

East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club Candidate Questionnaire

Melissa Wilk

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Q1 First name

Melissa

Q2 Last name

Wilk

Q3 Office you are seeking

Auditor-Controller, Alameda County

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Q5 Are you a registered Democrat?

Yes

Q6 If so for how long?

Since College

Q7 With which Democratic organizations are you affiliated?

Currently, N/A

However, I have received the endorsements of several Democratic Clubs throughout the County including the Tri City Democratic Forum, South Alameda County Young Democrats, Hayward Area Democratic Club, the Asian Pacific American Democratic Caucus, and others.

Q8 Are you a member of the East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club?

No

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Q9 If so for how long?

N/A

Q10 If not have you supported or contributed to the club in some way?

No, however, I am a firm supporter of the club's mission statement and values, and will commit to becoming an active member in the months to come.

Q11 What other lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) organizations are you affiliated with and in what capacity?

As a sister of a member of the LGBT community, LGBT rights is something I am very passionate about in my personal life. I have supported Human Rights Campaign campaigns as well as those hosted by Equality California.

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Q12 What specifically have you done to advance LGBT rights and/or to nurture an inclusive and affirming community for LGBT individuals and families? Please give specific examples.

The Office of the County Auditor-Clerk Recorder, has the distinct honor of issuing marriage licenses for Alameda County.

In 2013, when the Supreme Court Decision allowing for same-sex marriage to be allowed nationwide was made public, I was part of the team that enthusiastically went the extra mile to issue licenses to couples wanting to marry. While some other counties waited for further direction from the Department of Public Health, we proceeded immediately. Alameda County Counsel John Seyman announced., "The tide has turned. My colleagues that had been recommending their clerks wait changed course when the Department of Public Health issued an order late this afternoon directing clerks to issue licenses and to perform marriages. If all clerks aren't following the DPH directives, most now are. We were at least 45 minutes ahead of most of the rest of them." The All County Letter from DPH was not sent out until 5:10PM.

· We made the decision to stay open an hour late (until 5:30PM) on June 28th to accommodate same-sex marriages. This was the Friday before the large pride event in San Francisco. San Francisco, unlike Alameda County, had advanced notice of the ruling from the Ninth Circuit.

· We issued 6 marriage licenses after 4:30PM on June 28th. These was/is no tracking mechanism for how many marriage licenses are issued to same=sex couples.

I am honored to be part of that team, to make LGBT marriage available as soon as possible to committed couples, and to advance inclusive communities for all those that I serve.

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Q13 Who are your LGBT supporters?

I am proud to have diverse support from across Alameda County. In addition to having LGBT families in my family, I am proud to bring on LGBT members on leadership roles on my campaign team.

Q14 What LGBT candidates have you supported, and did it include financial or campaign support?

I have supported many candi

Q15 What other issues or causes have you advocated for that you feel are relevant to the LGBT community?

Issues facing the LGBT community come close to home for me -- I have advocated strongly against conversion therapy and promoted for non-discrimination ordinances to be taken up by our communities. Additionally, suicide rates among young LGBT individuals is significantly higher than those for straight young people -- this is a horrifying matter, and I support causes and organizations that aim to support at risk youth like these and bring them into an inclusive and welcoming community.

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Q16 What makes you uniquely qualified for the office you are seeking?

As the Chief Deputy Auditor-Controller for Alameda County, I'm currently responsible for: controlling, auditing and reporting \$3B in tax payer funds; directing a staff of over 200 people who serve over 125,000 walk in customers every year in our 3 locations; I enhance fiscal transparency by completing and digitizing hundreds of financial reports, records and audits and making them available to the public; and as the Official Custodian for Alameda County, I am responsible for over 25 million archived records. I have also been personally responsible for hiring every employee in the past 10 years, and I'm proud to say our office is now 85% minority represented and 75% women.

I'm running for this position because I am the most qualified candidate - I have been on the executive finance management team for Alameda County for over 15 years. I believe in being fiscally responsible, while still supporting our progressive values. I will continue to provide the excellence in financial reporting and transparency that has earned Alameda County the highest credit ratings possible -- we are only 1 of 2 counties to have this AAA rating. Being able to borrow money at lower interest rates allows us to use those savings to address critical funding issues like affordable housing, homelessness, quality healthcare and education for everyone.

Q17 Why should Stonewall consider you over your opponents for an early endorsement other than being LGBTQ?

Despite my lack of participation in the club, LGBT rights are very near and dear to my heart. From my sister to my uncle and even my campaign manager, who are part of the LGBT community, ensuring that LGBT individuals are able to live their fullest lives and integrate without fear or harm into our community is a personal passion of mine. In the professional world, I was part of the team to issue marriage licenses immediately following the Supreme Court Decision in 2013, because it was the right thing to do. I want to carry on the legacy of this office's spirit of inclusion and diversity, and take it to a higher level, if elected to this office.

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Q18 What would be your main policy goals?

Controlling auditing and reporting \$3 Billion in tax payer dollars each year.

Enhancing fiscal transparency, by successfully completing and digitizing hundreds of financial reports, statements and audits for the public.

Officiating as custodian of records for 25 million archived documents, including birth, death , and marriage certificates.

Diversifying our office to ensure representation from all communities we serve.

Q19 How do these goals relate to the LGBT community?

Maintaining strong financial health of the county, is a concern for all residents of Alameda County. It allows us the confidence and opportunity to borrow money, and invest money in communities and programs that serve the most needy in our county. Additionally, diversifying our offices that reflect the office we serve is important. As the old adage goes -- "Diversity is our Strength." That is true in society, and especially true in our Administrative Office. I will continue to promote diversity in this way if elected to this office.

Q20 What do you hope to accomplish if you are elected?

I hope to maintain Alameda County's prestigious AAA Credit Rating, to make audits and reports even more accessible to the public, and to ensure our office serves the diverse communities of Alameda County well, in an efficient and effective manner.

Q21 Why do you feel you can win this race?

I have an excellent field, mail, and visibility program county wide. I have the endorsements of an incredible amount of supporters from Alameda County Supervisors, to school board members to City Council leaders in Fremont, Oakland, the Tri Valley, and North County. We are working every day to make sure our down ticket race, is the first priority for voters come election day.
