

2020 Endorsement Questionnaire

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 *

Rob Bonta

City and zip code of residence.

Alameda, 94501

What is your campaign website address?

www.robbonta.com

What is your campaign email address?

info@robbonta.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 have been a registered Democrat for the entirety of my career in public service. I have never registered with another party.
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Are you an APA Caucus member?

Yes

No

Why are you seeking the Caucus's endorsement?

I would be honored to earn the endorsement of the APA Democratic Caucus of Alameda County. As a member and former Chair of the California Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus, the first Filipino-American ever elected to the California State Legislature, and the former Board President of the APA Democratic Caucus of Alameda County, I have represented and advocated for the interests of our diverse APA communities in Alameda County and throughout California. I have fought to increase APA participation and representation in all levels of government, including statewide appointments and statewide elected offices, as well as in state legislative and local seats, judgeships, commissions, etc. I have voted on legislation that ensures the APA community has equal access to education, social services, health, mental health, and other government programs and services. I have authored laws that require the collection of disaggregated APA data, so that all of our APA communities are seen. I've supported language access policies and been a champion for our immigrant communities.

I'm running for State Assembly because I believe that every Californian should have a voice and a seat at the table and I'm the right candidate to represent those voices. I've been a proven leader since my election to the Assembly in 2012 and want to continue to use the experience, insight, and relationships I've gained, combined with my values of promoting inclusion, opportunity, equity and justice, to create the greatest positive impact for the 18th Assembly District and the state of California.

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

California Democratic Party
California Labor Federation
Sierra Club California
California Professional Firefighters
California Teachers Association

For a full list of my endorsers, please visit: <http://www.robbonta.com/supporters/>

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?

21+ years

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

Yale Law School, J.D., June 1998
Oxford University, Graduate studies, 1993-1994
Yale College, B.A., May 1993

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

California State Assembly, CA State Assemblymember, 2012-present
San Francisco City Attorney's Office, Deputy City Attorney, 2003-2012
Keker & Van Nest, LLP, Litigation Associate, 1999-2003

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

Below are community organizations including community service/professional organizations/labor unions of which I am a member of:

- One Nation Commission (opposing the proposed public charge rule; working closely with Asian Health Services)
- Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee (flipping state houses from red to blue nationwide), Executive Board Member & Board Secretary.
- CA Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus, Past Chair
- City of Alameda Democratic Club, Wellstone, Stonewall, and many other local democratic clubs
- Co-Chair, COVID-19 Racial Disparities Task Force
- Rodel Fellowship in Public Leadership
- SEIU 1021 Member (as a Mills College Adjunct Professor)
- Municipal Attorneys Association (public employees' union) (former)
- California State Bar^[SEP]

Below are community volunteer activities I've been involved with in the last 5 years:

- LitLab Early Child Education Book Drive
 - Holiday Community Food Servings
 - Guest Lecturer at Mills College
 - Book & Toy Drive
 - Co-Founder of CA Legislative Charity Soccer Match to benefit local non-profits
 - Co-Founder of Annual "Fighting on the Field for A Common Goal" Event w/ Labor, Elected and Employer Partners to benefit Cypress Mandela Training Center
 - CA Legislative Softball Charity Match
 - Classroom read alouds
 - Sorting food at the food bank
 - Sweat equity to build affordable housing
 - Community fund drives (i.e. expenses for a victim of gun violence, college visit for a high school senior who couldn't afford it, etc.)
 - Rebuilding/disaster relief efforts in response to Super typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda in the Philippines
 - Neighborhood clean-up in Oakland
 - Tree planting / beautification project
 - Gun Buy Back programs
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CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

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

I'm proud of the work I've been privileged to do as your representative for the last eight years. I have authored some of the most impactful, significant, and ground-breaking laws that have reflected our California values of Justice, Inclusion, Equity, and Opportunity. I've consistently stood up for the rights of disadvantaged and vulnerable communities, including immigrants, people of color, women, and the LGBT community. I've championed progressive values on a wide range of issues, including housing and homelessness, tenants' rights, climate change, workers' rights, immigrant protection, gun violence, human trafficking, early childhood education, criminal justice reform, and universal health care. And I believe I have been successful in delivering real, tangible support and relief in each of these areas through new laws, budget allocations, and local initiatives. These are a just a few of the many differences between me and my Republican opponent. I hope you will consider endorsing my candidacy.

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 leader in criminal justice reform to help fix a fundamentally broken criminal justice system and to address overarresting, overprosecution, overincarceration, and oversentencing of black and brown communities. I authored AB 32, the strongest-in-the-nation ban on for-profit private prisons and immigrant detention centers. In 2018, I led the effort, along with Senator Bob Hertzberg, for bail reform, to replace a fundamentally broken, unfair, unsafe, and unjust money-based system with a fairer, safer risk-based system that treats individuals as individuals. With the passage of SB 10, California was the first state in the nation to end the use of cash bail. I will continue to work hard to ensure that Proposition 25 passes on the ballot this November to keep SB 10 the law. I authored the bill to automate the expungement, reduction, and modification process for criminal records, bringing Californians closer to jobs, housing, and education. And I supported, and helped secure, numerous pardons for APA immigrants and refugees facing deportation who had rehabilitated and rebuilt their lives and were deeply committed to helping others.

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

I represent Assembly District 18, which includes the cities of Oakland, Alameda, and San Leandro. Oakland – 16.1% Alameda – 30.4% San Leandro – 32.1%

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

Oakland – Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino Alameda - Chinese, Filipino, Korean San Leandro – Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese

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

Currently, the entire APA community as a whole is under attack as hate crimes have spiked against APAs. These hate crimes have been fueled by Trump using racist terms like the “Chinese virus”, “Wuhan virus”, and “Kung flu” when referring to the COVID-19 virus. I address this further in my response to Question #7 below.

