offense. I also believe it's appropriate for

these offenders to be chastised for such actions, especially when some of these candidates hold values in direct opposition to our Party's.

- A Democratic elected official or candidate publicly campaigns for or against a ballot measure contrary to the position of the Democratic Party.

Unlike Party affiliation where the lines are clear, ballot measures are areas of policy. The most appropriate mechanism to holding elected officials accountable for such acts is to deny them the Party's endorsement in the future (if determined warranted by the endorsing caucus). Additionally, I have no issue with sharing my opinions of elected officials' actions when I believe they are misguided.

- Have you endorsed or otherwise supported a Republican (or other non-Democrat) competing against a Democrat in a partisan or non-partisan race? If so, who and why?

NO, never.

7. What will you do to ensure that the CDP platform is translated into actual policy through legislation at the federal, state, and especially local, levels? What should the CDP's response be when Democratic elected officials vote contrary to the party's official position on legislation?

To be sure, the Chair of the Party is limited in what they are able to do in their position. That said, they can make appearances, speak at hearings, engage in media outreach and implement policies which publicly demonstrate our commitment to our stated values and policy positions. When it comes to legislation, we count on the good faith words of our electeds.

However, the Party's self-correction on those electeds that 'stray' from our stated values and policy positions need to face the music at pre-endorsement conferences.

8. Under your leadership, what new or improved resources or strategies will the CDP provide to county committees like the DPSC to do the following:
 - Win elections at the local non-partisan level;

I believe a one size solution does not work for all local non-partisan races; frankly, it depends on the type race and community. However, Sacramento, like other counties, has had a history of elected Democrats supporting Republicans in non-partisan races, or in other circumstances, Democratic elected-officials in non-partisan offices support Republicans. We, as a Party, must start to consider the

consequences for elected Democratic when they fail to support our values, especially for down ticket in races.

- Recruit, train, and elect younger and more diverse candidates;

I can confidently say I am the only candidate in this race who has a track record of doing just that. As the former Executive Director of Emerge California, I have trained hundreds of women of color to run for office and win – boasting a 70 percent win rate for our alumni. I will bring these honed skills and approaches to our Party. Last year, I launched, Unbought-Unbossed (UnB2), an advocacy organization dedicated to serving as an incubator for the next generation of political disruptors. Should our campaign be successful, and I be elected as Chair, I plan to integrate many parts of the UnB2’s engagement program designs into the Party.

- Elect criminal justice reform-minded candidates for District Attorney and Sheriff in every county.

As an African-American woman who as a candidate, has been speaking out on the issue of criminal justice reform (see platform on my website), I see value in the prioritization of races around this critical issue – judges, district attorneys and sheriff races – and implementing a statewide program at the county level through the use of grants and partnerships with organizations such as Real Justice, Black Lives Matter, the ACLU, and others.

9. Do you support the following reforms and how would you implement them:

- Changing how standing committee members are selected;

Not only am I committed to the democratizing of the process with respect to committee appointments, we were the first to campaign on it. Clearly, we need to end the days of top-down administering of our Party to the exclusion of other voices who happen not to be powerful or wealthy. One thing’s for sure, as we journey together on the road to a more democratic and inclusive party, we need to have many at the table of determining the best way forward.

<https://youtu.be/ZCckKArP2MA>

We haven't actually had a fair and inclusive conversation about what true reforms would look like, because the party leadership has never taken the issue of democratizing committee assignments seriously. Until that happens, we can't say we've considered all of the possible

ways to improve rank and file representation on our committees. Generally however, the fact that a broad consensus exists that there needs to be greater influence by the elected delegates when it comes to decisions about the make up of committees is an indication that we need to address the situation with something other than rationales for why it has to stay the same. I am committed to small 'd' democratic changes and reflecting a will that the majority of delegates support. I was the first candidate to campaign on this in the last election and now, all of the candidates are talking about it.

- Limiting the number of standing committee co-chairs and changing how they are selected;

YES

- Altering the balance of elected vs. appointed delegates;

YES

- Providing for child care at CDP meetings;

Absolutely.

- Making the CDP more accessible for persons with disabilities;

That should not even be a controversy – it has to be done.

- Making CDP meetings more affordable;

Certainly, there are ways to offset costs, but the reality is that the CDP Convention and E-Boards have served a dual role as a fundraising vehicle as well as cost center. Obviously, the Party cannot forgo the major costs associated with hosting our mandatory meetings, but there are ethical considerations on sponsorships and delegate contributions.

While I strongly support more frequent, live-streamed caucus and standing committee meetings, the Party has an obligation to meet and organize in person. If we want greater participation, we must find ways to finance the cost of bringing Convention and e-Boards to a larger scale.

I believe we must expand sponsorships, but the CDP should establish clear parameters for what types of political and businesses entities the Party is comfortable co-branding an event with. I believe the Chair cannot make this determination alone and there should be input from

the E-Board on the parameters for Convention and E-Board sponsorships.

However, my plan for increasing the budget and size of the CDP's operations also includes an increase in small dollar and high-net worth individual donors. Should we, as a Party, self-limit our fundraising and revenue opportunities at E-Board and Convention, I would look to subsidize the costs through new individual donor streams.

- **What other reforms do you support for making the CDP more democratic and accessible?**

PLEOs play an important component in our Party's structure, and certainly, their voices are important, but the current structure as it stands today still provides them an oversized influence in our Party. And while our Party has continued to make strides in increasing non-elected opinions into our decision-making, there are several vehicles for us to explore. As these past ADEMs highlighted, there is no bylaw preventing individuals from being paid to vote in an ADEM election. Certainly, we can agree that payment for votes is an unfair advantage. I also believe we must explore changing the process by people get appointed to the standing committees and believe that caucuses and delegates at large should be able to participate in selecting some of the make-up – though I believe strongly that the Chair should not abdicate the breadth of their authority, rather this would be an opportunity to more evenly balance the process from an access and inclusion standpoint.

10. **What criteria will be your priorities when hiring CDP staff, and how involved will you be in day-to-day decision-making with staff? Do you support unionizing CDP office and campaign staff, and what would you do to ensure that their decision to unionize would be honored by the CDP and its coordinated campaigns?**

Far too often, hiring decisions are limited to proximity and network. If we truly want diversity in hiring, we must actively go out and seek it, recognizing that the talent in diverse hires' resumes by definition will not look like everyone else's. Diversity cannot be measured purely by demographic labels. Having diversity in policy ideas, approaches to organizing, and even political strategy will make the CDP more relevant to voters and nimble to change.

As a professional who has dedicated the majority of her life promoting women, and especially women of color, into higher office, the members of the DPSC can be assured that my commitment to diversity in the CDP staff is just as fervent. I'm proud that a majority of my campaign team are: persons of color, LGBTQ and female. This didn't happen by accident. Our campaign made the mindful choice to delay our field program to ensure that we had the right make-up in our

team, rather than just hire those closest to us in proximity and network. While many talk a good game about a commitment to diversity, our campaign believes we should demonstrate it through our actions.

Additionally, I was the first candidate to call for the CDP staff to be unionized and still support it today.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kimberly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Candidate's Signature

4/1/2019

Date