

## 2022 Primary Endorsement Questionnaire

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

Email \*

kaplanforoakland@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 \*

Rebecca Kaplan

City and zip code of residence.

Oakland, 94607

What is your campaign website address?

supervisorkaplan.org

What is your campaign email address?

info@supervisorkaplan.org

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?

I have lived for 25 years in Oakland, portions of that time in different neighborhoods of Oakland, including Fruitvale, Temescal, Lake Merritt, and Jack London, with over a decade of that within the District. I have also represented, and been elected by, the areas included in Alameda County District 3 for many years, as AC Transit Board member at-large, and as Board member of the Alameda County Transportation Commission, and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District Board.

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

The ACLU  
The Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club  
Kehilla Synagogue  
Black Women Organized for Political Action  
Stonewall LGBT Democratic Club  
John George Democratic Club  
The Sierra Club  
National Lawyers Guild

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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.

Yes, I have actively worked against anti-Asian discrimination and harassment, in multiple roles throughout my career, including prior to 2020. This includes working to fight for the legal rights of AAPI prison inmates facing abuse, speaking out against, and fighting the harassment and deportation of immigrants by ICE, which escalated under Trump and targeted numerous AAPI people, particularly South Asians. I also authored the successful Oakland Council Resolution prohibiting OPD from continuing to collude in those racist raids. I helped expand language access in City of Oakland services and responded directly to help constituents and workers to help ensure people received appropriate services and support. I worked with APAPA to improve access and support for AAPI community members interested in pursuing public policy. I have worked with APALA to help protect worker rights, including to fight abuse of AAPI workers, and to ensure protections from harassment. (I am the endorsed candidate for County Supervisor District 3 of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance – APALA). When AAPI workers have been mistreated by management, I have helped to intervene in support and to get resolutions. When a local AAPI business was being treated in a disparate manner, compared to a large white-owned business seeking similar content from City management, I helped to ensure equitable treatment and equitable access to local contracting and support.

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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?

I have worked to help identify, support, hire, endorse and promote AAPI community members to leadership roles both in Oakland government and in other leadership positions. This includes selecting Art Dao as Executive Director of the Alameda County Transportation Commission, Ada Chan and Sheng Thao on my own city hall staff, as well as actively supporting and campaigning for Sheng Thao for elective office, (as well as supporting and endorsing and donating to leaders like Nikki Bas and Betty Yee) and encouraging, supporting and promoting AAPI community members to positions on Boards and Commissions, including Port Commission, Planning Commission, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission and more.

I have supported, and worked to expand, Oakland's language access policies, and procedures to help ensure that all communities can have access to participation in government activities and functions, by making sure materials, such as agendas and more, are provided in more languages, and that we have culturally competent and language accessible communications and departmental functions and public services.

I have worked with and am committed to continuing to work with the AAPI community, including advocacy groups community members, businesses, stakeholders and leaders to help identify and fight for funding for support for community, including efforts we have supported for vital pedestrian safety improvements in Chinatown and beyond, and fixes to key problems in the neighborhood with traffic, parking, and more. We have worked to secure major funding for needed improvements to ease access, pedestrian safety, and parking for workers and customers to our key business districts, including for key access points and crossings from Alameda to Oakland. We have fought for and won funding for community safety ambassadors and worked to protect the rights of AAPI employees and AAPI businesses.

One of the other issues disproportionately impacting AAPI community in Alameda County is air pollution, including diesel particulate emissions and other harmful toxins which harm human health. I have helped lead, and as Supervisor would expand on, projects to remedy the over-concentration of air pollution, including by working to launch this innovative zero-emission truck project, working in a broad coalition of business, community, stakeholders, the Port of Oakland and multiple government agencies at local, regional, countywide and State levels, to bring this important project to launch:

Check out video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=F98DJTIDwIE>

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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?

It is essential to strengthen public services – and ease of access to those services – for people of all nationalities, ancestries, and languages. I would work to expand services like mental health and preventative healthcare (like community vaccination clinics), as well as other social services like food programs and childcare, that are held in a culturally competent and in languages of the communities, throughout our county. And to work to strengthen language access to public services broadly.

I also recognize, as a recent Equity Indicators Report has also validated, that traffic safety problems are disproportionately impacting AAPI Communities, in terms of pedestrian safety, and the disproportionate ways that for decades, largely white decision-makers have directed freeway ramps and other regional transportation decisions, in ways that harm the pedestrian safety, especially in areas with large AAPI populations, like what has been done to Oakland's Chinatown. This is a historic and widespread inequity that has been undermining AAPI community vitality and business success, and human health with traffic accidents and air pollution, as regional decision-makers have pushed projects through in ways that damage communities that they don't care as much about. I have been actively working to rectify these historic injustices, working to bring funding and tangible improvements with upgraded crosswalks, and funding received and planning underway for a significant revision of roadway systems to help remedy these problems, as well as winning funding for expansion of pedestrian safety programs throughout our County, including around our schools.

