

# East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club Candidate Questionnaire

**Judy Appel**

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**Q1** First name

Judy

**Q2** Last name

Appel

**Q3** Office you are seeking

State Assemblyperson, AD15

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**Q5** Are you a registered Democrat?

Yes

**Q6** If so for how long?

34 years

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**Q7** With which Democratic organizations are you affiliated?

Stonewall Democratic Club  
Lambda Democratic Club of Contra Costa County  
Berkeley Democratic Club  
West Contra Costa Democratic Club  
El Cerrito Democratic Club  
Wellstone Democratic Club  
Berkeley Citizen's Action  
Former Associate to the Alameda Central Committee  
Elected AD 15 ADEM

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

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**Q9** If so for how long?

At least 8 years (the first email I can find as a member is from 2010)

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

n.a.

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

Executive Director of Our Family Coalition from 2005-2016  
FAIR Education Coalition, Leader and Member  
Human Rights Campaign, Welcoming Schools National Advisory Council, 2010-2015  
California LGBT Health and Social Service Network, Steering Committee, 2007-2015  
California Safe Schools Coalition, Steering Committee, 2007-2011  
Equality for All, No on Proposition 8 Campaign Committee, 2009  
LGBT Early Childhood Education Initiative, Steering Committee, 2005-2007  
Lesbian Avengers, 1990s, Activist

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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.

In my professional life, I have spent over a decade supporting LGBTQ families. I am deeply committed to reaching full equality for LGBTQ people not only under the law, but more importantly in the hearts and minds of Californians. Under my leadership, Our Family Coalition (OFC) has increased the visibility and impact of LGBTQ families in the LGBTQ equality movement. We have worked throughout California to create LGBTQ welcoming and inclusive schools by bringing the Welcoming Schools guide so that schools are safe for all children. We support parents/caregivers and their children through over 150 events a year. One of the events that I am most proud of is our annual LGBTQ family night at the Berkeley Downtown YMCA, which just celebrated its 18th year this past March.

I have been deeply involved in the implementation of the Fair, Accurate, Inclusive and Respectful (FAIR) Education Act, which updates

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the educational guidelines to ensure that LGBTQ people are included in a fair and accurate way in our teaching of history and social movements. In our most recent victory, California's History-Social Science curriculum framework, passed in 2016 by the State Board of Education, contains an impressive amount of content relating to LGBTQ people and gender norms throughout history. This work continues to advance, with the recent adoption of textbooks by the Instructional Quality Commission to recommendation the State Board of Education that include the content reflected in the Framework. This, along with our work in elementary schools, help make safer learning environments for queer youth. By normalizing the contributions of LGBTQ people in the history of our state, country and the world, the FAIR Education Act will play a critical role in ending stigma and creating a more equitable world.

Over the past 3 years we have also been involved in several important pieces of legislation that impacts LGBTQ people and families. For example, we sponsored the Modern Family Act (making it easier and less expensive for gays and lesbians to adopt), a bill paving the way for secured parental rights with home insemination, and a bill that requires the collection of data on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in 4 large statewide departments. I am committed not only to help pass good laws, but to doing what I can to make sure that are implemented with fidelity. I am currently co-leading a workgroup on the implementation of AB959, the SOGI data law.

I am proud to have worked closely with the Berkeley community to make Berkeley Unified School District the first in the nation to formally adopt Welcoming Schools as an anti-bullying LGBTQ inclusive curriculum for all elementary schools in the district. This success followed four years of organizing with over 120 families, educators, administrators and community members. We worked closely with both classified and the certificated (teacher) employee unions, the superintendent and the board. Over the past several years, we have worked with BUSD liaisons in all of our elementary schools to institute All Gender bathrooms in our schools. To date all schools have at least one such restroom and we are working on increasing access. We are very proud that BUSD is a beacon of this work around the nation.

As the Executive Director of OFC I was actively involved with the fight for marriage equality in California, working closely with EQCA on many fronts. I was instrumental in a statewide effort to increase the involvement of LGBTQ parents, straight allied parents, and the parents and family of LGBTQ people in the campaign and its' painful aftermath. OFC joined EQCA as an organizational plaintiff in the In re Marriage Cases. I was an active member of the Equality for All campaign committee during Proposition 8 and continued on to work with the Let California Ring project after Prop 8 passed.

