



Candidate Questionnaire November 7, 2006 General Election

Deadline for Submission of Questionnaire: Thursday, August 31, 2006

Submit electronically, with resume and photo, to sfyd.issues.action@gmail.com

BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot:

First Name	Middle Initial	Last Name
Jeff	G	Adachi

2. Office sought (include office, jurisdiction, position/district number):

Public Defender

3. Are you the incumbent? **Yes** **No**

CAMPAIGN CONTACT INFORMATION

Campaign Name:	Re-elect Public Defender Jeff Adachi
Address:	PO Box 77313
City, State, Zip:	San Francisco, CA 94107
Campaign Phone:	(415) 905-9100
Campaign Fax:	(415) 664-64643
Campaign E-mail	Jeffadachi2006@yahoo.com
Campaign Website:	www.jeffadachi.com

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

1. Beginning with the most recent position, please list public offices which you have held. Include positions on appointive Boards or Commissions.

Public Office	Elective or Appointive?	Dates Held	Leadership Role (if any)
Public Defender	Elected	2003-present	Department Head

2. If you ran for public office but were not elected, please list those races below:

Office Title	Year of Run
N/A	

QUESTIONS

1) Are you currently a member of the San Francisco Young Democrats in good standing?

No.

2) Why are you running, and what makes you qualified for this position?

I have spent nearly 18 years in the Public Defender’s office and two years in private practice, handling over 3,000 cases and trying over 100 jury trials. Hired as a deputy public defender in 1986, I tried twenty-eight misdemeanor trials in his first 18 months in the office. I was then promoted to the felony division, where I began trying homicide cases two years later, and rose to a head trial attorney, assigned to handling the office’s most serious and challenging cases.

In 1998, I was promoted to the Chief Attorney, the office’s second-in-command. I immediately modernized the office and introduced innovative new programs. In 2001, I became the first public defender to receive the Mayor’s Managerial Excellence Award, an annual award presented to the city’s top managers. That same year, I declared my candidacy for Public Defender and was elected on March 5, 2002. I assumed office on January 8, 2003.

I was recognized as a “Super Lawyer” by California Lawyer Magazine, and was featured in the nationally aired PBS Documentary *Presumed Guilty* (2002). From 1979-1983, I worked to free a

death row inmate who had been wrongfully convicted of murder, sparking his interest in public interest law. In the early 90's, I became involved in efforts to win redress for Japanese American internees who were initially denied redress payments.

I am a past board member of the Bar Association of San Francisco (2001-2003) and the *California Attorneys for Criminal Justice* (2000-2002), and served on the ABA's *Standing Committee for Legal Aid and Indigent Defense* (2002-2004). I am a member of the *National Board of Trial Advocacy*, the *California Public Defenders Association*, and the *Northern California Criminal Trial Lawyers Association*. I also taught bar review for over 15 years and has published five books in this area. I am the co-author of Chapter 25: Immunity for Testimony, in the California Criminal Law Procedure and Practice book, and has been a certified criminal law specialist since 1991.

My community activism includes: serving as the president of the *Asian American Bar Association* (1991) and the *Japanese American Citizen's League* (1992-1995). I also founded the *Asian American Arts Foundation* in 1995, which provides support to emerging Asian American artists, and served as president of the *Asian American Theater Company*.

In 1992, I received the California State Bar's Hufstedler award, which is awarded annually to a lawyer who has dedicated his career to pro bono work. In 1998, he received the Joe Morozumi Trial Lawyer award from the Asian American Bar Association. In 2005, I received the statewide Program of the Year Award from the California Public Defender's Association. In 2006, I was chosen to receive the American Bar Association's 2006 Dorsey Award, awarded annually to an outstanding public interest lawyer.

I graduated from Hastings College of the Law in 1985 and attended undergraduate studies at U.C. Berkeley.

3) What are the main challenges facing the city of San Francisco in the context of this position and how will you address those issues, if elected? If you are the incumbent, please list three accomplishments while in office.

The mission of the Public Defender's office is to provide high quality legal representation to over 20,000 people each year who cannot afford to hire a lawyer. We represent individuals charged with felony and misdemeanor crimes. I currently have a staff of 90 lawyers and 60 support staff.

The Public Defender's office is the city's largest criminal law firm. Established in 1921, we are the only county in California that elects its Public Defender. My job is to make sure that every individual we are appointed to represent receives the best legal representation possible. This means that we adhere to the high professional standards, and that each case is thoroughly investigated and prepared, and that zealous and uncompromised advocacy is provided in every case.

