

Democratic Party of Contra Costa County Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for seeking the endorsement of the Democratic Party of Contra Costa County (DPCCC).

Please submit your completed questionnaire and remit the endorsement application fee of \$30 no later than , August 12, 2024. Interviews will not be scheduled without both a completed questionnaire and received payment.

- Pay Endorsement Application Fee:

<https://secure.actblue.com/donate/2024campaignunityfund>.

1. Click on "Donate"
 2. The page will say "2024 Campaign Unity Funds" - Just fill in \$30 as the amount to pay.
- Complete Candidate Questionnaire.

IMPORTANT INFO

- Your application fee must be paid before questionnaires will be processed.
- Interviews will not be scheduled without both a completed payment and completed questionnaire.
- You must have submitted your questionnaire and payment **before August 12, 2024 before 11:59pm PST**.
- Your completed questionnaire will be added to the DPCCC website after all interviews are conducted.
- The DPCCC membership will vote on endorsements at a **Special Meeting on August 29, 2024**. You will be sent an invitation to the meeting which you are welcome to attend.

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The DPCCC aspires to be an organization where members are empowered and feel safe to be who they are, regardless of ethnic, cultural, or social demographics. We are committed to fostering equity and social justice through our policies and actions.

We hold ourselves accountable for unwanted behavior and we expect decision-making to be based on justice principles. We actively oppose **racism, sexism, classism, ageism, ableism, homophobia, and all other forms of prejudice wherever we see it**, and we take action individually and collectively to right past wrongs in our communities.

Section 1: Candidate Information

Name (First, Last): *

Melvin, Willis
.....

Preferred Name (if different than campaign name):
.....

Age *

- Under 18
- 18 to 24
- 25-44
- 45-65
- Over 65
- Prefer not to disclose

Pronouns: *

- She/Her/Hers
- He/Him/His
- They/Them/Theirs
- Ze/Zie/Hir/Hirs
- Prefer not to disclose
- Other:

Gender Identity (*check all that apply.*): *

- Gender non-conforming
- Genderqueer
- Genderfluid
- Non-binary
- Woman
- Man
- Transgender
- Prefer not to disclose
- Other:

Sexual Identity (*check all that apply.*): *

- Bisexual
- Queer
- Gay
- Heterosexual or straight
- Lesbian
- Asexual
- Pansexual
- Prefer not to disclose
- Other:

With which racial or ethnic group(s) do you identify? *(Mark all that apply): **

Native American or Indigenous

Black, African-American

Eastern European

Latino/a/x/e

Pacific Islander

Asian

East Asian

South Asian

Southeast Asian

Middle Eastern, Northern African

Native Hawaiian

East African

West African

South African

Central African

White

Multiracial/Mixed Race

Prefer not to disclose

Other:

Which office are you seeking? *

Richmond City Council District 1

CA FPPC ID # *

1468146

Campaign Website *

<https://www.melvinwillis.com/>

Campaign Consultant/Manager *

Carmen Martinez

Social Media Handles *

Instagram: @reelectmelvinwillis2024

1.1 - Why are you running for this office? Give no more than your top 3 reasons. *

1. I am a current Richmond City Councilmember running for reelection in District 1 to continue the work I have done such as voting to:

- Increase minimum wage to \$15
- Fully enforce the rent control protections passed by voters
- Stop sharing information about immigrants with ICE
- “Ban the Box” so the formerly incarcerated can rejoin our community
- Protect the shoreline from developers so it can be used by all
- Guarantee funding for children’s and youth programming in Richmond
- Suspend all rent and mortgage payments during the shelter in place for COVID-19

2. Richmond today is safer, healthier and more prosperous than when I was born. The improvements are due to the work of progressive people and organizations who came together to set the city on a better path. As a Councilmember and a housing-rights community organizer, I am proud to be part of this alliance.

3. There is more work to do, and the gains we have made are at risk. We face local and federal attacks on working families, women, people of color, immigrants and the environment. We run the risk of becoming two cities, divided by race, wealth, health and opportunity -- or a city where people who are not affluent are pushed out completely.

