

2022 Primary Endorsement Questionnaire

DEADLINE: Submit by 12:00 Noon, Monday, April 18, 2022

Email *

kakishiba@gmail.com



Thank you for your interest in being considered for an endorsement by the Asian Pacific American Democratic Caucus of Alameda County. Please answer each question in 250 words or less. Be honest and direct. Please submit your responses by 12 Noon, Monday, Apr. 18. All questionnaire responses will be posted on our website for Caucus members to review.

Personal Information

Candidate Name *

David Kakishiba

City and zip code of residence.

Oakland 94606

What is your campaign website address?

www.davidkakashiba4alameda.com

What is your campaign email address?

kakashiba@gmail.com

Are you a registered Democrat? The APA Democratic Caucus can only endorse registered Democrats *

Yes

No

Are you an APA Democratic Caucus member? *

Yes

No

How long have you lived in the district which you are seeking to represent?

24 years

What are the names of any community or nonprofit organizations with which you have been an active volunteer in the past 3-5 years.

Chair, Teacher Retention & Middle School Improvement Act Oversight Commission (Oakland Unified School District). Chair, College & Career Readiness for All Act Oversight Commission (Oakland Unified School District).

CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

1. What actions have you taken to address anti-Asian discrimination/bullying/harassment?

Please explain in what capacity you have acted and whether any of these actions were prior to 2020. (i.e., as an elected representative, member of commission/board/organization, and as an individual.

Since 1980, I have built, expanded, and sustained the East Bay Asian Youth Center (EBAYC), a nonprofit youth development organization that has helped protect thousands of Asian/Southeast Asian children and youth – Berkeley, Oakland, Sacramento – from discrimination, bullying, harassment, and violence. EBAYC staff and volunteers build supportive relationships with young people – culturally-affirming relationships that help empower young people move past pain, trauma, and isolation, and foster self-efficacy. In my 42 years with EBAYC, I have witnessed how newly arrived immigrant and refugee youth and their families have been bullied, beaten, and sometimes, terrorized in their schools and neighborhoods. Recall the headlines of the armed conflict on Wood Street in West Oakland; the murder of high school student Thong Hy Huynh in Davis; and the mass shooting of Cambodian children at Cleveland Elementary School in Stockton. Yet, Asian/Southeast Asian families do not live in isolation from other ethnic and racial groups. EBAYC grew from a solely "race-based" to a "place-based" approach – engaging and serving all young people and their families who reside in low-wealth, high-stress neighborhoods with a significant Asian population. Building cross-cultural understanding, patience, and solidarity became a core strategy.

Physical and verbal expressions of anti-Asian sentiment are not new and has been with us since American and European governments/militaries first encroached on multiple Asian nations, and they have been with us since we first arrived in the United States. My direct experience getting treated as such by teachers in my elementary school and high school, in part, motivated me to build and sustain an organization to support succeeding generations of Asian/Southeast Asian young people. Prior to my involvement with EBAYC, I was an active young leader of the Committee to Free Chol Soo, an all-volunteer community-based legal defense committee that successfully won the release of Chol Soo Lee, a poor Korean immigrant youth wrongfully convicted of a San Francisco Chinatown gang-related murder (one can see a new documentary film about Chol Soo Lee at the CAAM Film Festival in May 2022). Chol Soo Lee's life is like that of thousands of young Asian immigrant youth whose experiences with racial, cultural, and economic discrimination have further marginalized their lives. Prior to my involvement with the Committee to Free Chol Soo Lee, I was an active leader of my high school Asian Student Union (in Sacramento) and worked with the Sacramento Asian Community Center to get Japanese and Chinese bilingual MSW interns placed at my high school.

2. One out of every 3 Alameda County residents is of Asian ancestry but are underrepresented in elected office. What have you done and will you do to elevate their issues of concern?

See Question #1.

As an EBAYC Executive Director, I organized with Mien, Cambodian, and Vietnamese mothers to get their sons and daughters out of a lifestyle of violence and drug use. We organized to establish Alameda County's first school-based health center located in a middle school – Roosevelt Middle School – which was an epicenter for gang/racial violence among youth.

As an Oakland School Board Director, I organized with Chinese immigrant mothers to successfully rebuild and restore the Bella Vista Pre-School and Child Development Center after being closed and forgotten by Oakland Unified School District. I did so again in the rebuilding of the Yuk Yau Child Development Center Annex.

As County Supervisor, I will continuously reach out to and engage residents of Asian heritage, particularly those whose first language is not English, to understand their issues and to organize to achieve resolution.

3. One-third of Alameda County residents were born in another country. Do you believe that the needs of immigrants have been adequately addressed by the office you are seeking to represent? What changes are needed to better center their needs?

While no one office can adequately address the needs of immigrants, Alameda County should learn from Santa Clara County in their development and resourcing of their Office of Immigrant Relations. The Office of Immigrant Relations provides a one-stop repository for information, resources, services, and community-building for the county's globally diverse immigrant communities. Alameda County should replicate and adapt this approach with multiple offices throughout the county.

4. What have you learned about Asian Americans in the past year that you were previously unaware of and how has that impacted you?

We have seen the emergence of promising models of pan-Asian community organizing, alliances, and policy advocacy emerge in the past year, largely instigated by the rise of anti-Asian discrimination and violence. This is a good development.

5. What is the difference between supporting Asian American/Pacific Islander issues and being an Ally?

Support is mostly a passive activity. Being an ally means one who is putting in real time and work to address issues of anti-Asian discrimination, denial, and violence.

6. What resources (people/organizations) will you tap to increase your knowledge and understanding of the on-going needs of the Asian and Pacific Americans living in your district?

Everyone from the Oakland Chinatown Coalition, Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, Asian Pacific Environmental Network, multiple direct service non-profit organizations (e.g. EBAYC, Asian Health Services, Filipino Advocates for Justice), and social networks and individuals throughout District 3.

7. Please identify any Asian Pacific American candidates whom you have publicly endorsed/supported over the past 5 years including this election cycle. If there are none, please explain.

Nikki Fortunato Bas, Oakland City Council 2022
Sheng Thao, Oakland Mayor 2022
Mai Vang, Sacramento City Council 2020
Jenny Lam, San Francisco Board of Education 2019 and 2020
Gary Yee, Oakland Board of Education 2018
Aimee Eng, Oakland Board of Education 2018
Wilma Chan, Alameda County Supervisor 2018
Al Muratsuchi, California State Assembly 2018

Thank you for completing our questionnaire.

Only candidates who submit questionnaires by noon Monday, April 18 will be considered for endorsement.

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