I have carried my commitment forward over the past 5 years on the Berkeley School Board. I brought forward a model transgender student rights bill that was passed by a unanimous vote of the board. I have appointed LGBT people to represent me on commissions, including the appointment of a queer youth to the Youth Commission this past year.

Most recently, I am working with EQCA and a small planning group of LGBTQ school board members from around the State to plan the first ever EQCA LGBTQ School Board Trustee reception at the CSBA conference in early December.

These are just a few examples of the many initiatives I have both led and been engaged in over the past decade.

On a personal note, I am a lesbian parent with two kids. My wife and I had our first wedding in 1996 and since then got married at the SF City Hall in 2005 by Sen. Mark Leno, and then again in 2008 before Prop 8 eliminated the right to marry, by Councilmember Darryl Moore. My youngest child, who is now 16, is genderqueer pansexual identified. They began to use they/them pronouns about two years ago and changed their name legally about six months ago after using that name for two years. We have worked with their school, medical providers, insurance, friends and family to facilitate proper pronoun usage.

I am deeply committed to being a strong advocate for the LGBTQ community. I live openly and am proud of the changes I have made for our community and excited about what I will do in Sacramento.

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### Q13 Who are your LGBT supporters?

Organizations:

The California LGBT Legislative Caucus

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Equality California

Individuals that I know identify as LGBT:

Cathleen Gagliani, State Senator

Ricardo Lara, State Senator

Scott Wiener, State Senator

Susan Eggman, Assemblymember, Chair of the Legislative Women's Caucus

Todd Gloria, Assemblymember

Evan Low, Assemblymember, Chair of the Legislative LGBT Caucus

Lori Droste, Berkeley City Council Member

Geoff Kors, Palm Springs City Council Member and Former Executive Director, Equality California

Darryl Moore, Former Berkeley City Council Member

Roberta Achtenberg, Trustee, California State University Board of Trustees

Val Cuevas, West Contra Costa School Board

Bevan Dufty, BART Board and former San Francisco Supervisor

John Lindner, Franklin-McKinley School District Board Member

Amanda Abarbanel-Rice, Educator

Marcy Adelman, OpenHouse

Julie Bagniefski, Educator

Kim Beeson, Educator

Alison Bernstein, Attorney

Sarah Cline, Educator

Jennifer Corn, Principal, Thousand Oaks School

Valerie Corral, Director Wo/Men's Alliance for Medical Marijuana

Billy Curtis, Director, UC Berkeley Gender Equity Resource Center

Masen Davis, Former Executive Director of The Transgender Law Center

Tracy Davis, Berkeley Planning Commissioner

Steven Disselhorst, Our Family Coalition Board of Directors

Leslie Ewing, Executive Director, Pacific Center

Elizabeth Friedman, Senior Director of Development, UC Berkeley Haas School of Business

Rebecca Gebhart

Solange Gould, Department of Public Health, Office of Health Equity

Hali Hammer, Director of Primary Care, San Francisco Health Network

Linda Jacobson

Mary Jacobs, College Career Center Assistant, Berkeley High School

Rosina Keren, Middle School Counselor

Alec Mapa, Comedian, "America's Gaysian Sweetheart"

Perlita Payne, Librarian, Alameda County Library

Penny Peak, Director of Development, Cal State East Bay College of Business and Economics, Athletics

Margot Pepper, Educator and Author

Sean Poremba, Educator

Sayre Reece, National LGBT Task Force

William Rogers, CEO, Goodwill of San Francisco, San Mateo, and Marin

Sandy Sandall, Genentech QA Technical Manager

Beverly Scott, retired

Andrea Shorter, Atlas Leadership Strategies; Out and Equal Community Relations Director, former San Francisco Community College District

Janey Skinner, Faculty, City College of San Francisco

Frances Sotcher

Joan Starr

Catherine Teare, Associate Director, High Value Care, California Health Care Foundation

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Catherine Teare, Associate Director, High-value Care, California Health Care Foundation

