

2020 Endorsement Questionnaire

Email address *

info@santosraya.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 *

Richard Santos Raya

City and zip code of residence.

94601

What is your campaign website address?

<https://www.santosraya.com/>

What is your campaign email address?

info@santosraya.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.

9 years

Are you an APA Caucus member?

Yes

No

Why are you seeking the Caucus's endorsement?

I am running to provide a progressive voice for District 5. I go into further detail about how I am truly the progressive candidate when it comes to this race in your question about what differentiates me from my opponents.

However, I would like to take this moment and explain why I'm seeking your endorsement specifically. The issue with politics nowadays is that issues are addressed in a fashion that tends to generalize or put things under an umbrella. I am seeking to represent District 5. A district that currently suffers from a great socioeconomic disparity within itself and especially when compared with the rest of the City. It's easy to say that Black and Brown communities have been adversely affected and suffer from economic injustice. But the reality of the matter is, there are those within all communities that have been affected by economic hardship, especially of late. When Asian and Pacific Islanders are inaccurately portrayed by the media as "the model minority" their poverty and their hardship tends to get sidelined. It gets worse when part of the media wants to perpetuate the notion that somehow the virus is "the fault" of this community. As someone who is running to be the voice of progressive change for all of District 5, my plan is to elevate every member of my community--especially those that need the most help. This is the reason I am writing today to seek your endorsement. Thank you for your consideration.

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

SEIU Local 1021
Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club
Oakland Rising Action
Block by Block Organizing Network
The East Bay Young Democrats

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?

I've been living here for a year now since graduating from Law School. I also lived in District 5 as a child.

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

McCallister College, B.A. American Studies, Completed 2015
Minors in Creative Writing, Philosophy

Northeastern University School of Law, JD, Completed 2019
-Completed co-op placements at Alameda County Public
Defender's Office, National Center for Youth Law, People's Law
Office, and New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

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

July 2019 – Present

Legal Educator

Centro Legal de la Raza, Oakland, CA

Youth Law Academy

Design and deliver legal curriculum to low-income Oakland high schoolers in an after-school setting, provide college application support, and manage classroom logistics and administrative duties.

Nov 2016 –Present

Tutor

Varsity Tutors, Online/In Person

LSAT, College Application Tutor

Create tailored test prep study plans for students of all ages, collaborate with students to conceptualize and improve personal statements, generally assist students through application processes

Aug 2015 - June 2016

Americorps Member

City Year San Jose, San Jose, CA

Supervised after school classroom, represented Corps and student experience as member of communications "A-Team," coordinated with coworkers and employers to plan our Mid Year Summit

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

In college I volunteered as a literacy tutor for elementary school students in Minnesota.

In law school I volunteered as a tutor for other law students.

Recently, I've volunteered my time with activist groups most prominently Sunrise Bay Area.

CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

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

There is an urgent need for truly progressive leadership on the Council, There is an urgent need for truly progressive leadership on the Council, especially within District 5. I'm not running so much to put myself on the council, but to elevate and amplify the demands of the people as a facilitator and co-governor.

After realizing that Councilmember Gallo was running unopposed, I asked several local leaders and activists in the streets during a protest outside his house if they knew of anyone running. The answer I received, again and again, was that I should consider running.

I'm resilient and full of energy and passion. I feel that I'm the right person to run to represent this community because I have, and will continue to, put in the necessary effort it takes to build relationships and run a strong campaign. Again, this run is not about some personal agenda, but instead feeling called, feeling like the right person in the right place at the right time to do some good.

More generally, Councilmember Gallo's leadership style does not adequately serve our district. He is fond of saying that "we have enough laws, we just need to enforce them," and he has historically not been a proactive policy proposer. This approach allows District 5 to languish under-resourced, and without a representative to communicate a bold policy vision that would bring sustainable cultural and economic growth to the flatlands of Oakland.

District 5 sorely needs a Councilmember who is systems oriented, and generates comprehensive policy plans to address our systemic problems. Furthermore, we need an energetic representative who is able to work with other Councilmembers, who keeps their word regarding votes and other promises, and who is willing to actively reimagine public safety and defund the police. I'm running to bring consistent progressive values, creativity, and enthusiasm to the role, and to bring safety, prosperity, and increased culture and pride to the district and the City as a whole.

Especially within District 5. I'm not running so much to put myself on the council, but to elevate and amplify the demands of the people as a facilitator and co-governor.

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 working to balance and rework the budget. For too long, the City has not been held accountable for mismanaging the resources of its residents in a cost-effective and equally beneficial manner. This has played a major factor in driving city-wide inequity as a constraint on resources causes the most in need to not receive their help in a simple and timely manner.

I want to hold the city accountable to contract work and ensure they are done as a cost saving measure. For example in my district (D5), the BRT took 8 years to complete. The City let a contractor do not just the construction but the planning, and the contractor (Anew America) was tasked with distributing funds to businesses affected by the construction. Local businesses feel left out and unsupported by this project. I strongly believe funds were mismanaged and misallocated-- many businesses are still awaiting disbursement of their allocated grants.

I support the progressive business tax proposed by Sheng Thao and Nikki Bas .

For District 5 I would implement a Participatory Budgeting Process. I strongly believe in integrating the community and constituent feedback more into my own decision-making process. I plan to hold Friday meetings in advance of budgetary votes so that D5 members could ask me questions on what I was voting for. I plan to conduct such meetings in a public place in D5 and not in City Chambers and D5 residents would have an open invitation to join.

I've already attended events with CDP (Community Democracy Project) and I've helped organize around issues pertaining to the Participatory Budgeting and other progressive budget related causes.

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

15%

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

Vietnamese Filipino and Chinese. Hmong may be a close tie for top 3 as well.

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

Either the Hmong or Filipinx community. The Hmongs have been historically subject to risk due to the diaspora nature of their community. Here in Oakland they are no exception. The majority of non-Asian community leaders that I've interacted with since I've begun my campaign have never even heard of this group of Asians, let alone have any idea of what kind of issues their community faces.

The Filipinx community as well continues to suffer not only from xenophobia but classism and colorism, while still remaining a central anchor to our community.

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

Public Safety, Illegal Dumping and Job Security/Small Business Growth

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?

My campaign is focused not only on building unity within our diverse community, but on a clear personal willingness to discuss issues of race and racism in a straightforward and nuanced way. We need our leaders to disavow the phobias that make attacks like this possible. Part of "reimagining public safety" means convening regular community councils and public forums to restore the fabric of the community and to make clear the harms done by such behavior. I plan on dedicating several town halls to issues of racism and public health.

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

Politics, like most positions of power in the US, remain dominated by older, white males. It may be easy for one to say that in the Bay Area we have a lot of Asian leaders. But the reality of the situation is that Asians are still under-represented by political leadership. Rob Bonta is a regular contact of mine and I am currently in touch with him about a possible endorsement. Sheng Tao is a model of progressive leadership on the Oakland City Council and I've incorporated part of her platform into my own. I plan to work with her if elected.

The issue facing the Asian community when it comes to politics is a certain lack of motivation to participate in the political process driven by an inherent mistrust of governance. In fact, the general perception of District 5 residents is that local government and the City Council is ineffective. The satisfaction rating they give City Government is 2/10. Refer to my answer to question 2 for more details.

I plan to have a weekly and a monthly constituent meeting to remain on the calendar come hell or high water. My plan as a candidate is to make co-governance the norm. I plan to make drafted legislation that I'm working on available to view publicly. And the community orgs I mentioned who have helped me on the campaign or have an interest in helping me once elected, I plan to work with them on every piece of legislation I create while applicable. Currently, the key organizations I work with are Oakland Rising, The Ella Baker Center and Sunrise. I am happy to include The APA Caucus in my work regardless of who they move forward with endorsing.

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.

There aren't a lot of Asian candidates in the running in my local political scene and as mentioned in the previous question, I am all for supporting more good local leaders. Rob Bonta and Sheng Tao are examples of two proven progressive leaders that I would endorse if running. I plan to work with both if elected. Sheng Tao has helped co-produce a progressive business tax which I plan to champion if elected.

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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