

Emeryville CC Priforce

*Submitted via email: 9/6/22 – Copied and pasted into Word and saved as PDF  
Phone number removed for privacy purposes*

Personal Information

Candidate Name\*

**Kalimah Priforce**

City and zip code of residence.

**Emeryville, California 94608**

What is your campaign website address?

<http://www.priforce.org>

What is your campaign email address?

[vote@priforce.com](mailto:vote@priforce.com)

What is the office that you are seeking?\*

**City of Emeryville, City Council**

Are you the incumbent?

Yes

**No**

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

Yes

No

Are you an APA Caucus member?

Yes

**No**

Why are you seeking the Caucus's endorsement?

Part of my platform is increased public safety and the Asian and Pacific Islander community has experienced an increase in direct and indirect violence due to prejudices that target them specifically. I know what it is to be unsafe and walk my own neighborhood streets feeling that, at any moment, my life could be in jeopardy. I want to assure the Asian and Pacific Islander community that my involvement on the public safety committee (should I be elected) will be to listen to their individual and collective voice, analyze the data, and make the most empathetic decisions towards addressing these issues.

List ONLY the top 5 endorsements that you have received. (Please reference your website if you want to alert us to more).

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For fairness purposes, I will announce my endorsements privately on September 15th (to those who have endorsed me) and publicly on September 30th.

If we endorse you, will you use our name in your campaign materials?

**Yes**

No

Maybe

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

I've lived in Emeryville for twelve years.

**Educational background:** What schools have you attended, date graduated, major and degree(s) earned.

I believe in fairness and I don't think I should be endorsed over another person because I went to a prestigious school or worked for a recognized company. My academic and professional background are available on LinkedIn and there's a link on [www.priforce.org](http://www.priforce.org). I am aware that not everyone is internet friendly or may have trouble accessing a computer, but I hope that the APA community will provide ways to help everyone who isn't. Also anyone can call me personally at [withheld]<sup>i</sup> and will speak to them and answer their questions. These questions don't feel right.

**Employment:** List the last three (3) paid positions, indicating name of employer, job title, and length of employment.

For democratic appropriateness, I can not answer this question in this way. My academic and professional background are available on LinkedIn and there's a link to it on [www.priforce.org](http://www.priforce.org). I am aware that not everyone is internet friendly or may have trouble accessing a computer, but I hope that the APA community will provide ways to help those people. Or if they would like, they can call me personally at [withheld].

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

I work in the philanthropy field so I help decide which among hundreds of non-profit organizations to fund and support, so I interact and review many of them. I also helped to start a non-profit called The Hidden Genius Project which teaches African Americans boys in Oakland and several other cities about computer science. THGP just received 3 million from Google and every time we purchase products from the Best Buy in Emeryville, there is an option to donate to them.

**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/or as an individual.**

As a Tech CEO, I sought to bring in diverse groups to mentor and work alongside mostly youth of color throughout the East Bay. One of the groups, Asians for Black Lives, were a group of technologists working for big tech firms who were inspired by the George Floyd tragedy to reach out of their comfort zone and volunteer with our youth to help them build web and mobile apps. As the Covid pandemic led to anti-Asian discrimination/bullying/harassment and violence, my wife and I volunteered with the Asian Pacific Environmental Network in Oakland's Chinatown to clean up non-mural graffiti that had

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accumulated over the years. As an interracial couple, we wanted to show our solidarity towards Black and Asian unity and to support making Chinatown safer. In addition to our work, I also asked the same kids who were mentored by Asians for Black Lives to join APEN and help with Oakland Chinatown and they did.