I recognize that our large and important immigrant communities are a vital and essential component of our County, and need to be respected in terms of recognition of core needs, which can include issues related to immigration status, as well as the need to ensure culturally competent services and access to things like small business support, and to recognize and help remedy problems, like the disproportionate involuntary commitment of Muslims and some other immigrant communities in locked mental health facilities, and the need to expand more community-centered facilities that can provide mental health in a culturally competent manner, and not rely on locking people up, in facilities where they are then often not well understood.

When immigrants in Oakland were being harassed by Trump's ICE, and when OPD and the Oakland administration colluded in the harassment, sending out a press release accusing the innocent immigrant family of having been "human traffickers" – though there was no evidence of that – I spoke out and denounced it, and subsequently successfully introduced a law to prevent Oakland personnel from being used in that way again. <https://eastbayexpress.com/oakland-police-chief-made-false-statements-about-ice-raid-2-1/>

The following populations were identified in a study, as either newly emerging, or as populations that are underserved by language assistance services in Alameda County: Afghani Arab Eritrean Ethiopian Liberian Iraqi and other Middle Eastern Somali Filipino Pacific Islander Samoan Tongan Burmese, including Karen and Chin, Cambodian, Korean, Lao, Mien, Mongolian, Nepali, South Asian, Southeast Asian.

Immigrants also are disproportionately subjected to excess force by law enforcement, and may end up injured or killed, including when someone calls 911 regarding issues related to mental health or homelessness. I have taken action to help remedy this problem, bringing forward the proposal to Council,

fighting to get it passed, obtaining funding in the City budget, and winning millions of dollars from the State of California, to launch trained, civilian community crisis responders, to have another option, to respond to 911 calls, in a way that will help protect vulnerable communities, respond more effectively, save money, and let police focus their time on stopping guns and violent crime. <https://abc7news.com/macro-oakland-civilian-crisis-response-team-mental-health-police-dept/10430680/>

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

Many of the issues related to the AAPI community, which I have engaged with this year, include those that I had learned about previously, including responding to anti-immigrant harassment targeted at Asians, speaking out against anti-AAPI hate, supporting local community safety ambassadors and helping fight for funding for AAPI community groups to provide better, and more community-based, safety responses, fighting for the assignment of culturally competent foot patrols, and more. One of the things that I have experienced increasing this year, as the American culture wars over COVID-19 protections has become more intense, and as White Supremacists have become more boldly associated with being opposed to taking protections against the spread of COVID, is that I have seen increasing overlap and growth of white supremacist harassment of AAPI people for wearing masks – as the anti-mask sentiment and the white supremacist sentiment have come together. And, as someone who myself wears masks regularly and has promoted mask use, and who has appreciated the high level of disease prevention mask wearing in many Asian communities, I have noticed white supremacist harassment and violence being directed against those wearing masks, and disproportionately, against AAPI people. This also includes AAPI health care staff being harassed. It has made me more determined to speak out publicly on these issues too and defend those being harassed.

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

It is important to take action and support AAPI community needs in the case of particular issues – and also to be willing to go deeper than that. Being a more active ally requires being willing to be supportive not only when it is easy, but also when it is hard. It requires being willing to listen and learn and grow and being willing to step up for AAPI community needs even when there is pressure not to. But also, it means being willing to never say I'm finished becoming an ally – it means recognizing that is a process that never ends and being willing to recognize and hear new issues as they arise, and respond to community needs, and to recognize and support AAPI leadership, including in my own recruiting, hiring, promoting, endorsing, and nominating of leaders for additional positions.

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?

I would be honored to have the opportunity to serve as your County Supervisor and would be committed to working to ensure that the needs of the AAPI communities of Alameda County are respected and well-served. If I have the honor to be elected, I would love to include you in those I would work with to help ensure this is accomplished, including to help recommend and identify people for leadership positions which I would have the opportunity to appoint, as well as to work together on issues and budgets and policies. I would continue to work with community stakeholders extensively, including groups from the Chinatown Chamber of Commerce and Chinatown Improvement District, the Asian Pacific Environmental Network, APAPA, APALA, the Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce, the Asian Cultural Center, and more. I would continue to respect and honor, and would expand outreach for input from family associations, local business owners, congregations, community groups, and individual constituents to continue to uplift and serve the needs of our AAPI communities.

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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.

Hon. Rob Bonta  
Hon. Jane Kim  
Hon. Betty Yee  
Hon. Ash Kalra  
Hon. Wilma Chan  
Hon. Evan Low  
Hon. Ami Bera  
Hon. Sheng Thao  
Hon. Nikki Bas  
Hon. Jenny Wong  
Hon. Alex Lee

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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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