

2020 Endorsement Questionnaire East 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 *

Norman La Force

City and zip code of residence.

El Cerrito 94530

What is your campaign website address?

www.laforceofcourse.org

What is your campaign email address?

n.laforce@comcast.net

What is the office that you are seeking? *

- City of Dublin Mayor
- City of Dublin City Council
- City of Dublin, Unified School District Trustee, Area 1
- City of Dublin, Unified School District Trustee, Area 4
- City of Livermore, Mayor
- City of Livermore, City Council, Dist. 3
- City of Livermore, Unified School District
- City of Pleasanton, Mayor
- City of Pleasanton, City Council
- City of Pleasanton, Unified School District Trustee
- AC Board of Supervisors, District 1
- AD 16, State Assembly Representative
- Other: East Bay Regional Park District Director, 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 50 years.
.....

Are you an APA Caucus member?

Yes

No

Why are you seeking the Caucus's endorsement?

I have dedicated 38 years of my life to creating parks, saving open space, and preserving wildlife and habitat. The Park District operates the 120,000 acres of regional parks in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

I am running because the Park District needs a director and leader with a proven record of actually creating parks, playing fields, and making our parks accessible for all. I am a park advocate not a political appointee who is using this position to later seek higher office.

My opponent talks parks but I have "done" parks. My opponent talks about accessibility and equitable access to parks, but I have created parks underserved communities and youth. I do parks.

I have been the Sierra Club leader on park issues for over 30 years. I led the campaign that created the McLaughlin Eastshore State Park, which the Park District operates. It is now one of the great urban parks that is accessible to all communities from Oakland to Richmond. When our youth need ball fields I engineered the deal that got us the Tom Bates Sports Fields. I also worked out the deal that doubled the size of the Point Isabel Dog Park. I co-chaired the Park District's tax measures that doubled the size of the Park District and provided the operating funds for the parks. After the 1991 Oakland fire, I led the effort that forced the Park District to create a vegetation management plan to reduce fire risk. I then co-chaired the tax measure campaign to provide the funding for that plan.

The Park District needs a true environmental leader on the Board. It needs someone who will advocate for wildlife and habitat while ensuring that people, especially people of color, have access to our parks and not someone who was a political appointee looking for a public office.

My major current endorsements are:

Sierra Club

Richmond Progressive Alliance

Save Our Point Molate

Green Party of Contra Costa County

Regional Elected Officials

Keith Carson, Alameda County Supervisor

Vinnie Bacon, Council Member, Fremont

Helen Burke, Former Director, East Bay Municipal Utility District

Ruscal Cayangyang, Former Vallejo City Unified School Board Member

Stuart Flashman, Former Director, East Bay Municipal Utility District

Greg Harper, AC Transit Director

Doug Linney, East Bay Municipal Utility District Director

John Marquez, Trustee, Contra Costa County College District

Lesa McIntosh, East Bay Municipal Utility District Director

Frank Mellon, East Bay Municipal Utility District Director

Tom Panas, West Contra Costa Unified School Board Trustee

Chris Peeples, AC Transit Director

Joe Wallace, AC Transit Director

Albany

Nick Pilch, Mayor

Peter Maass, Council Member

Marge Atkinson, Former Mayor

Robert Cheasty, Executive Director of Citizens for East Shore Parks (CESP)* and Former Mayor
Robert Lieber, Former Mayor
Kathy Diehl, Former Chair, Albany Waterfront Commission
Patty Fujiwara, Former Co-President, Albany Teachers Association
Preston Jordan, Co-Founder, Albany Strollers & Rollers*
Miriam Walden, Former President, Albany Unified School Board
Berkeley
Jesse Arreguín, Mayor
Tom Bates, Former Mayor and Former State Assemblyman
Shirley Dean, President of Citizens for East Shore Parks (CESP)* and Former Mayor
Cheryl Davila, Council Member
Sophie Hahn, Council Member
Kate Harrison, Council Member
Soli Alpert, Rent Stabilization Board Commissioner
Alejandro Soto-Vigil, Rent Stabilization Board Commissioner
Igor Tregub, Rent Stabilization Board Commissioner
Kriss Worthington, Former Council Member
Richard Illgen, Former Berkeley Planning Commissioner
El Cerrito
Greg Lyman, Mayor
Janet Abelson, Council Member
Paul Fadelli, Council Member
Gabe Quinto, Council Member
Rochelle Pardue-Okimoto, Council Member
Jane Batke, Former Mayor
Richard Bartke, Former Mayor
Mark Friedman, Former Mayor
Norma Jellison, Former Mayor and Former East Bay Regional Park District Park Advisory Committee
Member
Bill Jones, Former Mayor
Letitia Moore, Former Mayor
Sandi Potter, Former Mayor
Lisa Motoyama, Former Planning Commissioner and Affordable Housing Advocate
Richmond
Eduardo Martinez, Council Member
Melvin Willis, Council Member
Cesar Zepeda, Director, West County Wastewater District
Jovanka Beckles, Former Council Member
Gayle McLaughlin, Former Mayor
Marilyn Langlois, Former Planning Commissioner
Environmental Leaders
Olga Bolotina, Chair, Executive Committee, Sierra Club San Francisco Bay Chapter
Robert Cheasty, Executive Director of Citizens for East Shore Parks (CESP)* and Former Mayor, Albany
Shirley Dean, President of Citizens for East Shore Parks (CESP)* and Former Mayor, Berkeley
Arthur Feinstein, Former Executive Director, Golden Gate Audubon Society*
Jim Hanson, Conservation Chair, California Native Plant Society, East Bay*
Jon Kaufman, Director, Claremont Canyon Conservancy*
Jerry Kent, Assistant General Manager (Retired), East Bay Regional Park District*
Martin Nicolaus, Executive Director, Cesar Chavez Park Conservancy*

