

SAN FRANCISCO PEOPLES' ORGANIZATION

Points of Unity – Public Draft

last modified April 13, 2005

We are an organization of groups and individuals committed to bringing sanity, humanity and compassion to San Francisco politics. Our ranks include people from all walks of life. We each have different backgrounds, different experiences, and different opinions. But there are some basic things on which we all agree.

We believe in the power of everyday people to shape our lives, our city, our world. It is the people of San Francisco – not downtown interests – who have the power to transform San Francisco into a city that places human need and the common good above corporate greed and private profit. When the people are organized and united, they can and will remake the city in their own image: beautiful, compassionate and free.

We believe in unity among progressives. Too often, progressives pay more attention to their disagreements than to their commonalities. This divisive error too often derails progressive and left movements before they even begin. We will not do this. We value and uphold our unity. We do not impose a single ideological position, practice or approach. Rather, we aim to support one another in spirit of respect for difference, shared purpose, and hope. We will not be afraid to struggle with one another. But we will do so to build our unity, not to tear it down.

We believe that economic justice is essential to a healthy, safe and democratic San Francisco. The concentration of corporate power and personal wealth is one of the primary sources of instability and injustice in San Francisco and the country at large. We must counter this by securing basic economic rights for everybody: secure, living wage jobs; adequate food, clothing and housing; accessible, affordable health care; quality education; a safe, clean environment; a safety net for those unable to work due to old age, sickness, accident and unemployment.

We support workers' rights. We support workers' rights to organize, to collective bargaining, to strike, to safe and healthy working conditions, and to receive a living wage and benefits. Workers are the heart of San Francisco; we must protect and support them.

We oppose all forms of oppression and exploitation. Though our city enjoys both a reputation and a self-conception as a hotbed of left and progressive politics, everyday San Franciscans still suffer the daily injuries of racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism and transphobia. Racism, sexism, classism and xenophobia are key features of San Francisco politics today. We work to bring an end to oppression not only in San Francisco's politics and economy, but also in our own organization and movement. *In particular, we promote and encourage the leadership of women, people of color and others from oppressed, exploited and marginalized communities.*

We want real democracy in San Francisco politics. We support fundamental political reforms aimed at fully realizing the democratic promise of our country. These include publicly financed elections, instant runoff voting, walk-up voter registration, district elections for Supervisor, proportional representation, and other efforts to broaden public access and participation in policy formation and decision-making in San Francisco.

We value democracy in our own organization. We do not strive for real democracy only in city politics. We also value democracy in our organization. We make decisions as collectively as possible. We work to empower one another as individuals and as a collective through trust, patience and open spirit.

We oppose the ongoing hyper-investment of public resources into punishment and policing. The criminal justice system has become today's Jim Crow. The U.S. has more prisoners than any other country in the world. California has more prisoners than any other state. And in San Francisco, everyday people are as afraid of the police as they are of street crime. Overwhelmingly, it is people of color under surveillance by police and under lock and key in prisons. We need a new model for dealing with crime based on rehabilitation, restoration and reconciliation – not racism and revenge.

We support efforts to restore our fragile ecology and develop a "green" economy.

Impending ecological crisis is humanity's most pressing survival concern. To stave off this crisis, we must reorganize our economy around "green" principles that will restore the ecology. Such a transformation is possible, but we cannot rely on polluters to make it happen. It's going to take a shift in government investment away from pollution-based, poison dependent industries like nuclear, coal and oil and into clean, green technologies and economic development.

We are politically independent. We are independent of any political party. Party affiliation serves too often as a proxy for real political unity. We are committed to building a progressive movement based on our shared vision and shared work – not membership in the same political party.

We believe in sustainable progressive politics that is committed to continually developing the leadership of progressives in San Francisco.

We are committed to keeping the public informed of pressing issues facing the City, important decisions being made at City Hall, and work being done by our organization.

If you have questions about SFPO, please contact Marlina (info@sfpeople.org) or visit our website: www.sfpeople.org