

2020 Endorsement Questionnaire South County

Email address *

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APA Democratic Caucus of Alameda County



PLEASE COMPLETE AND SUBMIT BY SEPT. 9, midnight. Please take time to review the questions before filling in the boxes since you cannot save the responses for later completion. 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 note: your questionnaire will be posted on our website for Caucus members and the public to review.

Personal Information

Candidate Name *

Aziz Akbari

City and zip code of residence.

Fremont, CA 94536

What is your campaign website address?

www.azizakbari.com

What is your campaign email address?

aziz4acwd@gmail.com

What is the office that you are seeking? *

- City of San Leandro City Council
- City of San Leandro School Board
- City of Hayward City Council
- City of Hayward, Unified School District Trustee
- City of Fremont, Mayor
- City of Fremont, City Council, Dist. 1
- City of Fremont, City Council, Dist. 5
- City of Fremont, City Council, Dist. 6
- City of Fremont, Unified School District, Dist. 1
- City of Fremont, Unified School District, Dist. 4
- City of Fremont, Unified School District, Dist. 5
- City of Union City, Mayor
- City of Union City, City Council
- New Haven School Trustee, Area 1
- New Haven School Trustee, Area 2
- New Haven School Trustee, Area 3
- City of Newark, Mayor
- City of Newark, City Council
- City of Newark, School Board
- City of Newark, School Board, Short term
- Eden Healthcare District
- Washington Hospital Healthcare District
- Oro Loma Sanitary District

Other: _____

Alameda County Water District

AD 20, State Assembly Representative

AD 25, State Assembly Representative

Ohlone Community College, Area 2

Other: _____

Are you the incumbent?

Yes

No

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

Yes

No

How long have you been a registered Democrat? If less than 5 years, please explain your reason for becoming a Democrat.

I have been a Democrat since 2016. Prior to that I was NPP but voted Democratic since I turned 18 (in 2012) and cast my first ballot.

Are you an APA Caucus member?

Yes

No

Why are you seeking the Caucus's endorsement?

Water is unique, especially in the political sphere, in its universality. It doesn't matter who you are or where you come from - everyone needs water. To that end, I take it as my responsibility to fight for clean and affordable water for all. I have been a strong consumer advocate by fighting for the expansion of our low-income rate assistance program, and have pushed the District's environmental sustainability programs to protect our Alameda Creek. My values and goals align with those of my community and the Democratic Party. Furthermore, I am South Asian, and have been active in my community through voter engagement and political education events for many years. Given my background, experience, and goals, I feel uniquely qualified to continue my service on the ACWD's Board of Directors. I would be humbled to receive the endorsement of the Asian Pacific American Democratic Caucus.

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

Congressman Ro Khanna, CA Treasurer Fiona Ma, Alameda County Assessor Phong La, Fremont Councilmember Raj Salwan, Ohlone College Trustee Sue Chan. Full list available at azizakbari.com/endorsements.

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

Yes

No

Maybe

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

My District serves Fremont, Newark, and Union City. I have lived in Fremont since 2000, though I did have some time away between 2011 - 2016 when I was in college at the University of Southern California. I have always been registered to vote in Fremont since I turned 18 in 2012.

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

Parkmont Elementary School, Fremont, CA (2000-2005)

Centerville Junior High School, Fremont, CA (2005-2007)

Washington High School, Fremont, CA (2007-2011)

University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA (2011-2015) - Bachelors of Science in Industrial and Systems Engineering

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

NeuVector, Inc. - Account Executive from 2020 - present

Rundeck, Inc. - Account Manager, International Business Development from 2017 - 2020

Principal Development Group - Business Analyst from 2015 - 2016

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

Ansar Service Partnership, Niles Rotary, Daily Bowl, Muslim Democrats and Friends

CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

1. What differentiates you from your opponents for the elected office that you are seeking?

I am the youngest candidate by a couple of decades, the only candidate who has a background in cybersecurity and data sciences, and am only one of 2 candidates endorsed by the Sierra Club. My vision for the District, focused on affordability, environmental stewardship, and major infrastructure investments, coupled with my experience in public service make me the most qualified and unique candidate in the race.