1.2 - What are the responsibilities that come with the office you are running for? *

Richmond City Councilmembers are responsible for policy, decision making and oversight over the entire city- including the budget and all city departments. The city shifted to district elections in which councilmembers are now tasked with representing distinct geographic areas of Richmond, specifically District 1, which encompasses Belding Woods, and portions of the Iron Triangle and North & East. As a predominantly low-income area, my constituents have historically lacked adequate representation in city government and been impacted by underinvestment by city leadership.

1.3 - What are your personal or professional qualifications that you believe make you the best candidate? *

I was born and raised in Richmond. I have been an organizer for 13 years fighting for housing, health, and environmental justice. Before I was elected, I attended, listened, and spoken at many city council meetings, other public meetings public events, and organizational meetings. I'm running for re-election to continue to build on the work that I've done in the community and to ensure that the constituents of Richmond have a voice on the city council. I have served on Richmond City Council since 2016.

1.4 - What are your top goals for this office? How do you plan on achieving them? *

Housing Justice:

This includes preserving and expanding the development of affordable mixed-use housing, implementing rent control, and advocating for tenant protections. Addressing homeless through effective transitional programs will also be a key focus.

Economic Justice:

I aim to expand pathways to jobs and careers, while strengthening worker protections and improving working conditions for all. Economic Justice is foundational to ensuring that our community thrives and grows equitably.

Environmental Justice:

Protecting our public and natural resources such as Point. Molate is critical. I will work to hold polluting industries accountable and advocate for sustainable practices that safeguard our environment for future generations. Environmental justice is inseparable from our broader commitment to a healthy, resilient community.

1.5 - How do you plan on engaging your constituents in dialogue after you are elected? *

I plan to maintain my relationships with local organizations and build new connections. Pathways for partnership will include formal opportunities, and I'll also be available to address community needs as they arise. I will prioritize meeting with constituents and groups who lack access to services, power and money.

1.6 - This is a 3-Part Question: Why are you seeking the endorsement of the DPCCC? How will you use our endorsement? How will you support other endorsed candidates and issues? *

I am seeking DPCCC endorsement because I am a democrat and I believe many voters in my district are interested in those candidates formally supported by the Democratic Party. If I received your endorsement, I would publicize it. I will support other endorsed candidates and issues that share my values by working together and endorsing them myself.

1.7 - Please feel free to include any additional information you would like us to consider in evaluating your candidacy. *

Thank you very much for your consideration for my endorsement. I'm excited to engage with DPCCC and hopefully receive your support!

Section 2: Democratic History

2.1 - List your previous and current party affiliations. When did you first register as a Democrat and why? *

I've been a democrat since I first registered to vote. I registered as a democrat believing this party represents working people.

2.2 - I have read and acknowledge the California Democratic Party's current platform (value statement) and will adhere to these values in the performance of my elected position. *

To learn about the CADEM Platform, please click [here](#).

Yes

No

2.3 - In your opinion, which elements of the CADEM Platform are most relevant to the position you are seeking? If elected, how do you plan to advance them? *

While many planks of the CADEM platform are of interest to me, I'm particularly committed to increasing affordable housing, preserving rent control, strengthening tenant protections and repealing Costa Hawkins.

2.4 - Have you actively supported policies and initiatives that prioritize and protect reproductive healthcare and freedom, and can you affirm your commitment to continuing this support if elected? *

Yes

No

2.5 - If elected, what would you do to advance equity, anti-racism, justice, and belonging? *

At the end of the upcoming term, I hope to have advanced my agenda focused on increasing equitable equitable outcomes across all policy areas. Addressing racial, economic, social, environmental, and other inequities will remain central to my efforts. My approach to elected office emphasizes on building coalitions and assisting with increasing community participation in every facet of government. These goals are fundamental to ensuring a fairer, more inclusive future for our constituents and achieving meaningful progress on critical issues affecting our community.

2.6 - Have you actively opposed LGBTQIA+ issues, which may involve voting against solidarity, supporting harmful or exclusionary policies, or publicly expressing opposition through statements or comments? (i.e. voting against or making disparaging remarks about the display of pride flags, marriage equality, trans-inclusive policies, or queer-inclusive curricula). *

Yes

No

2.7 - Have you previously sought the endorsement of the DPCCC? If yes, for what elected office? Were you endorsed? *

I sought endorsement from DPCCC in 2018 as a mayoral candidate and 2020 as a city council candidate.

