



Mark Leno Responses:

1. What was your childhood like? How did your childhood affect your decision to run for mayor?

I was blessed with a very loving and supportive family, which has left me with only pleasant memories of my childhood. From an early age, I learned the importance of volunteering and was taught about Tikkun Olam — which, in Judaism, means to repair of the world. Throughout my childhood and my young adult years, I loved to volunteer. Overnight, my community service became public service. I was appointed to the Board of Supervisors, and was then elected to the state legislature. I represented San Francisco at the state capitol for fourteen years. Now I'm back in the City, and am excited to continue working for the people of San Francisco as Mayor.

2. Why do you want to be mayor? If elected, what would you do as mayor?

I want to make sure that working people and their families can afford to live here, that our neighborhoods are safe, that we have green parks and open spaces in every neighborhood, that our communities are healthy and strong, and that our schools are well funded and safe. Most importantly, I want to make sure that this is a city that kids are proud to grow up in.

With the crises of housing affordability and homelessness out of control, the economic growth in our city is pushing out more San Franciscans every day. I believe our city can and should be doing better. I'm running for Mayor because we need a leader who will take on the special interests, lobbyists and SuperPACs who have too much influence at City Hall. We can't settle for caution and status quo solutions. We need a mayor who will think big, reject cynicism, demand results and bring people together to get things done. If elected Mayor, I intend to shake things up.

All of this is because I believe that if we continue on the track that we're on, then San Francisco kids aren't going to have a great city to live in when they grow up. When our teachers can no longer afford to live in the communities where they work, and families are leaving San Francisco searching for a place to raise their children, City Hall has failed our neighborhoods. We must act urgently to address the affordable housing crisis that's squeezing families and teachers out of our City. As Mayor, I will expand upon my successful legislative record fighting for our educators, building affordable housing, and supporting healthy families to keep San Francisco a place where working people and families can afford to live.

I am proud of my proven record of fighting for better schools and access to higher education. Focusing on providing quality education using every resource to assist all students in receiving a high school diploma with opportunity for higher education or vocational training will ensure greater successful outcomes in employment and financial stability. As the former State Senate Budget Chair, I understand the importance of investing in early childcare and education, providing access to nutritious food, and giving families health and dental care. Investments in early childhood programs pay huge dividends by providing stability for families, increase academic and long-term outcomes for children narrowing the achievement gap, support working parents and create new jobs and businesses.

As Mayor I will bring my 18 years of legislative and budget experience fighting for youth and families to City Hall. I have released my education plan to Renew the Promise of a Quality Public Education.

3. San Francisco is very diverse. How would you represent everyone?

The most important thing we can all do is treat each other with kindness and respect. I'm an openly gay, Jewish man — and my own experience as a minority taught me a lot about what it

means to be discriminated against, as well as what it means to stand up to discrimination. I learned that just because someone is different doesn't mean that they're any less than. We can find common ground, no matter our differences. That's what I've spent my 18 years in public office doing. In San Francisco we celebrate our differences, rather than let them divide us.

As Mayor, I'll work for everybody, not just for some. It's very important for the Mayor to have a moral compass that stays constant — never bitter, never spiteful, never seeking to do anything but what's best for everyone and actively trying to understand different points of view. This is exactly the type of legislator and I have been for the past twenty years — and this is exactly the type of Mayor that I will be.

I'm excited to represent all of San Francisco

4. What are your thoughts on SFUSD?

San Francisco and its Mayor have a unique relationship with SFUSD, in that SFUSD is its own entity with independently-elected School Board Members. As Mayor, I would respect the independence of SFUSD and respect the checks and balances in place.

However, there are concrete opportunities for my Administration to support SFUSD. Whether it is through the creation of affordable housing to keep teachers and families in San Francisco, advocating for state and federal funding to bring in more money for our public education institutions, investing in universal childcare and afterschool programs or keeping our streets safe and clean, I intend to use the resources at City Hall to

support our public schools. I look forward to working with the Superintendent, parents, teachers and school staff, PTA's, youth and Board Members. I am proud of my record as a coalition-builder, and believe that this will be key to continuing healthy and constructive relationships.