Max Perrey, Former Sierra Club SF Bay Executive Committee Member*

Dr. A. L. Riley, Executive Director, Waterways Restoration Institute*

Glenn Schneider, California Native Plant Society East Bay Skyline Gardens Coordinator*

Andres Soto, Community Organizer, Citizens for a Better Environment*

* Titles are for identification purposes only and do not denote organizational endorsement

Here is some of what I have done:.

Work on East Shore Park Issues

Led Sierra Club's campaign to create the McLaughlin East Shore State Park, 1983-Present

You can read about how that park got created in my book, *Creating the Eastshore State Park, An Activist History* (2002). Contact me for a copy. All proceeds are donated to the Citizens for Eastshore State Park with a portion going to the Cesar Chavez Park Conservancy to save Burrowing Owls.

Created the Plan for the Berkeley Waterfront that became the "Sierra Club" Plan that Berkeley voters approved in 1986, saving the shoreline for a park

Led Sierra Club campaign to pass Measure C in Albany in 1990 that required the voters to approve any changes to the Albany waterfront.

One of the Key authors of the Sierra Club & CESP Plan for the Albany Waterfront to replace Golden Gate Fields Race Track, now the adopted Vision for the track site.

Have campaigned for the past 36 years to save the East Bay Shoreline, from Oakland to Pinole, current efforts include trying to save Point Molate and the North Richmond shoreline.

Work on Park Bond Acts and Funding Measures

Led Sierra Club campaign to pass East Bay Regional Park District's Measure AA in 1988;

Campaigned for the 1988 California Parks and Wildlife Bond Act (citizen led initiative; I personally gathered 1,000 signatures and led Sierra Club effort to collect total of 100,000 signatures).

Vice-Chair of East Bay Regional Park District's campaign to pass Measure K in 2002.

Vice-Chair of the East Bay Regional Park District's 2008 Yes on Parks for Measure WW campaign to renew the Park District's bond acquisition measure for purchase of new park lands; helped craft the measure and get it passed.=

Vice-Chair of East Bay Regional Park District's 2006 Measure CC campaign to fund maintenance in the Park District Ward 1 parks, (I crafted this measure with environmental leaders and the Park District)

Co-Chair of the East Bay Regional Park District's 2016 Measure FF campaign to extend Measure CC to fund maintenance and operations in the parks in Ward 1.

Work on Park District's Major Management Issues

Sierra Club leader on the campaign for the Park District to create a resource management and habitat enhancement approach for vegetation management to reduce fire risk along the East Bay Wildland Urban Interface, the Sierra Club's "3 R's" to substantially lower the risk of catastrophic fires.

Sierra Club leader on campaign to expand and enhance the Park District's Stewardship programs for the protection and enhancement of the District's wildlife and habitat resources including additional funding for wildlife and habitat protection and restoration which led to a substantial increase in funding for Stewardship.

Sierra Club leader on effort for Park District to develop a grasslands management and monitoring program to address issues of cattle grazing in the Park District so District could better evaluate and manage its grazing program.

Work on Increasing Recreational Opportunities

Key Sierra Club leader that enable the Park District to double the size of the Point Isabel Dog Park.

Key Sierra Club leader for creating the agreement that secured the site for the Tom Bates Sportsfield development.

