

2020 Endorsement Questionnaire

Email address *

normaha@pacbell.net

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 *

Norma J F Harrison

City and zip code of residence.

Berkeley, 94702

What is your campaign website address?

<https://www.berkeleyside.com/2014/10/22/berkeley-school-board-3-seats-contested-by-5-candidates>,
https://ballotpedia.org/Norma_J.F._Harrison, <https://votersedge.org/ca/en/ballot/election/42-55852a/address/null/zip/94708/contests/contest/13201/candidate/135338>

What is your campaign email address?

normah@pacbell.net

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: Berkeley School Director

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.

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Are you an APA Caucus member?

Yes

No

Why are you seeking the Caucus's endorsement?

to educate you all

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

neighbors and comrades

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?

40 years

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

Roosevelt University, Chicago, Il., 1963

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

self, Realtor, 36years

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

Peace and Freedom Party, Communist Party, Democratic Socialists of America, Strike Debt, Gray Panthers, Berkeley Citizens Action

CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

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

Norma Harrison

School Board Questionnaire response

A comrade to whom I sent my statement below, responded, - and I responded to their response, here. I submit these 2 e exchanges in order of their occurrence as e mails between us. Norma

Obviously.

This writing is not meant to be so much of an apologia as is needed – as your comments indicate. I do suggest it slightly in my statement.

I instead try ardently to promote people moving their thinking to how else to do it.

Because there is no choice we submit to the horrors we experienced at school, the horror of having to send our children to it. I try to avoid restating them, here. They're really painful to recall.

The points I will make stand out are 1, that there is no acceptable social place to look at what people go through – no place to identify and challenge among some comrades how bad those early life experiences, and how bad it is having now to recreate them for succeeding captive generations.

I want to offer that space.

...and 2, to find a way to see ourselves living altogether differently. You've heard the 'it's easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism'. You see, even Cuba, for all its deep challenges to the rulers' systems, uses traditional methods, with many additional, relieving activities. I assume they teach the '1 hand grenade + 1 hand grenade = 2 hand grenades to repel the imperium when it invades' doctrine at many places in their curricula. But the lining up to go in, the separately graded – by age – classrooms, – the segregated studies: – geography from history from science from art from gym from recess - those are deeply alienating, painful ways to be together. I worry those could contribute to a sort of falling apart of THE revolution....

THANK you so much for your repeated input.

What I'd REEEally like is that you go attend the BCA meeting next Sunday and say just what you've said here after I've said what I will – give me the opportunity to acknowledge that yes, so far there's no choice.

And of course I'd DEEPLY love to get ACP&FP's endorsement this time.

You say you can't support endorsing my campaign – because I'm not arguing for schooling to be corrected. Similarly, I'm not arguing for capitalism to be corrected. School – capitalism – they're of a piece. And if we'd have a socialist revolution tomorrow, we like our revolutionary allies throughout the world would still be utilizing the present social forms – just with a better discussion, better rulership –

Think Venezuela – with Hugo... It needed electeds' support to move in the communist direction...

Norma

From: Mar Sent: Sunday, August 16, 2020 2:41 PM

Hi Norma,

Thank you for sending this complete explanation of what your campaign is about.

I find that I agree with a lot of it. I also have a problem with the approach.

I agree that we need to talk about real education in the context of fighting for a society in which that can take place. But we also need to recognize that we do not have that system now. So we still need schools of some sort. And there are a lot of teachers and families that are trying to make the schools places in which humans can thrive as well as they can, and also get prepared to be revolutionaries.

As long as your remarks remain the way they are, I cannot support your candidacy for School Board.

Mar.....

To comrades

I am again, a candidate on the November ballot for the Berkeley school board. My intention is to use this office to let come before us, the contradiction that U.S. institutions, like those throughout the world, are retaining and advancing efforts to continue subjugation of populations, de facto enslavement.

The U.S. imperium takes control, too of what's on Earth that nations of people are living on. These products gleaned and produced by people, have unfortunately been termed resources, meant to serve hu/man's profiteering, as well as adding to advancement of societies.