I have addressed this great challenge by ensuring that we hire the very best lawyers. Though our most experienced lawyers are paid the salary of a first-year associate in a private law firm earns, I am fortunate to have a dedicated and committed group of attorneys who believe in the work we do. Since assuming office, I have developed professional standards which all attorneys and staff are required to adhere to. I have also appointed highly qualified managers who oversee each of the felony, misdemeanor, juvenile, research, mental health, paralegal and support services units. We hold bi-monthly management meetings and annual retreats to constantly improve performance. We are also a goal-oriented office, and we establish clear objectives which each employee is expected to meet. Each employee is required to attend trainings, and we host as many as 50 on-site trainings each year to ensure that employees are kept apprised of new developments in the law.

Three accomplishments I am most proud of during my first term include:

The Clean Slate Program. Instituted in 1998, while I was Chief Attorney, the Clean Slate program provides expungement services for persons who have suffered felony or misdemeanor convictions and have rehabilitated themselves. Under the law, a person who demonstrates sufficient evidence of rehabilitation may petition the court to have their record cleared. However, many people are unaware of this right, and subsequently suffer the consequences of a criminal record, which may prejudice their ability to seek employment, qualify for student loans and obtain government subsidized housing. I started this program to reach out to persons who could benefit from having their record expunged, and to provide legal services, which include drafting the petition and advocating in court for an expungement, to those who could not afford to pay a lawyer for such services. Since 1998, we have increased our annual expungement caseload from 80 to 2,400 a year. This program has been recognized as a national model, receiving a write-up on the first page of the SF Chronicle. The Clean Slate program also received the California Public Defender's statewide Program of the Year award in 2006, and the Managerial Excellence Team Award in 2005, awarded by the Mayor's Fiscal Advisory Committee, a council of independent business leaders.

Paralegal Program. When I came into office, we were at a breaking point due to inadequate staffing. I asked the city Controller to perform a comprehensive audit of the office, and to compare best practices of other top defender offices around the state. The Controller found that we had inadequate support staff and attorneys to handle the caseloads we were assigned. At the time, we had 1 paralegal to serve 90 lawyers, while other offices had 1:4 ratio of paralegals to attorneys. In my first year, I successfully advocated for the addition of a paralegal unit. We were able to recruit the best and the brightest, and as a result, we have succeeded in reducing the workload of attorneys by allowing them to delegate tasks, at a substantial cost savings to the city.

4) Identify two challenges to San Francisco's young people in the context of the position you seek. What specific commitment will you make to address these issues if elected? If you are the incumbent, how have you addressed these challenges while in office?

Crime prevention is key. Young people from certain communities of the City bear the brunt of violence and crime. The shootings and homicides involving young people is most troubling. I believe that the criminal justice system alone, cannot provide the answers. Instead, we must address the core problems of poverty, poor education and lack of employment opportunities. I have worked to reform the juvenile justice system by providing wrap-around services for youth, creating a full-time social worker position to work specifically with young girls and opposing commitments to the California Youth Authority.

In addition, each year, my office hosts a juvenile justice summit to bring youth advocates, juvenile justice stakeholders, and families and youth together. (www.sfgov.org/pd) I have also led efforts to help former prisoners, including young people, live and enjoy productive lives. In 1998, I instituted the Clean Slate program, which helps over 2,000 rehabilitated people each year clear their criminal record so they can obtain employment and attend school. Since 2005, I have co-chaired the San Francisco Safe Communities Re-entry Council, a collaboration of 25 community-based re-entry service organizations working together to coordinate services to returning prisoners and their families, and to raise and address re-entry policy issues with local and state government officials. The Council is planning its first summit on September 27, 2006.

The second challenge is creating and maintaining a family friendly community. A community must be more than good schools, playgrounds and recreational facilities. Families must be able to support themselves economically to survive in one of the most expensive cities in the country. There must be a commitment to provide assistance to those who do not have the family support necessary to thrive, particularly in those communities which do not have access to a continuum of childcare, pre-kindergarten, mentoring programs and sports activities. For this reason, I founded an organization called "MAGIC" in 2003 (the Mobilization for Adolescent Growth in our Communities).