Volunteer Environmental Leadership Positions

Co-Founder and Vice-President of Citizens for East Shore State Parks, 1985-Present

Co-Founder of Coalition to Restore Urban Waterways, 1991 (lobbied at both State and federal level for bills to protect and restore rivers, streams, watersheds and urban creeks)

Sierra Club leader in stopping the proposal for housing at the toxic Zeneca property (James Levine of Levine/Fricke threatened to sue me for slander for my statements about the toxic nature of the site, which DTSC later showed to be accurate);

Sierra Club Co-Leader on campaign to Stop the Spraying for the Light Brown Apple Moth until the action under goes a full environmental and public health assessment and review;

Environmental Awards

William Penn Mott Award, June 2004

(Sierra Club California award to the Club member who has made a lasting and outstanding contribution to California's parks)

Sylvia McLaughlin Award for Environmental Stewardship, 2014

(Citizens for East Shore Park award for the volunteer who has shown a continuing commitment to environmental protection and enhancement of wildlife and species in the spirit of Sylvia McLaughlin, Co-Founder of Save the Bay)

East Bay Regional Park District Citizen Advocacy Award, 2014

(Citizen advocate award for work in saving Crab Cove at Crown Beach State Park from development)

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

Sierra Club, Jesse Arreguin, Berkeley Mayor, Gayle McLaughlin, former Mayor of Richmond, Rochelle Pardue-Okimoto, former Mayor of El Cerrito, Gabe Quinto, El Cerrito City Council member. Check out www.laforceofcourse.org.

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?

43 years

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

Georgetown University Law Center, Washington, D.C. J.D. 1983
University of Chicago, M.A. Chinese History, 1978
University of California Berkeley, M.A. Asian Studies, 1976
Stanford University Chinese Language Program, Taipei, Taiwan, 1976
University of Illinois, Urbana, B.A. Chinese History, 1974

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

I have been self employed as a civil rights attorney representing plaintiffs in civil rights and wrongful termination cases and representing pro bono Sierra Club and other environmental organizations suing over environmental claims.

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

Sierra Club, Sustainability Parks, Recycling, Parks, and Wildlife Legal Defense Fund, Golden Gate Audubon Society.

CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

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

As I discussed above, I have led the Sierra Club for close to 40 years on park and open space issues. I have created parks. I have created ballfields for disadvantage youth and communities of color. I led the East Bay Regional Park District tax campaigns that doubled the size of the Park District and provided funding for the programs that my opponent now claims she handles. My opponent had never been involved in Park District issues until she was appointed in January 2020 to the Board so she could run for higher office later. Between 1983 and 2020, while I campaigned for the Parks, I never saw nor heard of her. I "do" and "have done" parks. She talks about parks.

Moreover, my wife is Taiwan born Chinese. I have been with her when people have told her to go back where she came from. My older daughter writes extensively about the Asian-American experience in the United States. She has recently highlighted key Asian American cultural figures who have not been recognized. Check out Thessaly La Force who also sues her Chinese name, Wang Zhengyi, with the New York Times.

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

I was a key leader in creating the McLaughlin East Shore State Park. I remember that the State Parks head at the time told me to my face that this park would never be created. We made it happen. Now State Parks advertises it as one, if not the only, great State Urban parks that shows how the State makes parks for disadvantaged communities and provides access to communities of color. I worked to create this park because I wanted to save shoreline lands from Emeryville to Richmond for all people to use and enjoy.

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

Total Asian and Pacific Islander is around 35%.

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

Chinese-American, Japanese-American, Pacific Islander, and Indian.

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

Hmong in Richmond. They fled Laos and still have not been fully accepted in the East Bay and also have some of the lowest income levels.

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

Certainly, now everyone is concerned about health and health insurance to cover the pandemic illness, then jobs and employment, and how they will educate their children. In terms of parks, the Asian and Pacific Islander communities also want access to clean and safe parks where they can enjoy a day out and also provide a park experience for their children.

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?

Very early in this situation, around early June I sent a letter to the Park District outlining a 12 step program for addressing racial bias and discrimination. The Park District, and my opponent, ignored that letter and my 12 step program. If elected, I will implement that program. Anyone who wants a copy of that letter can email me to get a copy.

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

No. I have endorsed and supported candidates like Gabe Quinto and Rochelle Pardue-Okimoto, Lisa Motoyama all for El Cerrito City Council, to name a few. I will continue to support candidates I believe are qualified and would make good elected officials.

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.

Gabe Quinto, Rocheel Pardue-Okimoto, Lisa Motoyama, for El Cerrito City Council. There may be others.

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 East County Endorsement Meeting is scheduled for Thu., Sept. 17 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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