2. Describe one issue for the district you want to represent for which you have provided leadership and about which you are passionate.

I have been a champion of ACWD's low-income rate assistance program, better known as Help On Tap, and have supported every proposal to expand eligibility for the program and increase the bill credit. I believe that no one should have to choose between paying their water bill and putting food on the table. I am currently leading the push to expand the program further, and also include non-profit organizations in our District that are providing food and shelter to the local community.

3. What percentage of the district you [or intend to] represent are of APA heritage?

~52.63% (across Fremont, Newark, and Union City)

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

Chinese, Asian Indian, and Filipino

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

The APA community is by no means a monolith - there is profound heterogeneity within the larger APA community in Alameda County. The struggles our Hmong-American neighbors are of particular concern. Due to the impacts of the high cost of living, inaccessibility of healthcare, lower than average median income, and underrepresentation in the healthcare field, Hmong residents of Alameda County are facing health and economic disparities to a troublesome degree. While I do not have control over healthcare accessibility as a member of the ACWD Board of Directors, I will fight for the continued expansion of the Help on Top program, which has served as an important lifeline in our community. I want to ensure that everyone in our community has access to clean, affordable water on a daily basis.

6. List the three top concerns of members of the APAs in your district.

From my conversations with community members, I believe the most pressing concerns for APA community members are the rising cost of living, the lack of economic mobility, and the cost of higher education. To address these concerns, I was the sole vote against our 2017 rate increase and have pushed for the expansion of the Help on Tap program. We need to make it easier for working class and middle class residents of our County to afford living in our community.

7. During the COVID-19 pandemic, reports of anti-Asian verbal and physical attacks have arisen. If you are the incumbent, how have you addressed this? If you are a candidate how will you address this?

As a Muslim-American, I have dealt with the pains of verbal and physical abuse because of my heritage, religion, and background. I have been called a terrorist more times than I wish to admit, and was spit on twice during my last campaign. I have, and will continue to, speak up when there are issues of prejudice in our community. As the co-founder and Vice President of Muslim Democrats and Friends, our group has worked to address bias through our community gatherings and social media, and has addressed issues related to anti-Asian racism, Islamophobia, Black Lives Matter, and many more.

8. Do you believe that Asian and Pacific Americans are adequately represented in local government? What can elected officials do to improve participation?

I am proud to serve on one of the few majority-minority Boards in the water industry. In fact, our board is 3/5 Asian-American! This situation, however, is unique to our District. Asian-Americans don't often consider water policy when pursuing local office, and I believe that this MUST change so that our community's concerns can be reflected in the decisions made by the Board. In my capacity, I have encouraged other Asian-Americans across California to consider running in their local Water District races. I have also pushed ACWD to improve communication with minority communities, primarily through translations of our materials to major languages spoken in the District like Punjabi, Mandarin, Tagalog, Hindi, and many more.

9. Please identify all Asian Pacific American candidates whom you have personally endorsed over the past 5 years including this election cycle. If there are none, please explain.

I will list all who I can recall: Ro Khanna, Fiona Ma, Phong La, Kansen Chu, Raj Salwan, Yogi Chugh, Teresa Keng, Anu Natarajan, Ali Sajjad Taj, Alex Lee, Lucy Shen, Sharan Kaur, Gary Singh, among many more!

10. If you were faced with a situation that involved an Asian Pacific American community, would you seek consultation with our Caucus as a resource?

Yes

No

Thank you for completing our questionnaire.

Please submit your responses by Sept. 9, 2020 midnight. Our South County Endorsement Meeting is scheduled for Sat., Sept. 20 from 1 to 3 pm on Zoom. Only those candidates submitting the questionnaire on time will be on our endorsement ballot. No changes to your responses can be made after it is submitted.

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