

# National Union of Healthcare Workers Questionnaire for 2018 California State Constitutional Offices

To help NUHW assess your candidacy for state office, we ask you to complete this questionnaire.

## BACKGROUND

Name: Fiona Ma

Candidate for: State Treasurer

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Current Occupation: State Board of Equalization – District 2

Employer: State of California

Work Address: 455 Golden Gate Avenue, #10500, San Francisco, CA 94102

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Campaign FPPC Number: 1384474

Political Party: Democrat

- Please list any elected or appointed public offices you previously have held.
  1. U.S. Small Business Administration – Awards Committee (Region IX): appointed by the Clinton Administration (1996)
  2. 1996 Presidential Delegates Caucus-District 8 Convener: Appointed by the Clinton Administration (1996)
  3. SF Assessment Appeals Board (Alternate Member) – Appointed by the SF Board of Supervisors (1994-1998)
  4. Chinatown Economic Development Group – Commissioner: Appointed by Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr. (1996-1999)
  5. Controller's Advisory Committee on County Accounting Procedures – Member: Appointed by State Controller Steve Westly (2004)
  6. CA Earthquake Authority Advisory Panel – Member: Appointed by Senator John L Burton

(2004-2007)

7. San Francisco Board of Supervisors – District 4: Elected 2002-2006
8. California State Assembly – District 12: Elected 2006-2012
9. California State Board of Equalization – District 2: Elected 2016 - present

2. Please list any key volunteer organizational leadership roles you have played.

- President – Asian Business Association (1995-1998)
- CA Democratic Party Executive Board Member/Delegate (1995-present)
- SF Westside Chinese Democratic Club – Founder (1995-present)
- Honorary CA Chair and National Co-Chair – New Leaders Council (2008-present)
- Past President/Board Member – CA Women Lead (2010-present)
- Honorary Chair/C-Founder – SF Hep B Free (2007-present)
- Board Member – State Legislative Leaders Foundation (2008-2012)
- Western Region Director – Women in Government (2008-2012)
- Executive Board – National Conference of State Legislators (2007-2012)
- Aspen-Rodel Fellow – Aspen Institute (Class of 2009)
- State Director – National Foundation of Women Legislators (2017-present)

1. Briefly describe your educational background and prior work experience.

Educational Background:

- B.S. from the Rochester Institute of Technology (NY)
- M.S. in Taxation from Golden Gate University (SF)
- MBA from Pepperdine University.
- She has been licensed in California as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) since 1992.
- Member of CalCPA

Prior Work Experience

- Ernst & Whinney – Tax Intern in NYC Office (1987-1988)
- Ernst & Young – Tax Senior in SF Office (1989-1993)
- State Senator John Burton – Part time District Representative (1995-2002)
- Fiona Ma, CPA (1993-present)

2. Are you currently a union member? To which if any unions have you belonged? If you have been a union member, were you an officer, steward, bargaining committee member or activist?

i.

ii. Yes. Member of SAG/AFTRA since 2007

3. What significant endorsements have you received from organizations and individuals?

Please click onto <https://www.fionamafortreasurer.com/endorsements> for current endorsements.

I have also attached my current list of endorsements to this questionnaire.

4. How much money have you raised to date? How much do you aim to raise?

Approximately \$1.4M. I plan to raise another \$1.5M and possibly more depending on my opponent(s).

5. Have you conducted a poll? If yes, please provide relevant information from the findings.

No we have not conducted a poll as of today.

6. Beyond our public endorsement, what specific support are you seeking from NUHW?

Financial contribution 😊

## OVERVIEW

1. Why are you a candidate for this office and why are you seeking NUHW's endorsement?

California faces financial challenges that can only be solved through innovation, experience and commitment. I'm running for Treasurer to make sure our state works for everyone.

Many parts of our great state still lag behind in economic recovery, the gap between the wealthiest and poorest Californians continues to grow, and the growth in our cities must be effectively managed to ensure shared prosperity. The Treasurer plays a key role: investing California's money in a socially responsible manner and ensuring our state is on sound financial footing.