5. How are you going to help kids in San Francisco?

It's very important that the Mayor is an advocate for all kids of the in San Francisco. As a State Senator, I prioritized standing up for youth in a few different ways. I expanded youth access to mental health by removing the requirement that at-risk youth need to get prior consent from a parent for mental health treatment, preventing substance abuse, violence and suicide. I also created a pathway to higher education and living-wage stable jobs by waiving the fee for high school proficiency exams for homeless youth. And I have spent years fighting against the demise of art and music in our public schools. As Mayor, I would seek public private partnerships to expose our children to the world of creativity and imagination that art and music can offer our students.

Most importantly, I've made sure — and will continue to make sure — that all kids in San Francisco have stellar and equal education opportunities. I helped save City College when I was in the legislator. And as Mayor, I will renew the San Francisco Promise to ensure that all San Francisco students are set up for academic excellence by increasing access and improving funding for school resources, academic counseling, and after-school programs. Student interest in pursuing higher education or a curiosity for learning more about a particular issue area should be celebrated and supported. That means matching those students with the services they need to successfully arrive at a college degree debt-free.

As Mayor, I want to take Free City a step further, by ensuring that all City College graduates complete their Associate's degree will have a guaranteed, cost-free spot at San Francisco State

University. California is predicted to be short 1 million college graduates by 2030, which will have widespread effects on our economy and workforce for decades to come. If we want to lift more of our residents into the middle class, we need to make dramatic improvements to our college completion rates — and this means making dramatic changes to the barriers that students face.

6. What do you want to do to improve the homeless situation in SF?

You've walked around the City — so I don't have to tell you: San Francisco needs to tackle homelessness once and for all. As Mayor, I will end street homelessness by 2020.

San Francisco needs a Mayor willing to take bold actions, try new and different solutions, and lead regional collaboration to end homelessness. First, we must address the very visible signs of homelessness that are affecting those who live in tents and

everyone living and working around them. We need to end the cycle of tent encampments and make our sidewalks safe, healthy environments. We must help those struggling with addiction and mental illness. And we have to get people out of our doorways, driveways, and parks and into shelter or housing.

Second, we must recognize that we can never truly move the dial on homelessness without policies in place that keep people who are housed in their homes. We must protect tenants with rental and legal assistance, and stop unfair evictions that push more people onto the street. And finally, we can and must repair our broken system of supportive services and housing.

7. What would you do if there was a school shooting? How would you prevent that from happening?

School needs to be a safe space. This means that we need to make sure that students are

learning what it means to treat one another with respect, and that they're supported with adults who are helping them be the best kids that they can be. When I was a legislator, I expanded youth access to mental health by removing the requirement that at-risk youth need to get prior consent from a parent for mental health treatment. It's important that kids have resources as their direct disposal!

I've already taken steps towards making schools safer. When a sixth grader shot his classmate for being "too girly", a coalition of folks came to me to do something about it and together we wrote and passed the FAIR Education Act . It amends California Education Code to include societal contributions from people with disabilities and members of the LGBT community in history and social studies curriculum.

We also need to combat violence by making sure we have sensible gun control in the United States. We need stronger background checks on guns, ammunition, and the people who want to own guns. I've already worked to make this possible — and as Mayor, I'll continue to keep kids safe in San Francisco.

8. Do you have to be rich to be a mayor?

Not at all — and here's why: you don't need to be rich to help people. The Mayor of San Francisco must be kind. The Mayor must be a very good listener. The Mayor has to be smart — and very willing to work with all of the different people who make our city diverse. It helps if the Mayor has a lot of experience in politics, like I do. But the Mayor does not have to be rich. The Mayor just has to help people.

9. What do you like most about San Francisco?

When I moved here, San Francisco welcomed me with open arms. I met the love of my life, opened a small business at 55 Brady Street — and eventually began my career as

a public servant. What I love most about this city is how loving it is itself, how open it is to everyone. That's really special.

10.What is your hobby?

Hiking!

11.Can you bake? If so, what can you bake?

I wish I could — but I don't! If I could bake, then I would love to bake donuts.