

2020 Endorsement Questionnaire

Email address *

benny4berkeley@gmail.com

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 *

Ben Bartlett

City and zip code of residence.

Berkeley, 94705

What is your campaign website address?

www.benny.vote

What is your campaign email address?

benny4berkeley@gmail.com

What is the office that you are seeking? *

- Alameda City Council
- Alameda School Board
- Berkeley, Mayor
- Berkeley, City Council, Dist. 2
- Berkeley, City Council, Dist. 3
- Berkeley, City Council, Dist. 5
- Berkeley, City Council, Dist. 6
- Berkeley, Unified School District Trustee
- Berkeley, Rent Stabilization Board
- Oakland, City Council, Dist. 1
- Oakland, City Council, Dist. 3
- Oakland, City Council, Dist. 5
- Oakland, City Council, Dist. 7
- Oakland, City Council, At-large
- Oakland City Attorney
- Oakland USD, School Trustee, Dist. 1
- Oakland USD, School Trustee, Dist. 3
- Oakland USD, School Trustee, Dist. 5
- Oakland USD, School Trustee, Dist. 7
- AC Transit, Bd. of Directors, Ward 1
- AC Transit, Bd. of Directors, Ward 2
- AC Transit Bd. of Directors, At-Large
- EB Regional Park Dist. Bd. of Directors. Ward 1

Regional Council, Bd. of Directors, Area 1

AD 15, State Assembly Representative

AD 18, State Assembly Representative

Peralta Community College District, Bd. of Director, 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 am a lifelong member of the Democratic Party. I have been a registered Democrat since I was 18. I am a Democrat because I believe that healthcare is a human right, housing is a human right, racial and gender equity is a priority, and economic justice is important for the people.

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Are you an APA Caucus member?

Yes

No

Why are you seeking the Caucus's endorsement?

I am both passionate about ensuring equitable participation in the Democratic Party and also invested in building coalitions across identity groups, including Asian Pacific Americans who are often underrepresented in government.

The Caucus's endorsement means a lot to me because I strongly believe in the importance of uniting communities together and uplifting one another to collectively shape the politics and policies of tomorrow. As the incumbent Councilmember for District 3, I've mentored dozens of APA high school and college students and provided them with the platform to influence city policy. One of my goals in this work is to build community and strengthen coalitions by providing opportunities for APA individuals and people of color to learn about and engage in local government, democratic decision-making, and advocacy. It is important for me to engage with and build relationships with the APA community to meet the needs of this constituency.

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

1. Sierra Club
 2. State Controller Betty Yee
 3. State Treasurer Fiona Ma
 4. Berkeley Firefighters
 5. East Bay Young Democrats
- <http://benny.vote/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?

On & off for my entire life, consistently for the last decade.
I am a 5th generation Berkeley native.

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

BA. in Government and Classics Colby College 1995 & J.D. at UC Hastings, College of the Law 2014

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

Attorney/ Owner: Bartlett Law Tackett Bartlett LLP
Director: California Clean Energy Fund
Director: Briabe Mobile Media

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

South Berkeley Senior Center Volunteer; Writer Coach Connection Literacy Volunteer; San Quentin Arts Education Volunteer; Berkeley Food & Housing Project Fundraising Committee; Earth Rights Institute Boardmember; Friends of Adeline Member; New Libraries Now, Member, Black Elected Officials of the East Bay; Vice President, NAACP Berkeley Chapter; Boardmember, Homes 4 The Homeless

CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

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

Not only am I a fifth-generation Berkeley resident and respected community leader in our City, but also I am an incumbent City Councilmember for District 3 who represents South Berkeley values. Since being elected to the Council in 2016, I have demonstrated innovative, untiring, and experienced leadership in achieving progress towards affordable housing, re-imagining public safety, and ensuring economic and health opportunities for all, including marginalized groups and communities most in need. What distinguishes me as the best candidate for this office is my proven track record in advancing a progressive agenda.

