

2022 Primary Endorsement Questionnaire

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

Email *

oliviasanwong@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 *

Olivia Sanwong

City and zip code of residence.

Pleasanton 94566

What is your campaign website address?

www.oliviasanwong.com

What is your campaign email address?

vote4olivia@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?

Since 1980 - however I left for a few years to attend college, grad school, and also work outside the area (Bangkok and Boston)

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

East Bay Regional Park District Park Advisory Committee, Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce Foundation Board (non-profit arm of Chamber), Leadership Pleasanton Steering Committee, Museum on Main programs (based in Pleasanton), Go Green Initiative (also based in Pleasanton)

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.

I recently spoke about an incident I encountered while campaigning for public office - local press captured this here: <https://www.mercurynews.com/2022/01/04/facing-lawsuit-pleasanton-switch-to-district-council-elections/>

I also personally have thoughts about my father's experience at the Pleasanton Walmart where he was harassed twice about the "China virus" including two days before he died (late Sept 2020). However, it is not my personal experience and I have a tough time talking about this since he died. But know this is something I think about often.

I believe I am the first elected representative of Asian heritage to serve on the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Zone 7 when I was elected in 2018. I am now seeking re-election to my second term. I have also previously run for Pleasanton City Council in 2013 and 2014 where the only person of Asian heritage to serve on Pleasanton City Council was Floyd Mori who served in the 1970s. At the present moment I am the only person of Asian heritage who lives in Pleasanton and serves in elected office.

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 make an effort to be involved with all of the Asian advocacy organizations, including the APAPA internship program for high school students as well as Andy Li's Chinese New Year parade activities in SF. Both of these programs have been very valuable in terms of inspiring the next generation to get involved in local office as well as network with other elected officials.

I also recently partnered with Go Green Initiative to produce a documentary "Hometown Water" about water in Pleasanton. Many of the students were in high school or college and many are also of Asian heritage. Similar to the APAPA internship program, I believe this work helps inspire the next generation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-7jN605W2Q>

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?

I believe all residents, whether citizens or immigrants who are not citizens, should be able to participate in local elections for flood control and water as well as school board and possibly even city council. If there is enough mobilization to make this possible, count me in as a collaborator.

Until then, I believe all residents should be welcome to share their input and be involved. Advisory committees could be one option for non-citizens to be involved and the East Bay Regional Parks Advisory Committee is an example local example of this. Whereas the city commissions and committees typically require an oath of office and citizenship and likely prevent non-citizens from being able to participate.

For immigrants who are citizens, offering ballots in non-English languages and other translation services is important to supporting voter education. I believe California and Alameda County do a good job of making sure this is standardized and we need to continue to support this.

Please share other ideas with me about what I can do to help here. this is so important

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

How much we are dismissed for looking young and not looking like "leaders." I am 43 years old and still so many people in Pleasanton dismiss my comments for being the point of view of a young person and I don't understand. This happened to me ten years ago when I ran for Pleasanton City Council and still happens today. Everyone at every age has an important perspective and our government should be composed of a mix of age groups. I believe I have actually written about this experience before, so on one hand this is not new. At the same time, as I reach a solidly middle-aged age range and admittedly more gray hairs, I remain surprised about some of the comments I still continue to receive from my fellow Pleasanton leaders.

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

The main difference is an ally speaks up about issues and makes a point to call out when someone says something racist or acts in a discriminatory way. An ally makes an effort to call in to public meetings, write opinion letters for local publications, and works with local student groups to continue the conversation about important issues

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?

Sometimes persons of mixed heritage are not included in demographic statistics for "Asian American" since many of us select "multiracial/biracial" for the US Census and other forms that do not allow a multi-select option. I believe expanding the demographic statistics and including those of us with mixed heritage that includes Asian is really important to consider. Considering the Vice-President of the United States, a native of Alameda County, is one of us underscores the importance of this point.

I think this caucus is another important resource and I am open to your suggestions and recommendations. I do try to be involved when I can but can admit it is also challenging for me to make time for everything.

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.

Kamala Harris, Betty Yee, Fiona Ma, Shawn Kumagai, Phong La :)

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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