

Christina Murphy Rent Board 2016
2016 Rent Stabilization Board Candidate
Questionnaire

Christina Murphy

1516 Julia Street (Council District 3)

Berkeley – 94703 Years in Berkeley: 25+

I currently rent a small 1bd Rent controlled unit in Berkeley.

Landlord: Louis Greer; Mr. Greer owns a large amount of properties in the Berkeley Community.

1. Tell us something about yourself and why you have decided to consider running for Rent Stabilization Board Commissioner.

I am running because my Community asked me to run, the residents in the South Berkeley Communities and The Friends of Adeline requested for me to continue to support and be the voice for the voiceless Berkeley Residents. I have been Endorsed by Berkeley City Council Members; **Max Anderson-D2, Jesse Arreguin -D4, Kriss Worthington -D7** and strong support from **Mansour ID-Deen* and Friends of Adeline**. I am interested in becoming part of the Rent Stabilization Board because this agency protects tenants in Berkeley and advocates for their housing rights. It is my passion is to help those considered helpless. I have committed myself and have actively been getting the word out and trying to remind the community how important it is to vote. If I get nominated I will be very grateful for the opportunity to fill one of the open commissioner seats on the Rent Stabilization Board. I was born and raised in **North Berkeley** and at this time I reside in **South Berkeley**. I have advocated for tenants in Berkeley and Alameda County for over 10 years. I work at The Berkeley Drop-In Center; I am currently a Housing Case manager working with the (Shelter Plus Care/Season of Sharing /Section 8 /Chronically Homeless participants of Alameda County), and have been for over 3years.

*** For identification purposes only- these organizations are not necessarily endorsing any candidates.**

2. How much time are you able to devote as a Commissioner? Are your hours flexible? Can you Attend meetings until as late as 11:00 pm? Can you attend a two-hour twice-a-month daytime Meeting?

I am dedicated to this Campaign; I am committed, also preparing and ready to serve on the Rent Board Commission. I will be available for 20 hours or more **PER WEEK**, what ever it takes to get the Word out and the Votes in. I have a flexible evening schedule. I am willing to stay the entire meeting until the meeting is over, I wouldn't want to miss any important information. I am available for daytime meetings as well. I have served as an Alternate on **The Housing Advisory, Planning, Zoning Adjustment Board, Police Review, Sugar Sweetened Beverage Product Panel of Experts and Landmarks Preservation Commissions**. I will continue to serve and advocate for the voiceless in my Berkeley community.

3. What experience have you had with Berkeley’s rent control ordinance, the Rent Board’s staff? Or the elected Board?

My experience with the Rent Board has been in conjunction with The Berkeley Drop-In Center as an outside resource to over hundreds of the clients at the Berkeley Drop-In Center as an advocate for tenants with tenancy issues for over 3 years. Yes, I have formally met with a couple of elected Rent Board Commissioners.

4. Tell us about at least three issues that you consider important to tenants in Berkeley.

From my experience working Housing with Berkeley residents expressed many issues with mold, unlawful increase in rent, constructive evictions, unit repairs in timely manner but mostly the concerns are, Affordability, Availability and habitable sustainable units in Berkeley to dwell. I have advocated for tenants with housing issues and the homeless population. Berkeley residents face Fear. The minorities and the low –income Berkeley residents are afraid to speak up in fear that they will become homeless or evicted and thrown out of their community. We need to change our (“stinking thinking”) as a community about Affordable Housing; we need housing that the community can afford. Everyone has a right to have safe and Affordable decent Housing!

5. What is the role of the Rent Board Commissioners? What powers do they have? What changes do you think should be made in how the Rent Board operates?

As a Rent Board commissioner my first responsibility would be to uphold and follow **All** the Rent Board **rent control** and **eviction control** Ordinances. It’s important to my community to promote safe and fair housing for the community. The Rent Board stays informed with state legislation that impacts Berkeley constituents and will step up if necessary. The Rent Board maintains effectiveness, efficiency, in an ethical and organized legal manner. Further more the Rent Board role is protecting vulnerable populations such as low-income, disabled, senior citizen, and students. Rent Control is the number one biggest way to protect the voiceless, seniors, and low-income Berkeley residents from becoming homeless. The Rent Board is the reason we have the little Affordable Housing we have now, which have helped thousands of tenants maintain housing. If the State bring back the “Vacancy Control” than even more people would be able to obtain housing.

5a. How do you feel about affordable housing? What do you think about low-income housing?

In my community the low-income housing is the affordable housing. The teachers and firefighters in our community can’t even afford the Affordable units in Berkeley. Everyone has the right to housing that they can afford and in a safe decent area. The rent board needs to continue to protect the tenants that live in the low-income rent controlled housing units. I support the Progressive Alliance list of activist advocating for affordable housing, I also support the Berkeley Tenants Union solutions. We need better policies and education programs for the homeless

6. The Berkeley Housing element says, "Ensure that below-market –rate housing is distributed as evenly as possible throughout the community". What are the pros and cons of distributing low-income units as part of new projects, and what are the pros and cons of using set-aside fees from those projects to build mixed low-and medium-income buildings around the city? We want to emphasize that this question unsettled area and there are no right or wrong answers.