School is one of those controlling institutions.

I began my studies to qualify to do school teaching in 1959. I became licensed, having completed 4 years of college study, in 1963. Until 20 years ago I held various positions teaching and conducting student activities. At one, the War on Poverty Community Action Program/Total Action Against Poverty, in Roanoke, Va., where I was the Education Director of a program to direct the local students and their families to use public school better, I kept having to promote the traditional tactic that people are to utilize school in order to achieve goals that were supposed to be satisfactory to themselves and their communities.

People – students and parents and teachers were never able to attain structures that felt good; thus the constant insistence on 'reform'. Reform has not yet, in 150 years of it, provided satisfactory schooling. Various understandings including intensive and constant research and experience suddenly enlightened me; I was overcome with the recognition that it is school itself that is the problem. The institution requires the overall eradication of the person who attends and of their family. Both are obligated to become an 'other' in order to fit the requirements school has in order to meet the design, the demands of this social system, to provide submission to a de facto slavery system that provides profit, wealth, and power to the few people who own it. (see Casey Gerald, on having to leave pieces of oneself) (see George Carlin)

That's what the wars and school tests have always been for.

NO WAY can a teacher teach to each child – to each child's willingness nor to their ability nor to their interest – all of which change – or stay the same – over time; from day to day, hour to hour, or not at all – depending... Not if they have 20 children or 5, or even just the one or two.

Children are not asked. They are put through "free, compulsory education", a 13yr old explained. This 'education' needs also deny that students' other learning, customs, experiences – are not education. It insists that school is the source of learning, of education. Education is made into a package we're forced to buy into.

Commodification is the rule in capitalism. Form people into workers which will then go robotically to make money for our Owners. They will even go to kill people ostensibly for our Owners, ostensibly for OUR COUNTRY - which it no way is. Teachers unintentionally guide students to give up their humanity in order to conduct our Owners' wars, and jobs.

School is a bad place to force anyone to go regardless the moments of pleasure and learning there.

Y'tell people we all hate school – they 'go' oh no! I love/d school.

That's selective amnesia.

We all do that constantly.

But life's difficulties are magnified by the burdens we're required to shoulder in this oppressive system – yes, like school – that we don't want to 'go' to but have to in order to 'get a job', etc.etc.

Isn't that involuntary servitude? - oh, no, there are laws overriding that disagreement, laws laid by our Owners' legislators/legislatures - that They have bought.

Let people live integrated, instead, among people of all ages, doing various skills and interests together – including showing people who can't how to read and write and calculate ON THE JOB, whatever that activity is.

The many efforts called reform are not. They're just continuation by one jerk'n around or other of the status quo, which begins with students needing to line up to enter the building when a bell rings. For that it is usual that the student had to be awakened in order to get there 'on time', at great discomfort to themselves at having had to wake up then. And their folk who had to do that didn't feel good about it either.

The martialing continues throughout the days, again, at great discomfort. Humbling continues for the

lesser student not only in the classroom, the hallways, the washrooms, the lunchroom, but on the playground. Bullying is usual.

Failure is feared.

How horrible – that failure is allowed!

That's because school is church-derived and continued.

Children especially must not be forced to be judged failed.

These contradictions confuse even those children who are able to appear successful. Watching other students behave incorrectly encourages their submission, acceptance of the standards. They don't want to fail. They've been enabled not to.

They suffer through the early grades, having cried at being left by their dear people; they get a Kindergarten diploma and later an elementary school diploma, and a high school diploma, and a college or university degree of one or several levels, and fit into some 8hr a day stifle because they have that scroll; and then they spend short or long periods doing those jobs. My brother got a Master's degree in parasitology, a Master's in World Health, a doctoral in World Health and ended up his last couple of work decades selling AAA insurance and GRATEFUL TO HAVE THAT. A child was his boss and frightened my brother throughout my brother's time there.

And no way my brother is different from MANY employees.

