

**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	<b>Daraka Larimore Hall</b>
Campaign Contact Person	<b>Sean Dugar</b>
Campaign Email	<b>darakaforcedpchair@gmail.com</b>
Campaign Phone Number	<b>(805) 222-6190</b>
Anticipated Budget	<b>\$100,000</b>
Funds Raised to Date	<b>\$35,000</b>
Website & Social Media Handles	<b><a href="http://www.darakaforcedpchair.com">www.darakaforcedpchair.com</a></b>

Demographic Information (optional):

Racial/Ethnic Identity	<b>Black/African American</b>
Gender Identity/Pronouns	<b>He/Him/His</b>
LGBTQ?	<b>No</b>
Veteran?	<b>No</b>
Young Democrat (35 or under)?	<b>No</b>
Union Member?	<b>Yes</b>

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
<b>California Democratic Party</b>	<b>Vice-Chair</b>	<b>2017-Current</b>
<b>California Democratic Party</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>2013-2017</b>
<b>Santa Barbara County Democratic Party</b>	<b>Chair</b>	<b>10 years</b>
<b>California Democratic Party Labor Caucus</b>	<b>Vice-Chair</b>	<b>4 Years</b>
<b>UAW Local 2865</b>	<b>Steward, Head Steward, Unit Chair, Vice President, President</b>	<b>10 Years</b>
<b>UAW Local 1981</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>4 Years</b>

<b>UC- AFT</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>1 Year</b>
<b>Democratic Socialists of America</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>20+ Years</b>

**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?

*The most important thing we can do is believe survivors and not tolerate abusive behavior. Their voices must lead the process of reform and transformation. Our Party failed the activists and staffers who were victimized by the most recent Chair, both before and after they suffered the abuse they did. But we all know that this is far from the only incident of harassment and even assault that has affected our party's leadership. I commit that as your Chair, I will work with experts to develop processes that are both compassionate and fair, and ensure that no person who alleges assault, bullying, or discrimination suffers from any form of retaliation. I have called for an immediate process of healing, including counselling and therapy, a full-time independent ombudsperson to help members navigate the complaint process and a mandatory code of conduct for all DSCC members. The current investigation must be followed by a more independent and comprehensive one that can be used for reform, accountability, and culture change going forward. Above all, in our day to day work, we must stand up to the bullying and intimidation that have become too commonplace at all levels of the Party.*

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

*One of the major themes of my candidacy for Chair, as well as my activism at all levels of the Party has been improving the strategic and operational relationship between the CDP, the County Parties and our coordinated campaigns involving clubs, allies and candidate campaigns. I believe in robust field operations conducted by the CDP, in close coordination with the County parties, that focus on expanding the electorate by converting unlikely voters and targeting local races. I want to experiment with leading the CDP in targeting a small number of county-level races of strategic importance, and working with local coalition partners to build partisan coordinated campaigns in key Supervisor and other local races. That means investing in rural areas, communities of color, as and young voters in order to win new ground for local Democratic candidates and campaigns.*

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?

*Our party's delegates, and only our party's delegates, get to decide our endorsement process. If donors, elected officials, and organizational allies wish to persuade delegates to endorse a particular direction, that is their right to do—but it would not be my job as chair to control the outcome of an endorsement process. It will be my job to support the endorsed candidates and political positions of the Democratic Party.*

*CDP resources must be invested in ensuring that we hold and even expand our legislative supermajorities and dominance in California's Congressional delegation, but we cannot ignore long-term organizing and down ballot races, as so many crucial environmental, labor, economic development, housing and criminal justice decisions are made at the local level.*

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?

*I believe the Party should continue to reject these contributions.*

*I already hold do this standard in my campaign for chair, where my fundraising is sourced from small dollar donors. As chair, I will reject money from these sources, and I believe the commission should ban them permanently, rather than leave the decision at the discretion of the chair. I have already spoken out about the recent contribution from Davita, for example.*

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's a narrative out there that our party got divided in 2016 between Hillary supporters and Bernie supporters, but my experience campaigning for Democrats up and down the state tells me that's not true. Democratic activists want a chair who will stand up for the progressive values we hold dear across all of our policy areas. As my campaign t-shirt says, I'm a "pro-union, feminist, anti-racist, environmentalist, anti-war, pro-LGBTQ Democrat." Those are my values, those are Democratic values, and I believe we can unify the party behind them.*

