

# 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 \*

Elizabeth Echols

City and zip code of residence.

Berkeley 94708

What is your campaign website address?

[www.elizabeth4parks.org](http://www.elizabeth4parks.org)

What is your campaign email address?

[elizabeth4parks@gmail.com](mailto:elizabeth4parks@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, East Bay Regional Park District, Ward 1
- AD 15, State Assembly Representative
- AD 18, State Assembly Representative
- Peralta Community College District, Bd. of Director, Area 2
- Other: Director, East Bay Regional Park District, Ward 1

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.

Over 40 years

Are you an APA Caucus member?

Yes

No

Why are you seeking the Caucus's endorsement?

I have a lot of admiration for the work of the APA Caucus. As a longtime member of the APA Caucus, I would be honored to have your endorsement.

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

State Controller Betty Yee

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond

State Senator Nancy Skinner

Assemblymember Rob Bonta

Alameda County Assessor Phong La

Please see [www.elizabeth4parks.org](http://www.elizabeth4parks.org) for more

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?

Over 30 years

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

Yale University, BA in Economics and Political Science; Stanford Law School, JD

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

Director, Public Advocates Office, State of California (2016 - present)  
Regional Administrator, U.S. Small Business Administration (2010-2013)  
Director, U.S. Green Building Council, Northern California (2009-2010)

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

Board Member, East Bay Regional Park District, Ward 1 (2020-present)  
Commissioner and Former Chair, City of Berkeley Children, Youth and Recreation Commission (2016-present)  
California Democratic Party Delegate (2005-present)  
Elected Member, Alameda County Democratic Central Committee (2006-present)  
Board Member, Berkeley Democratic Club (2015-present)  
Board Member, Alameda County Democratic Lawyers (2004-2013; 2015-present)  
Volunteer, Cragmont Elementary (volunteered weekly assisting kindergartners learning to read)  
Sylvia Mendez Elementary School (volunteered in classroom and chaperoned 10 field trips for TK students)

CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

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

In January, the Board of Directors of the East Bay Regional Park District voted unanimously to appoint me to fill the vacancy left by Director Dotson's retirement. As a Board Member, I have worked tirelessly to expand parkland and open space, increase access to trails, preserve wildlife habitat, protect shoreline, prevent wildfires, expand environmental education, increase access for underserved communities to our parks, and ensure a safe, just and equitable workplace for our employees.

What sets me apart as a candidate is my commitment to addressing social justice and racial equity issues. I am focused on increasing access to parks and recreational opportunities for underserved communities, especially underserved youth. As a Board Director, I also am proud to have successfully championed the need to take specific steps to address systemic racism and other bias that prevents people of color and LGBTQ employees from reaching their full potential.

I am honored to be endorsed unanimously by my colleagues on the East Bay Regional Park District Board and have the strong support of our labor union, AFSCME 2428. My strong social justice and environmental values is why so many prominent community, labor, and elected leaders have come together in support of my campaign. I am proud to have the support of State Superintendent for Public Instruction Tony Thurmond, State Controller Betty Yee, State Senator Nancy Skinner, Assemblymember Rob Bonta, Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, Alameda County Assessor Phong La, BART Board President Lateefah Simon, and many other respected leaders. I also am proud to have the support of both the Alameda Labor Council and the Contra Costa Labor Council, as well as the Democratic Party of Contra Costa County.

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

I am passionate about increasing access to parks and recreational opportunities for underserved youth. I am currently working to address this issue by:

- Providing additional scholarships for camp and other recreational opportunities;
- Increasing free bus transportation provided by the Park District to make parks more accessible;
- Creating bridges over busy highways to allow safe pedestrian and bike access to parks; and
- Increasing summer and year round job opportunities for youth

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

Approximately 11.1% of Ward 1 of the East Bay Regional Park District are of APA heritage. The District stretches from Northern Alameda County through West Contra Costa County.

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

Chinese, Filipino, and South Asian

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

The Southeast Asian immigrant community, especially Laotian, Cambodian, and Hmong immigrants, are the most at-risk in terms of access to living wage jobs, healthcare, and affordable housing.

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

Affordable housing, rising racism and violence against APA community members, and quality public education

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 will continue to use my position as a platform to speak out against anti-Asian racism and all types of racism. As a Board Member, I also have championed the need to root out and address systemic racism and other bias that prevents people of color and LGBTQ+ employees from reaching their full potential. One of my highest priorities is for the Park District to recruit and retain an EBRPD workforce that reflects the full diversity of our community. In order to do so, the Park District must address implicit bias and the barriers that exist in recruitment, hiring, promotion, and retention to create a welcoming workplace for people of color and LGBTQ+ people.

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

Unfortunately, Asian and Pacific Americans are underrepresented in local government. Elected officials need to do more to mentor APA community members and encourage them to seek appointed and elected office.

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.

Vice Presidential Democratic Nominee Kamala Harris  
State Controller Betty Yee  
Alameda County Assessor Phong La  
Alameda County Superior Court Judge Margaret Fujioka  
Berkeley City Auditor Jenny Wong  
Berkeley Rent Board Member James Chang  
Alameda County Central Committee Member Ces Rosales

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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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