

East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club Endorsement Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in obtaining an endorsement from the East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club.

Per the Club's bylaws, to be eligible for endorsement, a candidate must be a registered Democrat. All candidates must also complete this candidate questionnaire to be considered for an endorsement. Endorsements are decided by the general membership, and candidates must receive at least 60% of votes cast to be endorsed.

The deadline for questionnaires is posted on the East Bay Stonewall website (<http://eastbaystonewalldemocrats.org/Elections>). Any candidate submitting a questionnaire that is received after the deadline will not appear on the endorsement ballot. To ensure a fair process, no grace period will be granted.

Please return your completed questionnaire via Google forms by clicking submit at the bottom of this form. All form submissions are final. If you have questions, please contact Joe Greaves, EBSDC PAC chair via email at jsphgreaves@gmail.com.

Email *

info@shengforoakland.com

Name (First Last) *

Sheng Thao

Are you a registered Democrat *

Yes

No

Office you are seeking? (e.g. City Council, School Board, Supervisor, etc) *

Mayor

Jurisdiction *

Oakland

District *

Citywide

Are you an East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club member in good standing? If you are unsure, email eastbaystonewalldems@gmail.com. *

Yes

No

I self-identify as: (check all boxes that apply; note these identifiers will be used publicly during our endorsement process.) *

Gay

Lesbian

Transgender

Gender non-conforming

Bisexual

Queer

Straight

Other:

How have you participated in East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club activities, and/or supported the Club other ways? What other LGBTQ+ organizations are you affiliated with and in what capacity? What other Democratic clubs are you affiliated with? *

I have been a member of EB Stonewall Democratic Club since 2014 and have attended dozens of meetings and events. I am also a member of Wellstone Democratic Club, Our Revolution East Bay, and the ALCO Dem party API Caucus. I previously served as an AD-18 delegate to the state Democratic Party too.

Using specific examples, please identify the causes you have advocated for and the ways you have helped advance LGBTQ+ rights or otherwise helped foster a community of inclusivity for LGBTQ+ individuals and families. *

For many years I served as Policy Director and Chief of Staff for At-Large Councilmember Rebecca Kaplan and worked very closely on LGBTQ+ issues, including AIDS and HIV response, homelessness, mental health, and more. District 4 has the highest concentration of LGBTQ+ residents in Oakland, particularly in the Laurel and I take that seriously.

Earlier this summer, I introduced a resolution co-authored by Vice Mayor Kaplan calling on the state to put Prop 8 repeal on the ballot. Currently the provision still lives in our constitution and we risk having same-sex marriage rights repealed AGAIN by this awful provision in our constitution.

I am also working with Vice Mayor Kaplan and the LGBTQ Center to find supportive housing for our transgender community, particularly black transgender individuals and as Mayor I want to ensure we expand LGBTQ+ youth center housing and programming. Particularly creating more safe spaces for trans and queer youth to gather and perform.

Have you previously supported LGBTQ+ candidates for office? If yes, did that include financial support? *

I mentioned above that I worked for Vice Mayor Kaplan and have been very supportive of her career. I was an early endorser of her Supervisor race and am so excited for us to elect the first open lesbian on the Board. I am also very excited to endorse Alfred Twu for AC Transit board, Evan Low for Assembly, Alex Lee for Assembly and hopefully more on their way!

Which LGBTQ+ organizations and elected officials have formally endorsed you for this race? *

I am currently endorsed by the following LGBTQ electeds:

- Vice Mayor Rebecca Kaplan
- Assemblymember Alex Lee
- Assemblymember Evan Low
- Berkeley Councilmember Terry Taplin
- El Cerrito Councilmember Gabriel Quinto
- Oakland Port Commissioner Michael Colbruno
- Alameda County Democratic Central Committee Member Bobbi Lopez
- CDP Progressive Caucus Vice Chair Brandon Harami

Please describe a policy/goal that is part of your formal platform that benefits the LGBTQ+ community? *

One quiet but growing crisis in Oakland is our LGBTQ+ youth homelessness crisis. Many younger unhoused residents were forced onto the streets by domestic violence, abandonment, and estrangement. I was a homeless youth fleeing DV and I know how hard it is to access quality resources that adhere to your needs.

This is why I am committed to ending youth homelessness in Oakland by investing in housing and services that meet our unhoused communities where they are at. Why I want to establish transitional housing that creates safe spaces for our unhoused trans and queer communities, and help create pathways for LGBTQ+ youth to work for the city.

I also want to invest more into LGBTQ youth programming -- particularly uplifting the ballroom scene and creating more spaces for our youth to gather and feel safe being themselves.

I will also be a Mayor who is not afraid to declare Oakland's values and vow to fight back against rising anti LGBTQ+ rhetoric.

What makes you uniquely qualified for the office and how are you different or unique from the other candidates in your race? *

I was surprised I was one of two mayoral candidates who actually marched in Pride this year despite the parade being cancelled since the pandemic began, but this is exactly the type of leadership you can expect from me. I am the only Councilmember with LGBTQ staff because I believe we need the community at the decision table when we create budgets and pass policy.

I have more experience than any other candidate, especially on LGBTQ+ issues, and will continue to be a strong ally in the Mayor's office. I understand the unique needs of your communities and will ensure more investments are made in mental health, housing, public health, and cultural growth of our LGBTQ+ community.

I hope my work and commitment for your rights and well-being speaks for itself and I would be honored to have your support for my race for Mayor.

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