*We tend to get caught up in divisions over candidates and internal positions, but when we are focused on issues, like defending public education, protecting renters, or expanding health care access, it's hard to tell the "Berners" from the "Clintonistas." A focus on issues is the best way to unify the Party.*

*That said, debate and disagreement on legislative endorsements, candidate endorsements, and resolutions is not only expected, but healthy. But once an endorsement is made and a resolution is passed, I believe the best way to unite the party is to build out our capacity for how we conduct advocacy and organize behind our chosen candidates.*

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;

*Our bylaws already address this to some degree, and if the official in question is a member of the DSCC, loss of DSCC membership can be a consequence of this type of bylaws violation. While these rules could use some clarification and tweaks, I agree with the general principle. I believe that local enforcement of similar rules by County Committees is also important. I am a strong Partisan Democrat, and believe that the same unity Party leaders expect of activists must be applied to leaders themselves. As a County Chair, I worked with clubs and grassroots activists to enforce this principle here in Santa Barbara. Clear expectations and consistency help alleviate some of the conflict around endorsements. When elected officials, activists and all Party leaders are clear about our responsibilities and expectations, it is easier deal with conflict without letting issues become personal. I'm proud that while I've always been willing to hold elected officials accountable, I am supported by nearly every Democratic elected official in Santa Barbara County.*

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

*Ballot measures can be complicated, with intersecting coalitions both for and against. I do not believe that campaigning for a ballot measure position contrary to the Democratic Party's endorsed position should be considered precisely the same endorsing a Republican over the Party's endorsed Democratic candidate. As Chair, I will advocate, organize for and support the Party's official positions, but there has to be room for dissent as well. Of course, political positions carry political consequences, and I believe it is appropriate to view elected officials' positions on ballot measures when they come up for endorsement.*

- 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?

*I am running for chair because I believe we must increase the advocacy we do for our endorsed candidates, positions, and legislation. And I believe we must empower local parties and clubs to be one-stop-shops for activists who are looking to do more than vote.*

*As a state party, I believe we must be proactive, not just reactive, regarding our platform and our legislative endorsements. Recent rules changes have started a process whereby the Party can put more weight behind its legislative endorsements, and I look forward to continuing those efforts. We need to expand the political department of the Party to include a well-staffed grassroots advocacy operation to help support our activists in building and communicating public support for our legislative priorities. We need to be part of the Statewide coalitions working to transform California politics and advance progressive policy.*

*But we also can't ignore the fact that a huge amount of policy is driven at the county and city level, and sometimes, our County Parties don't have the resources they need to be effective advocates in their own communities. As chair, I want to improve our working partnerships with county parties to get them the resources and training they need to influence their local elected officials, testify at City Council and County Supervisor meetings, and ensure that the voice of the Democratic Party is heard at all levels of government.*

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;

*No election is non-partisan, and the CDP should be working directly with County Parties to run sophisticated, party-centered coordinated campaigns. We should help County parties leverage cooperation with labor, candidate campaigns to build the infrastructure that local candidates can use to win, and local activists can use to hold the winners accountable. Every election cycle should leave behind more trained campaign leaders and workers, more new candidates elected by working alongside other Democratic campaigns. Not every County has the resources or institutional knowledge to lead such a campaign, and my priority as Chair will be to change that.*

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

*We have a great record of electing young candidates, especially candidates of color here in Santa Barbara County. The two main contributors to our successes have been having the political will to take "risks" on candidates who weren't backed by traditional power networks and building a strong field operation to help those candidates win. This is what I want to help build across the State.*

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

*These are life and death races. Who gets elected as District Attorney and Sheriff makes a huge difference in local communities, and City Attorneys in larger cities such as Los Angeles can't be ignored either. These races specifically are one of the most significant reasons I believe that the Party must build a closer working relationship with County parties and make a significant investment to create a bigger impact on local elections.*

*It is also in these races where we see the most defection to Republican candidates by Democratic elected officials. We can't say that we support criminal justice reform, or that black lives matter and support conservative law enforcement officials.*

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

- Changing how standing committee members are selected;