I would be honored to have NUHW's endorsement as I have received in my past elections. NUHW does very important work in our community and I have enjoyed our long term working relationship with the leadership and members of NUHW. I was honored to work with AB 2942 (Ma)(2007-2008)(Proposed) re Hospital Community Benefits (which mirrored a bill we worked/passed while I was on the SF Board of Supervisors (2002-2006) requiring public hospitals (including designated University of California and county hospitals) and district hospitals to provide community benefits, and also to complete a community needs assessment and develop and report to OSHPD a community benefits plan. This bill also required for-profit hospitals, which decide to provide

community benefits, to develop a community benefits statement, community needs assessment, and community benefits plan, or report to OSHPD that they do not provide community benefits.

2. Briefly describe what will be your top legislative priorities and issue areas of focus if elected.

- Continue to go after the underground economy and ensure everyone pays their fair share of taxes
- Ensure CA remains the 5/6<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world by improving our credit rating, working with the Legislature and the Governor on budgeting/bills, work on ways to fully fund our pension and healthcare costs so we ensure we fulfill our commitment to our retirees, and plan for the next stagnation/recession.

3. What do you believe distinguishes you, over your opponents, as the best candidate for this office?

As a Certified Public Accountant, Past Chair of the State Board of Equalization and former state and local official, I've put my skills to work for Californians. I'll be ready on Day One to serve as California's Treasurer and invest in the people and small businesses that are the foundation for California's economic success.

## **WORKERS' FREEDOM TO CHOOSE A UNION**

Workers are regularly denied the freedom to choose a union due to intimidation, harassment, and other forms of coercion by their employers, and sometimes even by labor organizations. Legal remedies for such violations of workers' rights are far too little, far too late, with the result that these violations are legal and workers' organizing efforts are squashed more often than not.

4. Would you urge employers to respect workers' freedom to choose a union by: b)

a) remaining neutral on the question of unionization and recognizing a union as their employees' collective bargaining representative when presented with a petition demonstrating its support from a majority of the employees (frequently referred to as "card check neutrality"); or

b) agreeing to a code of conduct for a fast and fair union election that prohibits both the employer and the union from disparaging each other's motives; requires them both to make only factually accurate statements when seeking workers' support; provides them both equal physical access and equal time to discuss workers' choice of a union with them; bans inherently coercive kinds of communications, like "captive audience" meetings and one-on-one discussions with supervisors; and establishes a short election period prior to a final and binding secret ballot vote?

Have you ever interceded with employers to urge their adoption of one of these methods for workers to choose a union? If so, describe your experience and what you learned from it. Yes on a few occasions:

- Met with executives at CPMC and stayed firm during my tenure on the SF Board of Supervisors re two issues surrounding St. Luke's Hospital and their new proposed Van Ness Campus: desire to decrease their charity care to the community using the St. Luke's Hospital services and their resistance to allowing workers to unionize inside their new Van Ness Hospital campus

- Personally called and urged the Senior Counselor and Chief Public Policy Officer of the Daughters of Charity Health System (DCHS) to sit down with SEIU-UHW
- Joined UNITE-HERE and Faith Community Organization in support of Meridian Hotel Workers demanding that the Meridian's General Manager meet with the workers
- Marched on picket lines with the California Faculty Association, UNITE-HERE, AFSCME, SEIU-UHW and California Nurses Association during numerous strikes and vigils over the years
- Lead the fight to expose the truth about Hornblower's Alcatraz Cruises; wrote letters and called our federal elected leaders

I learned that there is power in the people and one of the way to force change is by putting public pressure on employers to do the right thing.

## **INDUSTRY STANDARD WAGES, BENEFITS, AND WORKING CONDITIONS**

Over the first years of this century, organized hospital workers throughout California established a set of industry standard wages, benefits, and working conditions that brought these caregivers, who are predominantly of women, people of color, and recent immigrants, solidly into the middle class, while also creating a stable and experienced workforce in adequate numbers to protect the well-being of acutely ill patients and improve the quality of care they receive.

5. In the quickly upcoming round of collective bargaining, will you publicly support NUHW members in their efforts to restore the industry standard wages, benefits, and working conditions that made California's hospital workers among the very best compensated of any in the nation? YES to all!

