

CPA CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

The members of the Coalition for Police Accountability are committed to voting for mayoral and council candidates who commit to supporting transparency in government practices, social and racial justice and promoting constitutional policing. We are asking candidates to answer these questions on public safety and constitutional policing. We will publicize candidate responses on October 1.

Please address each issue with a “Yes” or “No”, and briefly explain your position. If you need additional space, please attach extra pages.

1. Police Unions’ donations and threats to fund campaigns against candidates have influenced politicians’ positions and weakened Oakland’s public safety. We have seen sluggish investigation and weak discipline for police officers while salaries and benefits have increased.

***To eliminate the appearance of a conflict of interest, do you commit to refusing any political donations from police unions or organizations or PACs run and funded by police unions?**

YES. I commit to refusing donations from police unions, as well as organizations and PACs which are funded by police unions

2. The Oakland Police Officers Association contract has been secretly extended twice with raises but with no other changes. The current contract ends on June 2026.

***Will you ensure a transparent negotiation process so that the Council and Oakland residents know that negotiations are underway and can raise issues they would like addressed?**

Yes. I believe the City Council should negotiate all city contracts publicly.

***Do you commit to opposing any contract that is presented to council without a transparent negotiation process?**

Yes.

***What will you be advocating for the city to negotiate in the next OPOA MOU?**

I am interested in learning more about and asking the OPOA about local recruiting practices and overtime pay. It’s important to me that we have officers who live in the community they serve.

3. The Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland (MACRO) was created with massive community support. MACRO is currently housed in the fire department. The current Community Advisory Board has no specific tasks, meets in private, and does not enable residents' participation. MACRO was developed to respond to low-level 911 calls, enabling OPD to attend to more serious calls. After two years, MACRO is not achieving the expected outcomes, responding to less than two 911 calls/day.

***What is your assessment of the first two years of the MACRO program and what do you think should happen now?**

***Do you support the council immediately creating a community advisory board that has a specific list of tasks, meets publicly, and makes recommendations to strengthen MACRO to the council and mayor? If you are a current officeholder, will you co-sponsor and introduce a proposal immediately?**

***If you are currently an officeholder, what have you done to address MACRO's current or previous issues?**

***If not currently an officeholder, what are your specific plans to address MACRO issues you have identified?**

I fully support immediate changes to the oversight and structure of the MACRO program. Its potential is clear, but after two years, it's evident that it is not meeting the expectations set for it. One key issue is the lack of transparency and measurable progress, making it difficult for the community to see how well the program is functioning. For example, the initial goal of providing a number to call for non-police intervention has only recently been implemented. This delay already sets MACRO behind schedule and contributes to the perception that it is underperforming.

I believe that MACRO is an essential part of reimagining public safety in Oakland, and abandoning the program would be a mistake. I want to focus on correcting the issues to improve its effectiveness. I support the creation of a more robust oversight body, akin to other city commissions, with the authority to access the necessary data, analyze the program's outcomes, and make informed decisions. This commission would be staffed with experts, include appointed members, and operate with full transparency, holding public meetings where Oakland residents can participate and provide input.

Moreover, much of MACRO's work involves routing individuals to county services, making MACRO function like a middleman. I think it's crucial for MACRO to be more integrated with existing services provided by Alameda County. I will work to build stronger partnerships between the city and the county to ensure these services are utilized effectively, without duplicating efforts. In some cases, it may make sense for MACRO to provide services directly in-house, but in others, a well-coordinated collaboration with county services would be more efficient.

I also propose exploring the establishment of a dedicated 3-digit number, similar to 988 for mental health crises, to make it easier for residents to know when to call MACRO instead of 911. This would help streamline the process for low-level emergencies, allowing residents to trust that non-police responders will handle these situations.

4. OPD's Internal Affairs Department has a long and current history of failing to effectively investigate itself and often being embroiled in OPD's scandals. The Community Police Review Agency (CPRA) was created by ballot initiative along with the Police Commission. Currently, CPRA investigates separately from IAD, which forces more honest investigations from IAD.

***Since 2021, the city has committed to shifting duplicate internal OPD investigations from OPD's Internal Affairs Dept to the independent Community Police Review Agency. Do you commit to ensuring that CPRA has sufficient staff to take on the added work and that OPD re-assigns IAD personnel to other police duties and scales down the IAD?**

The police department needs oversight, and there should only be one oversight body, not multiple ones. That body should have the resources to do its job and create trust with the residents and stakeholders of the city of Oakland.

5. The Brady List is a list of officers who the District Attorney has determined cannot be called to testify in court, because they have lied or committed other acts that severely damage their credibility. If they were called, the DA would be required to tell the defendants that the officers' testimony is impeachable. An essential function of the job of sworn police officers is to be able to testify in court.

***Do you support a proposal in negotiations for the new police union contract that an officer on the Brady List is unable to perform an essential job function and should be deemed unfit for duty?**

Testifying in court is one aspect of an officer's and therefore should be an aspect of any performance reviews, but I do not think this alone should be enough to relieve an officer from duty. The DA should remain independent from the police department and I think it would be an inappropriate paradigm if the DA had the power to effectively fire a local police agency's officers. I think we need to correctly staff and empower police oversight commissions to handle these kinds of investigations and hold officers accountable for alleged misconduct.

6. There are recent revelations that OPD leadership failed to support investigations of internal corruption. There remains ongoing disparity in OPD where Black officers are

disciplined more harshly for the same offense. Nonetheless, there have been calls for Oakland to get out of federal oversight immediately. There have even been calls to limit reforms and weaken the civilian oversight of OPD, the Oakland Police Commission, that over 80% of Oakland voters have approved twice.

***Do you believe we are ready now for the NSA to end? If yes, why. If no, what needs to happen before Oakland should get out of the NSA?**

***Do you support efforts to weaken the civilian oversight of OPD, the Oakland Police Commission? If yes, what authority of the Oakland Police Commission do you support removing?**

I do not believe Oakland is ready to end the NSA (Negotiated Settlement Agreement) yet. Our goal should be to successfully complete the 51 tasks necessary for the NSA to end, and we're not there. The city's most recent public reports are outdated, with the latest available from 2019. It's crucial for city leaders to communicate clearly with the public about the current status and the steps needed to finish the process, perhaps through a press conference to bring transparency.

I fully support civilian oversight of OPD through the Oakland Police Commission, which has been overwhelmingly approved by Oakland voters twice. Weakening this oversight would be a step backward. The commission's role is essential to ensure accountability and public trust in the police department, and it must remain independent from the OPD's leadership, sworn officers, and internal staff.

There are clearly challenges, including disparities in how Black officers are disciplined and failures in handling internal corruption. These are the kinds of issues that the NSA and the Police Commission should be addressing. To move forward, the council, the Police Commission, and the NSA need to better align their goals and priorities. While their objectives may seem at odds at times, we should focus on completing the 51 NSA tasks, as they are central to improving the OPD and exiting federal oversight. If we link the NSA's tasks to the real public safety challenges we face, we can get more buy-in from all stakeholders and build a stronger, more accountable police department.

By directly aligning the NSA's tasks with the goals of the council, the Police Commission, and the community, we can begin to streamline efforts and avoid duplication of work. For example, if the council wants to see faster responses to serious crimes, while the NSA's tasks focus on police accountability and reforms. If we can show how completing these accountability tasks actually contributes to a more effective and trusted police department, we could see more buy-in from the council and the public. In turn, this alignment would allow the department to focus resources more efficiently, reducing the tension between competing priorities for internal staffing and financial resources.