2.8 - Please list any elected offices, positions and date(s), which you hold/held or campaigned for as a candidate. *

Richmond City Councilmember at large (2016-2018 and 2019-2020) and Richmond Vice-Mayor (2018).
Richmond City councilmember District 1 (2020-present).

I ran for Mayor in 2018.

2.9 - In what ways have you supported and actively participated in the Democratic Party at the local, state, and national levels? *

I am not active in the Democratic Party.

2.10 - Please list any clubs, boards, commissions, and /or organizations with which you are an active member, including the length of your affiliation and any leadership position you hold/held. *

Richmond Progressive Alliance Steering Committee, Contra Costa Racial Justice Coalition, and Contra Costa Racial Justice Oversight Body

2.11 - Have you ever endorsed non-Democrats? *

Yes

No

2.11a - If so, what were the circumstances?

Gayle McLaughlin, Green Party.

Section 3: References & Club Endorsements

3.1 - Please list any other endorsements you have received for this campaign. *

Endorsements I've received thus far include:

- California Democratic Renter Council
 - Our Revolution East Bay
 - APEN (Asian Pacific Environmental Network) Action
 - ACCE Action
 - League of Conservation Voters of the East Bay
 - UTR (United Teachers of Richmond)
 - RPA (Richmond Progressive Alliance), Sierra Club
 - East Bay Democratic Socialists of America
 - IAFF local 188
 - SEIU CIR
 - Lead Locally
 - Richmond Mayor Eduardo Martinez
 - Richmond City Councilmember Gayle McLaughlin.
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3.2 - What other endorsements are you seeking? *

California Nurses Association
CBE Action
Center for Biological Diversity Action
Contra Costa Labor Council
Contra Costa Public Defenders Association
Contra Costa Young Democrats
Jane PAC
NUHW
Our Revolution National
Planned Parenthood

Some of the Democratic Clubs use this questionnaire in their endorsement process. If you would like to be considered for Democratic club endorsement(s), please contact the club(s) directly by going to our DPCCC website club's page:

<https://contracostadems.com/clubs/>

Part 2: DPCCC Values Section

Please proceed to fill out the 2nd section of the Candidate Questionnaire on the Democratic Party of Contra Costa County's Values.

DPCCC Value: Criminal Justice & Conflict Resolution

- *Opposes criminalization of low level offenses, advocates for Community Support Services, funding for prompt rape kit processing, gun violence prevention measures; Opposes scapegoating, racial profiling, religious profiling, bigotry, vigilantism, exploitation, and any xenophobic conduct that polarize communities and denounce actions by the government or individuals that keep undocumented immigrants in the shadows of our society; Supports Law Enforcement Training, Civilian Oversight Committees, independent investigators for cases involving the use of deadly force or in-custody deaths, restorative justice;*
- *Supports a properly funded and staffed the U.S. foreign service that promotes democracy and human rights around the world; Supports candidates who work to de-escalate tension especially in areas of conflict like Israel/Gaza, Sudan, Haiti, and other parts of the world through good faith negotiations and work for world peace; Endorse candidates who support the Democratic Party as it works to counter aggression by countries that violate the sovereignty of other countries and that fund and implement physical, cyber, and financial attacks on democracies and developing countries.*

Please expand on your stance and describe the potential impacts on the community that you seek to represent. *

I have consistently demonstrated my commitment to criminal justice reform and equity. I have collaborated with the Public Defender's office through the Contra Costa Racial Justice Coalition and various other local campaigns. At both the city and county levels I have pushed for the reallocation of resources from local law enforcement and Contra Costa County Sheriff Department to initiatives that have enhanced community safety such as affordable housing and mental health support. I actively fought for AB109 funds to go to re-entry services over the Sheriff's Department's budget, showing my dedication to rehabilitation and reducing recidivism. I have supported initiatives like Stand Together Contra Costa, advocating for increased legal services for immigrants in our community. Additionally, I have been a vocal opponent of ICE contracts and jail expansion, standing firm against policies that perpetuate mass incarceration.

