

Gavin Newsom for Mayor

The political tradition of the Building Trades, both nationally and in San Francisco, has emphasized practicality over ideology. We ask of our politics exactly what we ask every day on our job sites: What works?

In San Francisco, Gavin Newsom works.

For many Building Trades workers the evidence that Gavin Newsom works is before them every day. They start by counting tower cranes. They can make their rent or mortgage payments on time. The food on their tables is a little better. Their children's shoes fit better. A rainout doesn't bring desperation, but a chance finally to relax.

Bread and butter are foremost in our considerations, as they must be for anyone. They cannot be our only considerations, though, and they are not the only reason for supporting Gavin Newsom.

The great majority of Building Trades workers are employed by private industry on private sector projects. We understand that in our economic system business must thrive if we are to thrive. At the same time, we demand that business compensate us fairly and treat us with respect. We understand similarly that business must thrive in San Francisco if the City is to thrive. At the same time, the City must obtain from business what it needs for its citizens to live decent lives in dignity.

Long before becoming mayor Gavin Newsom had a reputation for being able to speak to business on its terms. Since becoming mayor, he has earned a reputation for being able to work with labor and its advocates. He supported the hotel workers in their successful two-year campaign for a contract with the Multi-Employer Group. He worked with Supervisor Tom Ammiano to craft the San Francisco Health Access Plan, which will permit tens of thousands of San Franciscans to afford health care. He worked with Sophie Maxwell to institute the CityBuild program, which serves at once the needs of City residents for employment, the needs of the Building Trades for capable candidates for apprenticeship, and the needs of business for workers who embrace the Building Trades ethic of a full day's quality work for a day's pay. The mayor's ability both to converse with business and to listen to labor is proven and critically important.

We have in some ways now a city government composed so as to be of great practical value to labor. Most of the Board of Supervisors is of a progressive bent and attentive to the voice of Labor. The composition of the Board obliges it and the mayor to deal with each other. Even though political energy has sometimes been wasted on fights that seem more personal than productive, the Board and the mayor have not fought to a standstill, but have made and continue to make important decisions together on behalf of the City.

Decisions on what will be built in San Francisco and how it will be built are more transparent, more open to public dialogue than they often were before. Some projects have been stopped as a result, and yet work is plentiful and more is coming. This approach to development has spared the Building Trades from the contradiction in which we often found ourselves in the past, that of having to argue for our livelihoods but against the needs of our neighbors. Both the Board

and the mayor can justifiably take credit for the transparency of development decisions, and that is our point: This combination works, and Gavin Newsom works.

The City of course has problems aplenty. Homelessness persists. Violence claims too many lives. Parks are tattered at the edges. Workers find few homes they can afford. Blue collar jobs are scarce almost anywhere but in the Building Trades. Families are leaving town. These are not problems peculiar to San Francisco, however, but bedevil cities across the country in one degree or another. Mayor Newsom has spoken again and again of seeking and implementing "best practices" to address them. By "best practices" he means what has worked best elsewhere. This is an approach that we in the Building Trades understand well.

Persons of good faith can hold a great many opinions on the best approach to take to the City's problems, and we will ourselves disagree with the mayor from time to time on these and other matters, but we are in complete accord on this: Gavin Newsom, four more years.

Delegates to the San Francisco Building and Construction Trades Council voted unanimously on Thursday evening, December 7, to endorse Gavin Newsom's candidacy for another term as Mayor of San Francisco.