Specifically, will you join workers in calling upon employers to restore:

- fully employer paid family health benefits
- defined benefit pensions
- a real voice in staffing levels with the right to arbitrate any disputes
- employment and income security for displaced workers
- a ban on subcontracting;
- scheduling policies that allow workers to live stable lives and maximize full time jobs?

## **SUPPORTING COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGNS**

In order to secure the best results for workers, patients, and communities from recalcitrant employers, NUHW members often must wage comprehensive campaigns that build power in multiple venues through multiple means. Such campaigns are undertaken both to help unorganized workers assert their right to choose a union and to compel employers' agreement to industry standards. Elected officials are frequently called upon to play important roles in these efforts.

6. To support comprehensive campaigns aimed at recalcitrant employers, would you be willing to:

YES to all as I have done in the past.

- meet with union organizing committee and bargaining committee members;
- sign public letters of support for the union's organizing rights or bargaining proposals;
- place phone calls to and meet with employer representatives on the union's behalf;
- attend negotiations with employers to support and help present the union's position;
- conduct facility walk-throughs to engage both workers and employers on disputed issues;
- participate in town hall meetings to highlight the union's organizing and bargaining campaigns and build support for union proposals in the press and with the public;
- participate in picket lines, marches, rallies, and vigils;
- assist in outreach to community-based organizations and faith based groups?

### **Single Payer Healthcare Reform and Public Financing for Healthcare Services**

Obamacare represented a critical step forward in the long struggle to win affordable, quality healthcare for all, but much work remains to be done. Even with the expansion of Medi-Cal to cover the near poor and the availability of significant subsidies to help low and middle-income families purchase coverage through the state exchange, millions of working Californians will remain uninsured as the price of coverage remains too dear, especially for those living in high cost areas. Now the Washington Administration is threatening these gains and millions are likely to lose their health insurance.

7. Do you support the establishment of a single payer healthcare system as prescribed in SB 562 Californians for a Healthy California Act a publicly financed system of healthcare for all with a uniform standard of coverage that reduces costs by eliminating the profiteering, administrative waste, and marketing expenditures that accompany private insurance? Do you support the Sales Tax and revenue measures in the SB 562 financing report? How would you participate in the campaign to enact a single payer solution to our healthcare crisis?

Yes, I have long supported single payer and co-sponsored SB840 (Kuehl) and SB810 (Leno) when I served in the State Assembly. I was born with a pre-existing condition and was very active in passing Obamacare to prevent the discrimination of people with pre-existing conditions by attending numerous press conferences and speaking out at various rallies and events on single payer and Obamacare. I am committed to the ideals of a single payer system in our country.

7. As you may know, NUHW members over the past several years successfully prosecuted a complaint against Kaiser Permanente for failing to provide its plan members with timely and appropriate mental health services. In prosecuting the complaint, we learned that the Department of Managed Health Care interprets current law not to require any specific timeliness standard for the scheduling of return appointments, even in mental health services where in many cases the close spacing of return appointments is absolutely necessary for the provision of clinically sound care.

My mother has suffered with depression over many decades and has been admitted to UCSF's Langley Porter twice so I understand first-hand the issues surrounding appropriate mental health services including timely access, good/bad physicians and adequate follow-up, counseling sessions, prescription medications, and more.

Will you support NUHW members if we seek to close this loophole in the state's timely access law? YES!

Will you support NUHW members in demanding that all members of the public have equal access to quality and affordable mental health care? YES!

Will you support NUHW members in their contract disputes to improve the quality of care? YES!

## 9. **SANCTUARY CITY AND NUHW**

NUHW recently declared itself a 'sanctuary union' and a member of the growing network of sanctuary institutions that will do everything within our power to ensure the safety and security of all members of our community regardless of their immigration status.

As a result, NUHW will:

- protect the rights and safety of every member of our union, our community and all patients including undocumented people and their families;
- will not voluntarily cooperate with federal agents to enforce immigration laws;
- pledge to stand up for, support and defend the most vulnerable among us; those deliberately targeted in the lead-up to the election; and those who have become victims of hate in its wake;
- urge its members to help address the social, emotional, medical and mental health needs of our patients and community members and to promote diversity and inclusion;
- declares its support for the following Legislation: The California values Act, which would prevent the use of public resources to aid federal immigration agents in deportation actions; the Due Process for All Act, which provides legal representation for noncitizens facing deportation; and the Stronger Public Defenders Act, which would create state-funded centers to train defense attorneys and public defenders on immigration law and the

consequences of criminal convictions.