People don't get a chance socially – or alone - to take an honest look at the social structure, to determine

among each other how it's done, or what it is that has happened to them. My intention is to give people the chance to say they don't like what happened to them, what's happening to their children, to their brothers; what could happen if the structure were inclined to let us form lives for ourselves among each other that are under our own control INSTEAD OF CONTROL BY THIS TERRIBLY BRUTAL SOCIAL SYSTEM – that we're all told FROM THE CRADLE! that we love.

I think there are people here who are able to form together these understandings and the altogether other social formation in which we can live meaningful lives – from the time we're 2 through 102 or more. Age segregation is antithetical to worthy or enjoyable living. It is essential to the profit system, capitalism.

We need to set up alternative living that FEELS good for ALL of us to do.

This requires working to end profit\$.

1. FAILURE We need never to fail people, students. Not getting something right that needs to be gotten right needs do-overs together with other people who will help fix it, is all. 'tests' is the opposite of that.
2. SEPARATE GRADES Age segregation is a serious invasion into reasonable, humane living. We belong together over chosen alliances caused by the varied impetuses respect of our living creates – will create. Enumerating those ways I leave to our organizing to make 'education' other than the indoctrination school presently is. I could name ideas which cause us to gather – in all cases here I'm speaking of 2year olds as well as 100yr olds and everyone. You too could name those ideas.
3. EQUALITY Two year olds want to be part of production. You've seen that evidenced time and time again, often causing from somewhere someone to say – don't do that – to a child. Our nature, human nature, is we all want to participate to perpetuate society and to advance it, too, TOGETHER.
4. SCHOOL'S PLACE None of our learning is extraneous – not from outside the classroom, not from before we've begun or ended schooling, not from our ancient cultures, none of it.
5. TEACHERS We are all teachers all our lives. Alienation by commodification of that role, that behavior, causes a terrible rift between us and our humanity. Who are teachers, then... Not only the people who get that small paycheck to take care of our children while we do jobs that are not satisfactory but profit our Owners. Teachers are to transmit a segregated curriculum, as though math is separate from science is separate from art is separate from history is separate from gym is separate from those few precious minutes of recess is separate from singing....
6. STUDENTS As well, we're all always students. It is not the graduate scroll that makes us able or displays our limits.

7. JOB job is the relation of labor to capital. See The Reason Education Sucks <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILQepXUhJ98> . Not enough are available for all people to have one. Full employment is just a term to keep us enthralled with the capitalist structure. Jobs are not for us to support and maintain our society and our relations with our friends, family, neighbors, allies everywhere. It is the obligation for us to become able to keep making our Owners rich, wealthy. As Carlin says, we have no choice.

8. POLITICS Yet we keep going out demanding 'education'!, 'jobs'! We're under the thumb of our Owners. We won't come out from under it until we organize at the base of our thinking – this is not a nice life. Those who think they have a nice life, again, employ selective amnesia. People don't like to see other people hurt/hurting. People allow it because we have no choice. All life - capitalist life – lines up as an occupying force in our minds, needs our mass organizing to identify it and work to overthrow the occupation, to decolonize.

- Governments don't want a population capable of critical thinking, they want obedient workers, people just smart enough to run the machines and just dumb enough to passively accept their situation. You have no choice. You have owners. They own you. They own everything. They own all the important land. They own, and control the corporations. They've long since bought, and paid for the Senate, the Congress, the state houses, the city halls, they got the judges in their back pockets and they own all the big media companies, so they control just about all of the news and information you get to hear.

- Governments don't want a population capable of critical thinking, they want obedient workers, people just smart enough to run the machines and just dumb enough to passively accept their situation.

- Politicians are put there to give you the idea that you have freedom of choice. You don't.

George Carlin https://www.azquotes.com/author/2470-George_Carlin/tag/critical-thinking

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILQepXUhJ98>

School Is The Opposite Of Education, a study to release us from our confinement

<https://njfhar.wordpress.com/2014/12/10/table-of-contents>

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

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

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

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

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

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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?

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

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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.

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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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