MAGIC is an organization comprised of over 35 youth and family agencies in Bayview Hunters Point, who have come together to create positive outcomes for youth and families, and to pool our resources to provide a greater safety net for youth and families in need. Each year, we host an annual "Back-to-School" celebration. This year, we distributed 2,000 backpacks and school supplies to youth and families. This is our third such event. MAGIC also sponsors an annual mentor fair, a mentoring program for youth incarcerated at juvenile hall, computer technology center at the Bayview YMCA, a book and technology fair, youth-led activities, as well trainings for youth agencies. For more information, please visit www.bayviewmagic.com.

5) If (re-)elected, how, specifically, would you work with SFYD to engage more of San Francisco's young people in the political process?

Our MAGIC initiative, mentioned above, is focused on developing leadership among youth. In addition, my office provides internships to over 300 young people each year, from 15-25, including high school, college and law students, and provides them with training and work experience in the criminal and juvenile justice field. We also hire 12 MYEEP students who are paid for their internships. I speak regularly at youth groups and meetings, including the SF Youth Commission, and work closely with several youth collaboratives, including the United Playaz, CHALK and Infusion One. I serve on the board for the United Playaz, a youth leadership development organization.

6) Have you collaborated with young people in your work in the past (list specific examples)? What value did you experience in working with young people? How are young people involved in your campaign?

I have been involved with several community collaboratives involving youth. Most recently, I worked with over 42 youth organizations in planning MAGIC's Annual Back-to-School Celebration, held on August 26, 2006 at Bayview Park in SF. We met for several months to plan the event, solicited donations for the backpacks, distributed 2,000 backpacks to youth at the event, and hosted over 60 community organizations who offered positive activities for youth to participate in throughout the year. I believe strongly that youth should be given leadership positions in any organization that is truly dedicated to empowering youth. Adults provide support and mentorship, and help young people achieve the vision they have defined.

I also teach law and bar review. I have done this for 15 years, and teach young lawyers how to pass the essay section of the bar exam.

EXPERIENCE

Please list or describe your current and past activities in the community in which you have acquired skills that relate to the office you seek. Include your role in the activity and the year(s) in which you were involved. Involvement consists of many areas such as family, neighborhood, community, employment, or public life. Please explain how your experience would make you an effective advocate for young people as an office holder.

I have been involved in community activism for over 25 years. After graduating college, I worked as a youth counselor at the Asian American Drug Abuse Program in Los Angeles. My experience there led me to seek a career in law. I also spent 7 years working on a case of a man who was wrongfully convicted of murder and was on death row. Our defense committee raised over \$125,000 to fund his defense, and were ultimately successful, working with his legal team, in winning his freedom. I have also been deeply involved in the movement to obtain redress payments for Japanese Americans, who, like my parents and grandparents, were interned during World War II. I wrote a brief on behalf of claimants who had been denied redress payments, and advocated to the

Assistant Attorney General that their claims should be paid. Ultimately, they received their \$20,000 redress payments from the government.

I have also been involved in many community-based organizations, including the Japanese American Citizens League, the Asian American Theater Company, and the Asian American Arts Foundation, which I founded in 1995. I served as the producer of the Golden Ring Awards, a televised awards show recognizing excellence in Asian American arts. The Foundation raised over \$100,000 to support the work of emerging artists. I am also a filmmaker, and wrote, directed and produced "The Slanted Screen," an award winning film about ethnic stereotyping. (www.slantedscreen.com)

I often speak out on issues that involve social justice concerns. Recently, I led a protest to save Japantown and worked with Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi and community members to pass a "special use district" to protect the character of Japantown. I also am strongly supporting Lt. Ehren Watada, who has refused to serve in Iraq, based on his belief that the war is unlawful.

My professional affiliations include serving on the boards of the SF Bar Association, California Attorneys for Criminal Justice, the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Legal Aid & Indigent Defense and the California Public Defender's Association Chief Defenders. I am also a member of the National Criminal Trial Lawyers Association. I served as president of the Asian American Bar Association in 1991, and was one of the founders of the Minority Bar Coalition.

Please include the following when you submit your candidate survey: a resume and a photo.

RESUME:

JEFF ADACHI
Public Defender
555 Seventh Street, 2nd Floor
SF, CA 94103

Professional Experience

Deputy Public Defender (1986-1998)
Chief Attorney (1998-2001)
Public Defender (2003-present)

Education

1983 UC Berkeley, Asian American Studies
1985 UC Hastings College of the Law
1992 Criminal Law Specialist

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 2006

SUBMIT VIA E-MAIL TO sfyd.issues.action@gmail.com