

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 *

sarah@sarahfortransit.com

Name (First Last) *

Sarah Syed

Are you a registered Democrat *

Yes

No

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

AC Transit Director, Ward 3

Jurisdiction *

Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District

District *

Ward 3

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: decline to state

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 not participated in East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club activities yet. I am a member of the East Bay Frontrunners running club. I am a member of the Los Angeles Frontrunners running club and have participated in training runs, races, fundraising, and trips with the club from 2018-2021. I have donated and outreached to Somos Familia Valle to foster their inclusion in transit planning in Los Angeles. Somos Familia Valle is a San Fernando Valley community organization led by trans queer people of color dedicated to support, empower, train, and mobilize families for racial, gender, environmental, and economic justice.

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. *

As a transportation planner and project manager, I educate my colleagues and management about what we can do to make our systems accessible and safe for LGBTQ+ people. On my projects, I ensure we allocate budget to engage LGBTQ+ and other marginalized people early and throughout the process as we develop projects to improve the experience of people who ride transit. A large portion of houseless folk are LGBTQ+ and experience oppression based upon their identity. As an instructor at Cal State Northridge, I created the syllabus and co-taught a course on how power, socioeconomic characteristics and space intersect to shape mobility and inequality in cities. My syllabus and class lecture covered queer people's vulnerability to violence and discrimination and how it effects their experiences of cities and public transit systems. The course also covered how transit and transportation agencies can make their systems accessible and comfortable for queer people and what people working in the field can do to help marginalized people navigate these spaces.

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

Yes, including financial support.

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

Rebecca Saltzman, BART Board President; Andy Katz, Municipal Utility District Board Member

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

LGBTQ+ people deserve the right to feel safe in public spaces. Harassment is a public health issue. I will advocate for policies to protect transit riders from harassment while on board or waiting at stations and stops. I will bring a holistic approach to safety and build partnerships to secure funding for more frequent transit service so transit riders aren't experiencing long waits at stations and bus stops.

I will advocate for the establishment of an Office of Race and Equity at AC Transit and associated budget allocations to provide leadership, guidance, training, and support to all divisions and programs on equity efforts, including efforts to make our transit system and our workplace accessible and inclusive for the LGBTQ+ community.

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

My life of centering people in transportation systems makes me uniquely qualified to serve on the Board. Like many people, I have been a walker, transit rider, and cyclist my entire life. There was a moment in 1999 when I started to pay more attention to what's happening in transit planning. I was on my way home from work in Marin County and the bus never came. I was stranded and unable to get home safely to the East Bay. I wrote a letter to the editor to advocate for better transbay bus service. I met others who were working on similar issues. I began pursuing a transportation agenda focused on delivering transportation systems that are people centered, multimodal and equitable. I earned two master's degrees in city planning and transportation engineering at UC-Berkeley. I spent my career building light rail and better bicycle access in the Bay Area at BART and in Silicon Valley. I led bus rapid transit planning in Los Angeles and championed safe routes to schools in Oakland and Berkeley. At the Othering and Belonging Institute at UC-Berkeley I help communities have their voices heard in planning and evaluate transportation equity grant programs.

Living and working on transportation projects in the Bay Area for 20 years and in LA for 3.5 years has allowed me to work collaboratively with communities to understand and address issues. I've experienced the benefits of safe and reliable service firsthand, and as a transportation professional I see the opportunities we have for improvement. In the Bay Area today, the average resident can reach ~1.4 million jobs in 45 minutes using a car -- more than 9 times the average level of job access on transit. I want to use my unmatched qualifications in transportation to close access gaps and deliver transit that is safe, frequent, and reliable.

I was raised in a working class, mixed race family in south Texas. My mother Mary's family immigrated from Poland in the 1850s to rural Texas. My father's family was displaced from India to Pakistan during Partition when he was 11. Dad immigrated to Texas in the 1960s after serving in the Pakistan Air Force. I noticed at a young age that my dad, brother Arman, and sister Meena were treated differently than me due to both racism and colorism. As an Asian American woman, my experiences compel me to this day to fight Islamophobia and to make impactful change in the face of systemic racism and discrimination. As an AC Transit Director I will set policy to address disparities in transit through the use of an equity lens in planning, service improvements that increase access for marginalized people, and development policies that allow more people of all races, identities, and incomes to live near good transit.

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