During the last four years, I've successfully written and passed 100 key measures. City legislation generally takes around three-and-a-half years to reach the implementation phase. So my second term will be devoted to implementing these progressive measures. As an incumbent and South Berkeley resident, I have the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to streamline future legislation and constituent concerns and ensure that the work I have done with the community comes to fruition. As an attorney, I also have years of experience reading existing laws and navigating legal challenges. This gives me a distinct edge in drafting policies that will shape our community and help South Berkeley evolve. I know what legislative advancements need to be prioritized because I have already built strong relationships with our constituents to address the most pressing issues in the South Berkeley community.

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

One of my top priorities is ushering in a wave of affordable housing. Skyrocketing property values and housing demand have brought forth record-breaking rents and displacement rates, altering East Bay's economic and cultural landscapes as we know it. There is also a lack of expansion of housing and transportation infrastructure to meet cities' demands with job growth and a high population. Our state has seen a trifecta of population explosion, severe underproduction, and racist housing policies, and the way to fix it is by radically addressing all three. To solve this crisis, my housing plan calls for the 3 P's—Production, Preservation, and Protection—which addresses how to fund the production of more affordable housing, preserve existing structures and housing units, and strengthen protections for tenants.

During the last four years, I've successfully [co]authored key affordable housing measures. My office wrote the \$300,000+ grant that allowed Resources for Community Development to create plans that allowed them to secure \$40 million in affordable housing for South Berkeley. I've also proposed the Open Doors Initiative, which aims to increase the feasibility of homeownership for first-time homeowners by transforming existing large housing structures into affordable housing units. To address homelessness, my office designed Step-Up Housing, which significantly reduces the cost of housing the homeless by stacking prefabricated units 6 floors and having a service provider and medical facility on the first floor. In my second term, I will focus on the implementation phases of these initiatives.

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

Berkeley is about 20%. My district is about 10%.

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

According to the 2010 Census, in Berkeley, Chinese, Asian Indian, and Korean make up the three largest API ethnicities. In my District, I believe the largest populations are: Chinese, Filipino, and Korean.

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

The most at-risk API community members in Berkeley are often aging elders and struggling families living in low-income housing and on subsidies. My district has the largest tenant populations in Berkeley. Housing and financial services for the most at risk APA community are often cut due to City budget difficulties and lack of accessible language services.

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

The top three concerns are COVID-19 health and safety, COVID-19-related racism, and housing. Most APA community members in the city are students, with 50% of UC Berkeley's student population consisting of APA individuals. While I don't have many undergraduate students in my district, there is a growing graduate student population in District 3. This community experiences a lot of the same housing problems as my other constituents. Housing prices are so high that many family members and students share rooms with one, if not two, other individuals. In the case of APAs, first-generation, second-language speakers, and new residents are most likely taken advantage of by landlords because they're less likely to know their tenant rights in Berkeley.

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?

I supported and voted in favor of a Council item that condemns the derogatory usage of the terms “Chinese Virus” and Wuhan Virus” as synonyms for the coronavirus. The legislation urges members of our community to refrain from using such hateful language. Additionally, it also condemns President Trump’s use of these phrases and his racist, xenophobic attacks on Asians.

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

Identifying younger APA leaders and encouraging them to get involved in Berkeley politics and local government, in general, is very important. In my Council District, all of my paid staff members are APA, and my office’s intern program consists of over 50% APA students. APA folks are often underrepresented in politics, and I believe that as a Black elected official, we need to lift all minorities so we can all succeed.

However, not all local governments have strong APA representation. To improve participation among governments that lack APA involvement, elected officials could create robust internship programs and effective community outreach programs that uplift those most underrepresented in politics. In my office, I have had the honor to work with over 20 different college and high school interns, most of which are APA. As a mentor, I collaborated with my interns to write real pieces of legislation to give them firsthand experience. When they hit roadblocks, I sat down with them to discuss thought processes to find potential solutions. I also extended opportunities to staff my meetings and introduced them to the constituent outreach responsibilities, expanding their network with community leaders and organizations. By building these meaningful connections, I’ve been able to sustain their interests in local government.

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.

Sheng Thao for Oakland City Council
Mai Vang for Sacramento City Council
Ces Rosales for Alameda Democratic Party Central Committee
James Chang for Berkeley Rent Board
Mike Honda for Congress
Betty Yee for Controller
Rob Bonta for Assembly

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 North County Endorsement Meeting is scheduled for Thu., Sept. 24 beginning at 6:30 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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