As a city councilmember, I supported the "Ban the Box" legislation that aimed at easing the reintegration of formerly incarcerated residents into our community and improving their access to public housing. My advocacy extends to preventing individuals with minor offenses from unnecessarily from being drawn into the "criminal justice system." I support alternative public safety programs such as the Community Crisis Response Program (CCRP) which will provide community-focused, trauma-informed, and healing-centered crisis responses delivered by trained crisis responders to strengthen other residents' connections to timely services and resources. This program will be a non-police crisis response team that will consist of individuals from our communities with lived experience.

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- *Opposes criminalization of low level offenses, advocates for Community Support Services, funding for prompt rape kit processing, gun violence prevention measures; Opposes scapegoating, racial profiling, religious profiling, bigotry, vigilantism, exploitation, and any xenophobic conduct that polarize communities and denounce actions by the government or individuals that keep undocumented immigrants in the shadows of our society; Supports Law Enforcement Training, Civilian Oversight Committees, independent investigators for cases involving the use of deadly force or in-custody deaths, restorative justice;*
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DPCCC Value: Education & Child Support Services

- *Advocates for high-quality, affordable child care; support programs for low income families including access to parks and job retraining; ensures educational materials (textbooks, library books) are inclusive, historically accurate, and reflect scientific consensus including age-appropriate, medically accurate sex/gender education; replacing sworn peace officers in schools with trained non-police personnel; Supports policies that respect students' civil rights related to gender expression and addresses issues like gender-based violence and harassment.*

Please expand on your stance and describe the potential impacts on the community that you seek to represent. *

I support quality, affordable child care. I support a public education system that is inclusive of all students and provides comprehensive curriculum and supportive social-emotional services to students. I am particularly interested in protecting students civil rights through a gender-affirming learning environment and reducing bias based on race and disability. I don't support police in schools.

City leaders can bolster the work of our education system by funding initiatives that serve Richmond youth such as parks, recreational programs and employment programs. We must continue to increase revenue through progressive tax measures, and prioritize use of that revenue for our residents, particularly youth.

DPCCC Value: Seniors & Veteran Support Services

- *Supports the California Master Plan for Aging including dignified living at home housing options that are age, disability, and dementia-friendly; prioritize public housing initiatives over privatization for seniors and adults with disabilities; support retraining for those aged 55-65, and extend unemployment; oppose mandatory retirement; call for stronger oversight of reverse mortgage programs, rigorous prosecution of financial crimes against seniors; support comprehensive single-payer healthcare, with interim Medicare Part D reforms; support HICAP services, affordable mental healthcare including issues around isolation, quality caregiving, and increased funding for In-Home Supportive Services. Preserve programs like Adult Protective Services and home-delivered meals; advocate for the removal of the FICA income limit to strengthen Social Security and preserve pensions.*
- *Champions the needs of veterans and military families by promoting equitable treatment and benefits, access to education including tuition waivers and retraining, adequate healthcare funding including government assistance for those exposed to toxins; elimination of veteran homelessness, establishment of Veterans' Courts and justice programs and support independent investigations of claims of hazing, rape, sexual assault and harassment and that the military remove the chain of command from all investigations and prosecutions; support a path to citizenship for military service members, and protections against discrimination based on ethnicity, disability, gender identity, political affiliation, race, religion, or sexual orientation; oppose deportation of military personnel and limitations on citizenship for children of veterans who are born abroad.*

Please expand on your stance and describe the potential impacts on the community that you seek to represent. *

As a community organizer focused on housing justice, I have directly supported seniors advocating for fair and safe housing. I believe Richmond can provide better services to vulnerable populations including seniors and veterans. Examples include increasing resources for unhoused veterans, investing in our senior centers and supporting programming that serves seniors and individuals with disabilities such as R Transit (paratransit).

DPCCC Value: Affordable Housing & Environmental Protections

- *Supports eviction protections, rent control/stabilization, anti-harassment ordinances, and habitability protections; Supports zoning and housing policies that ensure sustainability and affordability, including infill and mixed-use developments that balance job opportunities with housing availability; Promotes the integration of green spaces and community gardens in all communities; Supports local authority in phasing out fossil fuel extraction and preventing the zoning of new extraction sites; Advocates for strong regulatory measures for setting science-based health and safety setbacks from residential areas for industrial sites, including oil and gas wells and toxic dump sites.*

Please expand on your stance and describe the potential impacts on the community that you seek to represent. *

Housing justice is of great importance to me, in my day job, it is a central component of my work. As a city council member, we have significant influence over housing policy and interventions for the unhoused. I have actively supported enactment and enforcement of rent control, tenant protections and the COVID-19 eviction moratorium. I am also concerned about working class homeowners and small business owners facing high costs. I also support affordable housing, community benefits agreements, and land trusts. In my day job, housing justice is a central component of my work. Given that Richmond is subject to legislation at the state and federal level, I have used and will continue to use my platforms and influence to advocate for housing policy change at other levels of government.

