

2022 Primary Endorsement Questionnaire

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

Email *

choicezchu@aol.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 *

Kansen Chu

City and zip code of residence.

95132

What is your campaign website address?

www.kansenchu.com

What is your campaign email address?

choiczchu@aol.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?

37 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.

Chinese Historic Culture Project, Hello Angels Foundation, Milpitas Lions Club, Evergreen/East San Jose Rotary Club

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.

As a first-generation immigrant and an Asian-American, addressing anti-Asian discrimination, bullying, and harassment has always been extremely important to me. While I was a State Assemblymember from 2014-2020, I co-authored AB-2542, the California Racial Justice Act, which prohibited the state from seeking or obtaining a criminal conviction, or from imposing a sentence, based upon race, ethnicity, or national origin. Additionally, in 2016, I founded and chaired the Assembly Select Committee on Hate Crimes. This group held hearings featuring expert panels that examined the current state of hate speech and crimes in California to explore ways to more effectively address it. Then, this committee worked to pass legislation to actionably address increases in discriminatory harassment and bullying.

That same year, I worked with civil rights groups to change policies to help better report, respond, and prosecute hate crimes. Therefore, I have been working to address all forms of discrimination and harassment of Asian people even before the most recent rise in racism towards Asian people in 2021. As the APA Democratic Caucus of Alameda County has also noted, the pandemic has only further caused an increase in crimes against Asian Americans. Consequently, I will reinstate and strengthen the Committee on Hate Crimes to address violence against all minority groups, including the Asian community if reelected.

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?

People of Asian ancestry compose over 30% of Alameda County's population, and with under representation in government, this significant sector of the country's population may not see their individual needs met and issues addressed by the local government. As an Asian-American myself, this is deeply troubling.

To elevate the issues of concern of Alameda residents of Asian ancestry, I've taken it upon myself to learn directly from them. Through my own decades of serving AD-24, countless events that have allowed me to meet with Asian members of our community, and through my own experiences as a Taiwanese-American, I've been able to listen to the issues that matter most to Asian American county residents. I truly take it upon myself to educate myself about issues that are most pressing to this population so that I can represent them most effectively. I also frequently engage with new, recent sources, like the APA Democratic Caucus of Alameda County's Facebook and website.

Though I may be AAPI myself, I understand that I will never have the same experiences as AAPI women, so I actively work to better learn about the intersectional ways that AAPI people of all gender identities and sexual orientations experience discrimination. This allows me to better represent a population that is underrepresented.

Beyond myself, I will work to educate other Assembly representatives and ensure that other elected officials are working to serve the AAPI demographic effectively. Through my established Select Committee on Hate Crimes, the committee can work to make sure that the Assembly is taking the issues important to AAPI people into consideration.

Next, through my initiatives of strengthening education and economic opportunities for everyone in the district, I hope that this investment in our community will enable Asian and Pacific Americans to be able to represent themselves in the government and eliminate the issue of underrepresentation.

Finally, to elevate the voices of AAPI people, I will continue to host events that give important community organizers, activists, and people to share about issues important to them. Additionally, I plan to increase efforts to register all AAPI people to vote so that they can engage politically.

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?

When I represented AD-24 in the State Assembly from 2014 to 2020, I took numerous actions to meet the needs of immigrants in our community. As a first-generation Taiwanese immigrant, I want to ensure that everyone who comes to this country has the same opportunities as me, and so this issue is deeply important to me. During these terms as an Assembly representative, I voted to authorize Medi-Cal benefits, general health coverage and certain tax breaks for undocumented families, immigrants, and children to address healthcare and economic challenges. Moreover, I voted to establish a statewide sanctuary policy and to prohibit landlords from disclosing the immigration status of their tenants.

I still see constant work to be done to meet the ever-changing needs of immigrants, and I will work to do even more in future terms through improving education and economic opportunities.