· will request that our nation's hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare providers declare their support for and protection of undocumented people and their families, affirmatively create a welcoming environment for them, and declare themselves to be "safe zones" so that no member of our community feels threatened when seeking medical care.

Please state whether you agree with NUHW's sanctuary union action and the 'Sanctuary State' movement. And state what you will do to protect our communities from hate and possible federal action.

YES, I unequivocally support NUHW's sanctuary union action and the 'Sanctuary State' movement. As the eldest daughter of immigrant parents who left China due to the Communist movement and eventually settled in the New York and became naturalized citizens, I believe we must protect and defend all citizens living here in the United States and ensure all the progressive rights we have passed as a State do not get rolled back and no one gets discriminated against or feels unsafe leaving their homes.

### **Housing and Homelessness:**

Californians are seeing one of the worst housing crises in recent memory. Working people are being priced out of their homes by increased rents and mortgages. Homelessness is increasing due to a lack of affordability and a lack of social services for wrap around care.

What is your definition of affordable housing? How do you propose to increase the affordable housing stock/inclusionary zoning? What do you propose to do to curb evictions? What actions have you taken so far to help fix the current housing and affordability crisis? Do you support the repeal of Costa-Hawkins?

There is no doubt there is an affordable housing crisis today especially in the large metropolitan cities in California where many of the jobs and big employers are located. When I served on the SF Board of Supervisors, I was a member of the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and we set housing goals for the Bay Area yet there was no mandate or consequences for any city/county to comply with the goals and thus some jurisdictions did and some did not move forward with building affordable housing.

The definition of affordable housing differs significantly around the State of California since cost of living, salaries, availability of jobs varies depending on where one lives. However, I agree with HUD that families who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. In the US, there is an estimated 12 million renter and homeowner households now pay more than 50 percent of their annual incomes for housing. A family with one full-time worker earning the minimum wage cannot afford the local fair-market rent for a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the United States.

In the 2009-2010 legislative cycle, I passed and the Governor signed my bill AB987 to expand the area in a transit village development district to include all land within not more than ½ mile of the main entrance of a transit station, to encourage development a transit hub to help community deal with sprawl, traffic gridlock, community



times, the loss of open space and increased air and water pollution. This bill was intended to help building more affordable housing around transit hubs, many of which are located within a redevelopment agency zone.

According to the State Treasurer's website, California needs 1.5 million affordable housing units however we are only producing 13,850 per year.

The complete elimination of the Redevelopment Agencies in 2012 has exacerbated the affordable housing crisis in California since the tax increment financing mechanism and mandates to provide affordable housing provided opportunities and incentives for developers to create affordable housing. We need to re-establish some sort of redevelopment agency model especially around transit hubs which encourages denser housing and less parking.

There are four main state agencies that directly and indirectly affect affordable housing in California, three of which the Treasurer plays a major role:

1. Tax Credit Allocation Committee – State Treasurer Chairs this Committee
2. Debt Limit Allocation Committee – State Treasurer Chairs this Committee
3. Housing Finance Agency – State Treasurer is a Board Member
4. Department of Housing and Community Development.

As the next State Treasurer, I commit to dig in and work on ways to make the above four affordable housing programs more effective and help to increase the supply of affordable housing in California. I also have good working relationships with many current members of the legislature and being a past Assembly member, I passed and got signed 60 bills in 6 years (many were first-in-the nation bills) so will continue to work on reforms and new programs through the legislative process.

As a member of the SF Board of Supervisors and during my tenure in the Assembly, I supported rent control and did vote for any initiatives to repeal rent control in San Francisco or California. I have also voted on laws to ensure the rights of tenants when faced with egregious situations. I believe San Francisco's Rent Board does a great job of policing illegal evictions and provides a resource for tenants to find help when faced with an illegal eviction.

I do not support the repeal of Costa-Hawkins.

I believe having a roof over one's head should be a right and not a privilege.

I believe in the American Dream of home ownership and as State Treasurer will work on ways to expand first-time home buying opportunities.