Specifically, Filipino Americans and Native Hawaiian Pacific Islanders are at high risk as they suffer significant disparate impacts when it comes to COVID-19. Filipino Americans and Native Hawaiian Pacific Islanders are contracting COVID-19 at higher rates as a result of overrepresentation as front line healthcare workers and other essential service workers. Many within these communities live in multi-generational housing, are immigrants with limited English proficiency, and/or are more likely to lack access to health insurance and social safety nets. This is another reason why it is critical to have disaggregated data in order to ensure the communities that need it most are getting the assistance they deserve to not only survive, but to thrive.

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

APAs in my district have a wide range of concerns including access to affordable and quality education and healthcare, access to affordable housing, protection of immigrants, language access, data disaggregation, support for our API-owned small businesses, criminal justice reform, recognition and prevention of hate crimes, increased API representation and civic engagement, and more. In 2019, I participated in the biennial statewide listening tour, hosted by the API Legislative Caucus, with over 300 APA community leaders and organizations in multiple cities, including in the 18th Assembly District. The top three most pressing issues reported were housing & homelessness, immigration, and health.

I have worked hard to expand access to affordable housing and combat homelessness. I was a lead author of AB 1482 which provided just cause and anti-rent gouging protections, the strongest tenant protections in the nation. And I have authored and supported measures to increase California’s housing supply and house our homeless neighbors.

I’ve been a champion for our immigrants, advocating for health care for ALL Californians regardless of immigration status, seeking the end of transfers of Californians from prison and jails into ICE custody, authoring the TRUTH and VISION Acts, and passing the strongest-in-the-nation law banning for-profit, private immigration detention centers in California.

I believe that healthcare is a right not a privilege; for all, not the few. And I have fought for true access to high quality, affordable health care for all. I have protected Californians from unfair Surprise Medical Bills with the passage of my AB 72.

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 the policy subcommittee chair of the California Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus, I along with my caucus colleagues pushed a number of measures to combat anti-Asian hate in the wake of COVID-19 as well as to support Asian and Pacific Islander communities during the pandemic. We also prioritized a budget proposal of \$1.4 million in one-time funding for research, advocacy, and education on the impacts of COVID-19 on California's API communities.

The \$1.4 million budget request would have gone towards expanding and deepening work already begun by organizations involved in the Stop AAPI Hate reporting center and the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. Specifically, the funding would have allowed these groups to analyze hate crimes and hate incidents in California, the economic impact of COVID-19 on API small business, and the health and mental health of API communities in California. They would also be tasked with recommending policy proposals and creating an education campaign on anti-Asian sentiment.

I also signed on to a letter to Governor Newsom asking for his partnership to publicly denounce these discriminatory acts and to partner with California state agencies to address heightened xenophobia during this public health emergency.

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

No, but I believe the momentum is moving in the right direction and can build with intentional support and action. According to the US Census Bureau, Asian Americans are now the largest racial group in Alameda County. However, our publicly-elected officials in local government do not yet reflect that statistic. We must continue to build the pipeline and intentionally mentor and support other APA candidates (something I have consistently done as detailed in my response to question #9). APA elected officials who have broken through and knocked down doors cannot simply walk through those doors, but must reach back and pull other APAs through with them. And we must continue to support programs that train and prepare APAs for elected office, such as the Asian Pacific American Leadership Project, of which I am an alumnus and a long-time supporter.

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 have supported many Asian Pacific American candidates for office and have also walked and phonebanked for them, promoted them through my platforms, and provided them collectively with thousands of dollars of financial support. The list includes, but is not limited to:

Malia Vella, Alameda City Council
Wilma Chan, Alameda County Board of Supervisors
Sheng Thao, Oakland City Council
Nikki Fortunato Bas, Oakland City Council
Aimee Eng, Oakland Unified School District
James Chang, Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board Commissioner
Fiona Ma, State Treasurer
Betty Yee, State Controller
David Chiu, Assembly
Todd Gloria, Assembly & Mayor of San Diego
Mae Cendaña Torlakson, Assembly
Alex Lee, Assembly
Thu Ha Nguyen, Assembly
David Min, State Senate
Kamala Harris, US Senate and President
Al Muratsuchi, Assembly
Das Williams, Supervisor
Dr. Richard Pan, State Senate
Mai Van, Sacramento City Council
Bobby Roy, Elk Grove School Board
Suely Saro, Long Beach City Council
Dee Rosario, East Regional Park District Board
Juslyn Munalo, Daly City Council
Verna Castro, Alameda School Board
Nicky Gonzalez-Yuen, Peralta Community College Board
Marjan Philhour, SF Supervisor
Anthony Phan, Milpitas City Council
Raj Salwan, Fremont City Council Re-Election
Anna Song, Assembly
Kansen Chu, Supervisor
Pat Gacoscos, New Haven Unified School Board
Ces Rosales
Sarabjit Cheema, New Haven Unified School District
Linda Canlas, New Haven School Board
Rod Daus-Magbual, City Council for Daly City
Cindi Reiss, Peralta Community College Board
Gabe Quinto, El Cerrito City Council
Dianne Martinez, Emeryville City Council
Shawn Kumagai, Dublin City Council
Sue Chan, Ohlone Community College Board

Phong La, Alameda County Assessor
Mark Bartlett, Chula Vista City Council
TJ Tejinder Dhami, Fremont School Board
Jenny Bach, CDP Secretary

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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