Berkeley has always been known for having a diverse population. With all the new development I was getting very excited for the people looking to find stable housing, but when you build a 50 unit apartment complex and only give 3-8 units up for BMR and there are over 1000 Berkeley residents that is having the most hard time trying to find a unit that they can afford this is a housing crisis. So with the limited units available in Berkeley, there still aren't enough units for the residents in our Berkeley community to sustain permanent housing, and the homeless numbers continue to rise. BMR units have been at 50% or 80% of (AMI) area median income, we need units for people who make less like seniors, and the disabled. Most of the Berkeley residents often are on fixed incomes and can not afford 50% AMI and homeless people needs a even lower AMI percentage .The good thing is the set aside fees can be designated for the homeless with extremely low income. Plus when the waiting list opens for most of the upcoming available units, applications are not from our Berkeley community. I feel that if you build and want to make profit in Berkeley there has to be a rule set in stone to consider Berkeley Residents first!

7. Is a pro-tenant Rent Board capable of treating both large and small landlords fairly? Explain

I believe that the pro-tenant Rent Board can treat large and small landlords fairly because the ordinance is set in stone. Follow the rules that the Rent Board has in place to enforce the ordinances.

8. How do you think that the rent and eviction controls are related to homelessness? Can the Rent Board have any effect on the homeless situation?

There is plenty of data and evidence to support the fact that low-income Berkeley residents are getting pushed out into unfamiliar communities, which is not fair! I think that rent control protects some tenants in Berkeley but not **enough**. The rent controls keeps a cap on keeping rent down and then people will be able to keep stable housing and from becoming **homeless**. **"Just Cause" protects and prevents many unfair evictions.**

9. What do you consider to be your constituency or base of support? What organizations are you affiliated with? What are qualities would you bring to the slate.

I was raised in **North** Berkeley; I work and live in **South** Berkeley. I have been out in the community advocating for over 5years. with outreach and resourceful information. I am aware of the housing needs in Berkeley from the monitories and low-income residents in our Berkeley community.

I am affiliated with **Friends of Adeline- (1yr.)**, **Berkeley Drop-In Center- (5yr.)**, **Pool of Consumers Champions (POCC)-(4yr.)**, and **Berkeley Mt. Zion Baptist church- (18yr.)**

My base line of support comes from the **Friend's of Adeline** and also the residents in **South Berkeley**, district 3 areas, especially for the fearful voiceless Berkeley residents.

Most of the low-income minority tenants in Berkeley are uneducated about their housing rights

while being protected by rent control. So I consider myself privileged, I have worked in many Berkeley communities, the communities trust me, and my community respects me in Berkeley. My community considers me a leader, people in my community knows I really care genuinely about their housing needs. I am here for the people and not for ranks to get to the top; the top for me would be when everyone homeless obtains housing that they can afford.

Also I am a long-time resident of Berkeley so what happens in Berkeley matters to me .Not only does these issues with the housing crisis affect the population I work with but it affects me too, so I would work extra hours and do what it takes to continue to support my community the same community that supports me! I will continue to be that vessel that could educate the community. I will also support the landlords with awareness of the Rent Stabilization Board regulations. I will continue to represent for our community.

10.Please Check links on our website (berkeleytenantconvention.net) to two potential ballot measures affecting tenants that will be on the ballot in November (a) Safe and Affordable Home tax, and (b) Amending Measure Y to increase relocation payments and prevent family evictions during the school year. Explain your position on both.

I support both of the measures on November ballot. Right now we are in a Housing Crisis. There is **no better** time to advocate for tenants. Both of these initiatives benefit tenants and the community as a whole.

11.The Convention asks all candidates to sign a pledge to run against or endorse against the slate the Convention selects. Will you sign it? Do you think that the pledge is important? Do you think its fair?

I will not run or endorse against **THE SLATE** if I am not selected to be on the slate and I will support the Candidates that are selected.

However I am not sure my community or the organizations I am affiliated with will do the same. Yes, I will sign the pledge and I feel having a process is a fair way across the board for no discrimination, prejudice, and a order of operations is good.

I just would like to take the time out to say thank you to the team that prepared the questionnaire for the Rent Stabilization Board Convention. Also thank you for a fair, diverse opportunity to offer people from the community to have a chance to participant in leadership roles in the community that matters such as housing and equal opportunity to serve in the community that they lives in. I think it's very important to have people for the community makes decisions that benefit residents in the communities of Berkeley.

12.If you are nominated by the convention, will you agree, in concert with other slate members, to hire a coordinator with full authority to make campaign decisions in consultation with the slate? The slate will retain the power to determine an overall budget and replace the coordinator.

If I am nominated at the Rent Stabilization Board Convention to be on the slate I will support the team hiring a coordinator with full authority to make campaign decisions in consultation with the slate. The slate will determine an overall budget and replace the coordinator.