Improving economic opportunities for immigrants starts with education. To this end, my main priority is to reduce barriers to higher education. I have supported free community college for all and will continue to work toward making higher education affordable for everyone. I also support partnering with the private sector to provide career-oriented technical education, particularly to underserved communities. I came to the United States for graduate school, with a suitcase full of books and not much else. If elected to the State Assembly, I plan to break down the barriers that I had to overcome to be where I am today.

Furthermore, I plan to expand programs that support small businesses, especially those owned by immigrants, including their recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. I also support building pipelines to recruit and train diverse employees, especially police officers, teachers, and medical professionals.

Lastly, I want to frequently engage with the immigrant community to hear what issues matter most to them through town halls, hearings, and different meetings with community members. I will respond to these requests and truly listen.

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

Though I've always worked to advocate for every smaller community within our district and the Asian American population, I've really grown to understand how the intersectionality of people's different identities can affect their specific needs, and how this should shape my legislation.

For example, this past year, I learned that 74 percent of AANHPI women report having experienced racism and/or discrimination in the past year. As the founder of the Select Committee on Hate Crimes, and as someone who spent days marching to Stop Asian Hate and engaging with organizations fighting against Asian Hate, it was no surprise to me that Asian Americans were dealing with discrimination and harassment. However, I read a report that underscored how AAPI endure a disproportionate number of such incidents.

Russell Jeung, a co-founder of Stop AAPI Hate explained this as the intersectional harassment of being both Asian Americans or Pacific Islanders and women, which went beyond my own experiences with racism as an Asian man. Beyond this majority of Asian women reporting racist encounters, 38 percent also reported having experienced sexual harassment: this form of discrimination is uniquely gender-based in its sexist, sexual nature. These statistics made me even more aware that within hate crime action, we must also specifically advocate for women.

Though I've always voted and advocated for people of every identity group, I plan to further incorporate the specifics of intersectional identities into my legislation, and I plan to keep learning from community members within the Asian community whose identities differ from mine in areas other than race.

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

Being a true ally can extend far beyond supporting issues that are relevant to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. For example, many of the core issues of my platform are relevant to every population of AD-24. Through supporting education, safety, housing, mental health, and reduction of racism, I believe I can help AAPI community members, and so many others. However, to become a true ally to the Asian American and Pacific Islander population, I have to work much more deeply than supporting the same issues. Rather than just hearing of issues and passing policies as any politician could and should, I plan to truly learn from the population and engage with the AAPI community to fight for us even more effectively.

First I will fully educate myself with AAPI-written or -composed resources, and by engaging with community members in all settings. To be an ally, I can practice being a bystander and standing up against microaggressions and all forms of discrimination in my every day life; even beyond the office and my job as an elected official. An ally spreads awareness, advocates, engages in productive dialogue, and educates themselves and others; it extends beyond showing support for the causes alone. Rather than just supporting AAPI issues – which I will always do – being an ally means also deeply supporting AAPI people themselves, on the individual level and as a community.

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 plan to tap directly into the APA community, the research and learning of my fellow elected officials, community organizers and activists, focused organizations, and educational materials to better understand and meet the needs of Asian and Pacific Americans in AD-24.

First, I will engage directly with the community through hosting frequent town halls, meeting with as many voters as possible, and being constantly open to feedback and suggestions. Next, I will arrange one-on-one meetings and community events with leaders who are working to stop Asian hate, advocate for Asian and Pacific Americans in our community, and who represent different members of the diverse and ranging APA community. I want to meet with women, LBTQIA+, nonbinary, and other members of intersectional groups within the community. Even among Asian and Pacific Americans, there is a wide range of needs that must be met. Through these meetings, I can learn from people who have spent their lives doing important work and thorough research.

Additionally, by engaging directly with organizations like the national reporting center Stop AAPI Hate, The Asian American Foundation, or Alameda's APA Democratic Caucus I can learn from more experts and people who strive to advocate for the APA community,

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.

All API candidates who have run for state Assembly, senate, treasurer, controller, governor.

Thank you for completing our questionnaire.

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

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms