

2020 Endorsement Questionnaire South 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 *

Lucy Shen

City and zip code of residence.

Fremont, 94539

What is your campaign website address?

votelucyshen.com

What is your campaign email address?

lucy@votelucyshen.com

What is the office that you are seeking? *

- City of San Leandro City Council
- City of San Leandro School Board
- City of Hayward City Council
- City of Hayward, Unified School District Trustee
- City of Fremont, Mayor
- City of Fremont, City Council, Dist. 1
- City of Fremont, City Council, Dist. 5
- City of Fremont, City Council, Dist. 6
- City of Fremont, Unified School District, Dist. 1
- City of Fremont, Unified School District, Dist. 4
- City of Fremont, Unified School District, Dist. 5
- City of Union City, Mayor
- City of Union City, City Council
- New Haven School Trustee, Area 1
- New Haven School Trustee, Area 2
- New Haven School Trustee, Area 3
- City of Newark, Mayor
- City of Newark, City Council
- City of Newark, School Board
- City of Newark, School Board, Short term
- Eden Healthcare District
- Washington Hospital Healthcare District
- Oro Loma Sanitary District

- [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]
- Alameda County Water District
- AD 20, State Assembly Representative
- AD 25, State Assembly Representative
- Ohlone Community College, Area 2
- Other: Fremont Unified School District Governing Board Member, Area 5

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.

My earliest registration record is in January 2016, which was right before the first primaries I could vote in after turning 18.

Are you an APA Caucus member?

Yes

No

Why are you seeking the Caucus's endorsement?

I'm running as a second generation Chinese-American immigrant for the school board seat in a school district with 89% non-white students, but the current board of education is made up of 3 white women, 1 white man, and 1 black woman. I'm also running in a district that has many conservative Asian-Americans, and it's important to me to publicly fight for racial justice in a way that doesn't align my Asian identity as white-tangential and weaponize the model minority myth against our black and Latinx community members. This includes supporting affirmative action, desegregating our school districts, and finding equitable ways of supporting all our different schools' diverse needs. I come from an organizing background and am fairly new to electoral politics, but I believe the APA Caucus' values and priorities align closely with my own and 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).

Fremont Unified District Teachers Association (FUDTA)
East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club
Southern Alameda County Young Democrats
California Young Democrats
Alex Lee, Democratic Candidate for State Assembly District 25

All endorsements can be found at <https://votelucyshen.com/endorsements/>

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 was born in Fremont and have lived here all my life (currently 25 years old) except for 4 years I spent in college and 2 years of grade school spent in Shanghai.

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

I graduated from Mission San Jose High School in 2013 and Wellesley College in 2013. I also studied abroad at Oxford University in 2015 and conducted research as an undergraduate at MIT in 2015.

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

Intuit, Software Engineer, 2017 to present
Coursera, Software Engineering Intern, 2016 for 3 months
Verily (Formerly Google Life Sciences), Software Engineering Intern, 2016 for 3 months

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

Fremont LGBTQ+ Task Force, StandUpForKids Silicon Valley Chapter, Girls Who Code, Spark Program, SaveFremontSexEd

CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

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

My experience in community organizing has equipped me with the listening and mediation skills that are crucial to any policy making and governance process. I am also a second-generation Chinese immigrant running to represent a district that is majority Asian. My experience as an alumnus of the school district I would represent will provide an important perspective that is currently missing on the board. I am uniquely positioned to help bridge the generational and cultural divides that I've been witnessing in our local advocacy efforts, and I will continue to do what I have always done—use my voice to elevate those who do not have a platform, and work to connect people across ideological and cultural divides.

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

My first foray into community organizing was as part of the core team of SaveFremontSexEd, a group formed by Fremont residents to advocate for comprehensive and inclusive sexual health education in Fremont schools. The curriculum the board was considering (3Rs) was under attack for its content on gender identity and sexual orientation, and I learned about the situation through an ACLU advocacy training. Many of the key organizers in that group, including myself, are members of the LGBTQ+ community, and a few of us went on to form the Fremont LGBTQ+ Task Force because we were shocked by the level of vitriol certain Fremont community members had directed at us during the board deliberations. After the initial 3Rs meetings, I was appointed by the board to a special task force to review and recommend a medically-accurate and culturally-inclusive sexual health curriculum, where I served as Secretary. Our task force recommended 3Rs again, and this time the board voted to approve it. As a board member, I will continue to push for good sexual health curricula for our students, because they deserve to learn what is happening to their bodies before puberty happens, and because I hope they'll have access to better resources than I had at their age.

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

70% of our students are of APA heritage, and 59.3% of the city of Fremont's residents are of APA heritage.

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

Indian, Chinese, and Filipinx

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

Our Filipinx students have lower than average A-G completion rates in 5 of our 8 applicable high schools (MSJHS is so segregated that the Filipinx student population is "not applicable" to the data). That's dramatically lower than our Indian and Chinese students, who are the other two major APA ethnicities in our district.

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

Keeping my responses relevant to the district:

1) Mental health: Our school district has long had issues with intense academic stress on campus, particularly in Area 5 where we have a higher percentage of students who are of Chinese and Indian heritage. We experience a cultural pressure to excel in our studies and outstrip our "competitors," which results in an unhealthy learning environment rife with academic bullying and toxic elitism. On the flip side, our school administration is also ill-equipped to support these parents and students when they request accommodations to allow students to access educational resources best suited to their needs and skill levels, and this results in a lot of added pressure on everyone involved, including the students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

2) More diverse curriculum and staffing: Well over half of our students are Asian, but only 19.5% of our teachers are. In fact, 65.7% of our teachers are white, but our students are 89% non-white. We need to hire a greater diversity of staff across all levels of school administration by actively recruiting educators from HBCUs, AANAPISIs, and HSIs. Our students should also be able to go to class and learn about their communities' histories in the US. Curriculum standards are set by state law, which has recently moved to include these in history curriculums across California. In a district as diverse as FUSD, it is essential that we abide by these state standards and push for more diverse and untold histories, such as Sikh immigration to California, the Chinese Exclusion act, and the Filipinx labor movement.

3) Community accessibility and transparency: There is a growing distrust between parents, educators, and district staff that's resulted over the last few years from bad communication and a lack of transparency. Our district (and particularly Area 5) is quite affluent on average, but accessibility is lacking on both ends of the socioeconomic spectrum. It is difficult to get input from parents too busy working to support their families because they don't have time to show up to our long school board meetings and stay until 3am. Meanwhile, parents who do have the flexibility and are able to show up still find it difficult to understand board procedures and often complain that their voices go unheard.

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?

Specifically addressing this issue within the bounds of our educational system, I believe it is important to start with implementing anti-racist pedagogy. We have to go beyond the standard "anti-bullying" trainings that have been ineffective for years and tackle our country's race issues at the root. Within FUSD, we must practice equity within our education to our students. Educators, staff and community members must lift up diverse narratives and support trauma-informed education. Administration should be held accountable for disproportionate POC suspensions, expulsions, and other disciplinary actions. As a board member, I will advocate to prioritize and agendaize these action items and I will vote to appoint a committee that is appropriately diverse and representative of the community.

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

No. Our 5-person school board currently doesn't have a single person of APA heritage, which is egregious for a student body that is over half APA. Elected officials need to improve accessibility of public meetings for the community to easily follow current discussions and weigh in during public comment. Our local policies and public data must also be made more transparent and accessible to the larger community. The primary blocker to local participation is lack of access; currently the only people who can afford to get involved are those with the time, energy, and schedule flexibility to dig through city documents and figure out how to make public comment.

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.

Alex Lee, Democratic Candidate for State Assembly District 25
Aziz Akbari, candidate for Alameda County Water District Director
Justin Sha, candidate for Fremont Mayor
Lance Kwan, candidate for Ohlone Community College District Trustee

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 South County Endorsement Meeting is scheduled for Sat., Sept. 20 from 1 to 3 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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