I support a Just Transition to phase out fossil fuels, and support displaced workers from that industry. This is especially important for Richmond given the presence of the Chevron Refinery. We have other toxic sites in Richmond that need a full environmental clean up.

DPCCC Value: Equality & Human Rights

- *Actively advocates for a just and inclusive society, speaking out against all forms of racism, discrimination, harassment, hatred, and violence; Supports movements and initiatives that address discrimination; Enforces policies that ensure equal opportunities and equal pay for equal work across genders, races, and abilities; Upholds the rights of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals for acknowledgment of their stated name, gender, and pronoun; Supports the use of gender-neutral language to foster an inclusive environment; Promotes the participation of women, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, and people of color in elected office and ensures access to facilities consistent with individuals' gender identity and disability access; Supports the right to free speech, ensuring it does not extend to discriminatory practices against any group based on race, religion, gender identity, or sexual orientation.*

Please expand on your stance and describe the potential impacts on the community that you seek to represent. *

Equity and human rights are a significant part of my policy priorities. Outside of my role as councilmember, I've been a leader in the Contra Costa County Racial Justice Coalition for many years, which is focused on addressing local racial disparities.

DPCCC Value: Healthcare & Reproductive Rights

- *Advocates for the preservation of rights under Roe v. Wade, guaranteeing confidential and unrestricted access to reproductive services without the need for consent or judicial intervention, ensuring continued coverage of all healthcare options; Works toward implementing a universal, single-payer healthcare system, while in the interim, seeking reforms to make Medicare Part D more affordable and accessible, including the ability for Medicare to negotiate drug prices.*

Please expand on your stance and describe the potential impacts on the community that you seek to represent. *

I support universal healthcare. I am dedicated to improving access to sexual and reproductive health care, including abortion access. I will advocate for approving public dollars to help local clinics and health organizations to increase funding and resources. I'm firmly against turning public services into private businesses and am fully committed to securing public funding in our area for comprehensive health care.

DPCCC Value: Economic Justice & Business Development

- *Support for Small Businesses and Entrepreneurship focusing on women, people of color, and those with limited entrepreneurship opportunities including veterans; Support the rights of employees to organize and Project Labor Agreements; Ensures a safe working environment free from harassment, intimidation, and retaliation; Advocates for the establishment of local banks and credit unions, limiting regressive financial operations like check cashing businesses and pawnshops; Promotes Project Labor Agreements to protect workers; Supports initiatives to counteract "food deserts" by developing local grocery stores and community gardens in underrepresented areas.*

Please expand on your stance and describe the potential impacts on the community that you seek to represent. *

I am very supportive of policies to address "food deserts" and that's very relevant in Richmond and my district specifically. I have advocated for small business support in Richmond to prioritize those who lack access to capital. I support Project Labor Agreements. I support public banking.

Reminders:

* After submitting this questionnaire, please go and pay your endorsement application fee at: <https://contracostadems.com/donate>

* Please direct questions to the Endorsements Committee Chair Tamela Hawley or Vice Chair Cameron Sasai at endorsements@contracostadems.com

* The DPCCC Code of Conduct: <https://contracostadems.com/about/code-of-conduct/>

* The CADEM Party Platform: <https://cadem.org/our-platform/>

If you like, you may submit a biography and/or resume in the section below. Not required.

 Add file

Submit Questionnaire

By submitting this questionnaire, I attest that the foregoing is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and to uphold the Code Of Conduct. <https://contracostadems.com/about/code-of-conduct/>

Thank you and good luck with your campaign! We will be in touch with you to schedule your interview time.

Interviews will be scheduled by District Directors.

By submitting this questionnaire, I agree to accepting the endorsement of the DPCCC if offered. *

Yes

No

I have paid my endorsement application fee: <https://contracostadems.com/donate/> *

Yes

No

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