*The Chair should not have the sole discretion to appoint members of standing committees. I favor the creation of a Nomination Committee made up of the Executive Officers and six members elected by the Executive Board to review applications and fill committee spots. The application process itself should include a formalized and public recommendation/nomination system. While I believe the Chair should retain the prerogative of appointing Co-Chairs of the standing committees, the number of co-chairs should be set in the bylaws, so that this process cannot be used to add unlimited numbers of individuals to the Executive Board.*

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

*Yes, per the above.*

- Altering the balance of elected vs. appointed delegates;

*I worked for more than a year with representatives of the Legislative caucuses and party activists to reform our delegate appointment and endorsement rules to find a compromise that balanced perspectives from activists, Party leaders, labor, caucus staff, and legislative leadership.*

*I support maintaining the current compromise balance, with one major caveat. The current arrangement is predicated on the idea that Party resources are made available only to candidates endorsed by the Party, and that these endorsements are done through our democratic process, one in which elected officials and legislative leadership are well represented. Should the Legislature change that arrangement, as with AB 84, it would be appropriate to revisit the current distribution of delegate strength.*

*Another important thing we can do is deepen the connection between elected officials and activists. Far too often, the only interaction activists have with their elected officials is in competition over ADEM spots or local party offices. We can't write a good working relationship into our bylaws, but what we can do is lift up examples of good partnerships between elected officials and grassroots activists, and encourage better communication across the state.*

- Providing for child care at CDP meetings;

*We have to. Not doing it is discriminatory against all sorts of people, but especially women and the economically disadvantaged. It is a fundamental question of equality and fairness, and I'm deeply appreciative to the activists who have championed this. I believe that access to childcare needs to be part of our convention planning from the early stages, and access to it must be a significant factor when deciding on a location.*

- Making the CDP more accessible for persons with disabilities;

*Again, this is a mandatory issue of fairness, and it is too often overlooked. There are activists and disability advocates throughout the state who have worked to raise the issue of equal access, and I seek to listen to them wherever I can. This doesn't just apply to conventions, however. It is our job to make sure that all county parties and local Democratic clubs pay attention to disability issues and equal access to facilities when deciding where to hold meetings and events. It should not be an afterthought, like it too often is today.*

- Making CDP meetings more affordable;

*We have to be creative to help ensure that cost does not serve as a barrier to participation. Most statewide organizations are structured in such a way that local chapters fund expenses for delegates participating at a higher level. Neither our Central Committees nor ADEMs, which are no longer formal committees within the CDP, are equipped to serve this role. We also have a commitment to using unionized facilities, which raise our costs. I support the*

*creation of a solidarity fund that can be used to supply grants for travel expenses for Convention and Executive Board meetings. I will also encourage Regional Directors to work more closely with clubs and Central Committees to increase the frequency and improve the content of regional meetings that are more accessible to participants and don't include overnight stay.*

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

*I believe we need:*

- 1) Reform in internal elections to limit expenditures in contests like ADEM elections, as well as banning reimbursement-for-vote practices*
- 2) To end the abuse of the "independent contractor" designation in Democratic campaigns, and demanding that our endorsed candidates do the same.*
- 3) Regular submission of operating budgets to the Executive Board*
- 4) To make sure that minors and non-citizens can be included in Democratic party processes*
- 5) To expand the number of languages in which we produce our materials*
- 6) To expand the ability of people to vote in ADEM processes*
- 7) To make the Chair more accountable to the body, and to codify the responsibilities of other statewide officers in the bylaws.*

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?

*I fully support the right of all workers to organize. If any group of CDP employees, or employees of CDP-related coordinated campaigns were to organize, I would immediately recognize it and begin bargaining in good faith. I would also follow such a union's lead on what kinds of acts of solidarity and good employment practices make the most sense vis a vis endorsed Democratic candidates.*

*My priorities when hiring staff will be professionalism, cultural competence, and skill. I will be looking for organizers, communicators and fundraisers with experience both inside and outside the Party. I believe that the CDP staff should look like California and reflect its racial, ethnic, gender, sexual and geographical diversity. I believe that our first responsibility is to make sure that all staff have a safe working environment, and I will favor in-house operations over consultants and outsourcing.*

*I support the return to an Executive Director model, and believe the Chair's role should not be direct supervision of front-line organizers or communications workers.*



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Candidate's Signature

4/1/2019

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Date