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For detailed information about my policy positions on Richmond issues, visit:

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2005 Report to Richmond Voters and Residents

One year of hard work for the people of Richmond.
One year of standing against special interests.
One year of integrity. One year building a better Richmond.

To the people of Richmond who elected me, and to all the people of Richmond who I represent: I am accountable to you. You are entitled to this report because you, and only you, placed me in this office. **Not a single dollar for my campaign came from a corporation.** I work for you, the people of Richmond, and this is my year 2005 annual work report.



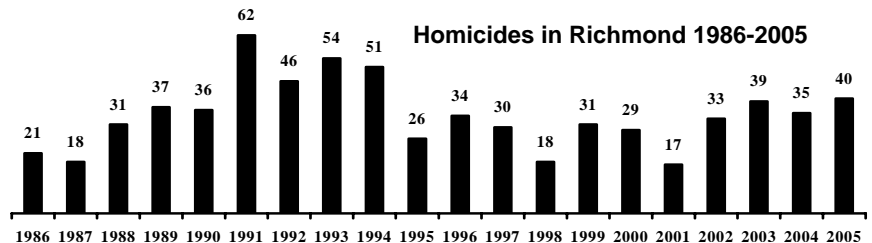
Although some **positive steps have been taken**, the city of Richmond continues to be in serious trouble. **Street violence continues to decimate our neighborhoods, tearing Richmond apart.** The city keeps “rolling up its sleeves,” creating the appearance of taking action with summits and meetings. However, **our city has lacked the political will to obtain the funds needed to implement the programs known to prevent violence.** In the meantime, the **community itself has taken the lead** and is already embracing our youth. **The city of Richmond must follow the example of the community and start leading.**

Violence has been endemic in Richmond for over 20 years and it will take all our efforts and concentrated resources to eradicate it.

A Better Richmond is Possible!

Yours,

Gayle McLaughlin



Roots of Richmond Violence Run Deep

by Gayle McLaughlin

West Contra Costa Times, June 25, 2005

In the guest commentary of June 11, 2005, Richmond Mayor Irma Anderson reflected on the June 4 Black on Black Crime Summit held in Richmond. This event was organized by African American Christian and Muslim ministers to readdress the endemic problem of violent crime that has decimated Richmond for at least 25 years and cost hundreds of young lives. In her commentary, the mayor pledged to support youth programs, citing an upcoming initiative funded by private contributions that will give 200 young people part-time jobs for the summer. More recently, other members of the council have called for a “state of emergency” insisting that only a larger police presence will solve the ongoing violence problem.

I respectfully disagree with my fellow city council persons. We are not going through a violence “crisis” in Richmond, but continuing to suffer from chronic violence, several decades in the making. Richmond’s chronic street violence is largely drug- and/or gang-related. The availability of drugs to be traded and the use of guns to secure turfs are key causal factors. Even deeper roots lie in our decimated educational system and lack of jobs, which create a giant surplus of desperate and angry unemployed young men. When young men in the drug trade are confronted, countless times they tell us: “You want my gun? Give me a job!” I profoundly believe that most of our troubled young men would choose a better life if given the right opportunities and the appropriate guidance.

How do we make significant and long lasting opportunities exist for alienated and underserved young people? Not through greater police repression. Mayor Anderson’s summer job program is certainly well-intentioned, but it is insufficient, and the impact of such a small program on Richmond street violence will be, I believe, minuscule. Mayor Anderson and many of my colleagues on the Richmond City

Council would love to have the money to invest in youth employment and education-strengthening programs. Let us be clear: the money is within reach, but most of my city council colleagues are unwilling to pay the political price to access those funds. I refer to closing the corporate loopholes that allow multibillion corporations like Chevron to get away without paying millions of dollars of taxes to the city every year. Repealing the utility users’ tax cap granted to Chevron more than 10 years ago would generate millions of dollars of revenue to support Richmond youth programs.

The cycle of violence in Richmond also has another difficult mechanism: the fewer resources we use to prevent violence with employment and education, the more dangerous is the job of repressing the local violence, and police officers and firefighters expect more compensation for the work they perform. The public safety unions swallow the bulk of the city’s budget, and take the lion’s share of any new initiative that the citizenry may vote into effect, such as Measure Q. Chevron and the public safety unions directly influence the decisions of the Richmond City Council. Chevron spent approximately \$150,000 in the last election to support its candidates. The “Keep Richmond Safe” PAC of the Richmond Police Officers Association and the Richmond Firefighters Association spent close to \$120,000.

It is very hard for Richmond elected officials to ignore the weight these powerhouses exert on their political futures. The special interests will attack anyone who questions their priorities and calls for a fairer distribution of resources. And so, youth programs are chronically underfunded, and the cycle of violence continues. The city of Richmond needs to remove the utility users’ tax cap and collect the millions in additional dollars due to our city. The city needs to allocate millions of dollars every year to a year-round part-time employment program that hires, trains and educates several thousand young residents. The life of one Richmond child is certainly more valuable than the profits of Chevron stockholders, and infinitely more valuable than the political career of any city council member.

Positive Steps in 2005

Richmond Toxic Sites Got Oversight

One of the most toxic sites in California, the Zeneca-UC Field Station, is now under the clean-up supervision of the Department of Toxic Substances Control (Cal EPA). I was glad to participate in the grassroots effort that led to this victory and to introduce a Richmond City Council resolution demanding the public's protection. I was able to bring together the entire Richmond City Council for a unanimous vote in defense of the community's health.