Most recently, my daughter was the victim to bullying wherein she was targeted and rocks thrown at her. While her friends claimed it was because she was a high school Freshman, she couldn't help but feel isolated and that the attacks were racially motivated as a minority Asian student. As her 6'4" big Black dad, I patrolled the areas around her school and spoke to parking garage owners who allowed their facilities to be accessed carelessly to be used to attack children with rocks from their rooftops. I worked with the Vice-President of her school to identify the students and my daughter felt safer through my efforts. It's what fathers are for, but not everyone has an impulsive father to defend them from hate. What I did for my kid, I want to do for Emeryville's youth and elders, defend them from harassment that preys on the most vulnerable of Asian and Pacific Islander residents.

2. One out of every 3 Alameda County residents is of Asian ancestry but are underrepresented in elected office and make-up 28% of all eligible voters in the County overall. Do you believe the legislative body you are seeking to represent has adequately served Asian and Pacific Americans? Why or why not?

Representation matters and I believe more can be done to prepare and endorse Asian and Pacific Islanders to enter public service and become elected officials. I don't believe in majority or minority rule. I think the strength of the candidate is in their ability to not just be good politicians but to be great social leaders and every candidate, Asian or not, must be a great social leader whose public service doesn't begin or end when they are running for office.

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 would like to see reforms in the BMR (Below Market Rate) program that increases its accessibility, particularly to immigrants. As a child of immigrants, we wouldn't have been able to survive if it were programs that supported new Americans.

4. Please identify the three largest APA ethnicities in your district.

Chinese is the largest Asian and Pacific Islander ethnicity, followed by Korean, and Indian. The fourth largest would be Filipino.

5. Please identify the most at-risk APA community in your district and explain why.

At-risk is a loaded term and in my work across the non-profit and philanthropic field, at-risk is highly discouraged in use because it becomes a catch-all phrase that doesn't frame the risk and why the risk exists. We prefer "low opportunity" because it focuses the deficit-oriented language around the system and not those vulnerable to it. From teen pregnancy, to drug addiction, to the unhoused, I'd rather refocus this question as to what facilitates "low opportunity" among Asian and Pacific Islander communities in Emeryville. For the many I have come across, the state of Emeryville's economy is their greatest concern.

6. What have you learned about Asian Americans in the past 2 years that you were previously unaware of and how has that impacted you?

I had a formal Buddhist education growing up in Brooklyn. It was mostly conducted by a diverse group of Asians, from India, Tibet, Japan, China, and Taiwan, and they were all monastic (monks and nuns). As a student I learned about B.R. Ambedkar, and before I became obsessed with Albert Einstein, Madame Marie Curie and George Washington Carver, Ambedkar was my superhero. His historic movement to lift the conditions of the Dalit people while helping to architect a new independent India fascinated me and should I become an elected official, I would credit him, the most, as my inspiration. So it was difficult to learn and experience caste discrimination from Dalit friends of mine. I couldn't imagine that even broaching the topic would be considered taboo among American technology companies. Learning about this has shaped how I view the continuing legacy of AMbedkar.

**7. How do you think microaggressions and verbal harassment against Asians and other marginalized community members can be better addressed and what will you commit to doing? If you have intervened in the past, please describe what you did.**

As the head of my local tenant board association, managing the concerns of over a hundred residents over Nextdoor or through live in-person gatherings involves an established norm of respect and congeniality. Without that, the discussion can fall apart and deter newcomers from joining in the dialogue. Very quickly issues can become class warfare or racialized and at those times I've interfered when residents attack one another, and some of those attacks are targeted at Asians. In those moments, I remind residents of their commitment towards creating a safe and healthy living environment for everyone. I exercise my convening power and as city councilmember there is a convening power that comes with the role and I plan to utilize it to improve the lives of everyone. Establish the ground rules. Enforce a decorum or respect. Help everyone find common ground. That is how I approach my interactions.

**8. 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 am concerned about anti-Black, anti-Asian violence and consult with the organizations I mentioned above and my vast network of friends to help me form an equity committee specific to these issues during my campaign.

**9. Please list any Asian American candidates you have publicly endorsed.**

I can not reveal my endorsements until September 30th.