The Air Just Became a Bit Cleaner

Toxic refinery "flaring" was finally regulated and stricter controls were imposed. The Chevron refinery in Richmond will have to obey these new groundbreaking flare control regulations adopted by the Area Air District under pressure from Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) and the community. I actively supported CBE's legal action.

This bad idea is losing steam and facing increasing opposition. I continued to advocate against bringing urban gambling into Richmond and other urban communities. I gave testimony against urban gambling to state and federal agencies.



Casino Point Molate Less Likely



No Sales Tax Hikes in Richmond

Richmond already has a high sales tax (8.75%). Sales taxes are regressive, they lean on the consumer and they hurt local business. Instead we need fair taxation and the end of loopholes and tax perks for big industry. The voters of Richmond agreed and rejected measure 'Q' in a 2 to 1 vote. I was the only council member opposing a new sales tax hike.

"Yes" to a New Park for North Richmond

The North Richmond Shoreline Open Space Park is good for Parchester Village and it is good for Richmond. I continued to show support for this community aspiration, and championed, on the Richmond City Council, the East Bay Regional Park District's plan to purchase and create a regional park on the Breuner Marsh property, next to Parchester Village.



An Injustice to One is an Injustice to All

Sentences must fit the crime. I introduced and successfully passed a Richmond resolution calling on the Governor and the Legislature of California to review the Three-Strikes law and correct the inherent injustices that particularly affect Latinos and African Americans.



'Solar Richmond' is Launched

A new not-for-profit grassroots initiative has been launched to educate and encourage more solar energy on residential, business and public properties in Richmond. I am a co-founder of Solar Richmond (www.solarrichmond.org) because I believe that it can bring to Richmond energy cost savings, environmental preservation and solar jobs and training for Richmond youth.



End of Self-Inspection for Chevron

The fox will not guard the hen house anymore. From now on, Chevron's construction work will require permits and fees, and certifications will be done by the City and an independent third party working for the City. I was a co-sponsor of a directive, unanimously approved by the Richmond City Council on November 15, to repeal the 12-year-old practice of allowing Chevron to self-permit, self-inspect and self-certify its own work.

My priorities for 2006...

- Defend Richmond's public assets:
 - Preserve Richmond's open space shorelines
 - Make the shorelines clean and accessible to the public
 - Monitor the forces who put profits before people and are rushing to rezone Richmond's shoreline areas
 - Facilitate increased public participation in the review of the general plan.
- Promote and support concrete short- and long-term solutions to Richmond's endemic violence.
- Invigorate the City's general fund by ending tax loopholes, perks and favoritism to big industry.
- Defend and promote Richmond's small businesses.
- Continue to learn more about and from Richmond communities through neighborhood councils, grassroots organizations and individuals willing to share with me their experience and knowledge.
- Promote solar energy utilization in Richmond by the City, local businesses and residents.
- Restore Richmond libraries and community centers to full operations capacity.
- Promote justice and fairness for tenants and landlords



I believe that...

- Life is infinitely creative, resourceful, reliable and ultimately good.
- We, humans, are an expression of that life force and, as such we are creative, resourceful, reliable and have the capacity to be fundamentally good.
- All life is inextricably connected—true happiness can only be achieved by way of our connections with each other and the planet at large.
- Human history, through ups and downs, moves slowly but steadily towards democracy, justice and equality
- It is the right of all people to enjoy life, liberty and the security of person; to be treated equally under the law; to enjoy freedom of thought, conscience and religion; to free expression and association; to have access to clean water and clean air.
- It is possible for all human beings to be free from economic want and poverty and to live with dignity.
- Peace among and within nations is possible, but only when these rights are assured to everyone.
- The most fundamental responsibility of government is to ensure the health and well-being of all its people and the land they inhabit.
- Individual rights must be balanced with responsibility for the well-being of the community.
- We have a responsibility to live in such a way that we do not diminish the opportunity for future generations to enjoy a high quality of life.
- All people, individually and collectively, are capable of learning from their mistakes.
- Life includes suffering, but we have an inherent opportunity and responsibility to lessen that suffering by continuing our struggle against poverty, disease, war, injustice and environmental degradation.
- There is no beauty like the beauty of working people.
- There is no power like the power of truth.
- A better Richmond is possible and in the making.

Inspired by the Sebastopol Greens' statement of faith.

Your ideas are important to me

What issues concern you the most? Where else should I place my efforts? What would you like to see in Richmond by the end of 2006? Contact me: Gayle@BetterRichmond.net; 510-237-1256; P.O. Box 5284, Richmond CA 94805.



Gayle supporting local health care workers in November 2005

I don't work for...

I was elected by the voters of Richmond to represent them and serve them. I was not elected by, and I don't represent, the special interests of Chevron, Cherokee-Simeon developers, the Nevada casino conglomerates, or any local PACs operated by Darrell Reese. I am aware of the power that special interests have exerted over Richmond politics, and I am not intimidated. I trust the people of Richmond to recognize the elected officials who truly serve them and democracy well.

There are many grassroots initiatives in Richmond helping hundreds of young men and women to find their way to a better and productive future. Support one that you like, create one that you see lacking, speak out for what you believe the City needs to do.