Libby Trumbull, Educator

Mary Wells

Barbara Wenger, Educator

Susanne Zuerbig, Jon Logan Family Foundation

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

U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin

CA State Senator Mark Leno

CA State Senator Scott Wiener

CA State Assemblymember Tom Ammiano

CA State Assemblymember Carol Migden

Berkeley Councilmember Darryl Moore

Berkeley Councilmember Kriss Worthington

Berkeley Councilmember Lori Droste

Oakland Councilmember Rebecca Kaplan

Oakland Councilmember candidate Peggy Moore

Palm Springs City Councilmember Geoff Kors

Alameda Superior Court Judge Tara Flanagan

Alameda Superior Court Vicki Kolakowski

BART Board Bevan Duffy

BART Board Rebecca Saltzman

Alameda County Dem Central Committee Ces Rosales

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

In addition to my work directly with LGBTQ organizations, my past 25 years of working toward racial, economic and gender equity all impact the LGBTQ community. Some highlights are: as an attorney and creator of the Civil Rights Legal Division of the Coalition on Homelessness and on the board of the Community Housing Partnership, I worked to end homelessness and create affordable housing. As the Director of Legal Affairs for the Drug Policy Alliance, and as a founder of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, I worked to end the War on Drugs, legalize cannabis, reduce sentencing and eliminate the drastic collateral consequences of felony convictions (eg. barriers to jobs, housing, reunification with family, public benefits, etc.). Midway through my 11 years at Our Family Coalition, I ran for and was elected to the Berkeley School Board (re-elected in 2016 with nearly 40,000 votes), where I have been working on safe schools, quality education, mental healthcare for kids, and career technical education, all which benefit our students.

When I left Our Family Coalition, I worked at the California School-Based Health alliance, helping to bring healthcare to students where they are every day: at school. I currently work at a social justice oriented family foundation where I am able to support a variety of social justice projects.

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

I have been working with and for the people of this community and CA to change the institutions that unfairly tilt the balance in favor of some, and against the rest of us. I love this community, which is why I've always worked hard to make sure that opportunity was available to each and every person in it.

In my first job out of law school, I represented homeless people working their way out of poverty and helping identify stable, affordable housing for local families.

As a co-founding board member of the Ella Baker Center, I worked with Van Jones to reform our criminal justice system, championed restorative justice programs and defended those without resources to defend themselves.

As a leader in the LGBTQ movement, I fought for the rights and dignity of queer families working toward marriage equality, empowering LGBTQ families to live and thrive as equals.

I've worked in our public schools for over a decade – as a parent volunteer, an advocate for health care in schools and now in my second term on the Berkeley School Board, where I'm working to end the school-to-prison pipeline and give every student a quality public school education.

My commitment to equity, public education and criminal justice reform has earned me the endorsement of the California Teachers Association, the California Federation of Teachers, ten state legislators, former State Senator Loni Hancock, the Ella Baker Center co-Founder Van Jones, Equality California and hundreds more.

I have been with my wife for over 25 years and we have two children, the youngest of whom is pansexual and gender queer. This has given me a unique perspective on the current needs of our queer youth.

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

I would be honored to have the support of the Stonewall Democratic Club. First because I am the best person to represent the values of this District and have spent many years fighting for LGBTQ families like mine, and for full equity and inclusion for LGBTQ people. I love this district and will be a strong representative both here in the district and up in Sacramento. I am also a viable candidate with a clear path to victory.

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### Q18 What would be your main policy goals?

Public Education- Seeing so many inequities in our education system, especially among low-income students of color, it's clear that we must take a holistic approach to public education and be intentional about crafting impactful policies that address student needs from the cradle to their careers. A robust entry point into our public educational system is critical, which is why I strongly favor funding universal pre-schooling, creating deeper subsidies for low-income communities and ensuring that every student comes to school healthy and ready to learn. If we want to upend an inequitable system, we need to do so by ensuring that every child has the opportunity to gain access to the resources they need for their academic and professional future.

Affordability for working families- This district is on the frontlines of the housing crisis. Working families are getting priced out of this district, unable to buy or rent in the communities they've lived in for decades. We have to address the rising costs of housing and do more to create economic equity – including access to health care, paid family leave and affordable child care. The current displacement crisis also leaves a huge carbon footprint by contributing to the increase in car usage over long distances. This district encompasses some of the wealthiest Californians and some of our state's poorest residents.

Criminal Justice: We must do more to level the playing field by ending the school-to-prison pipeline, reforming our criminal justice system and giving every Californian the same fair shot at success. I've worked to change our criminal justice system, helping those who have served their time reenter society, where they can be productive and successful. I've seen how "justice" is unevenly applied to people of color and worked to defend those without the resources to defend themselves. We need sentencing reform and alternatives to incarceration including the expansion of restorative justice practices. In addition, we need to resource programs that assist the reentry population with housing and workforce development as they are released from custody.

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### **Q19** How do these goals relate to the LGBT community?

LGBTQ people are a part of our society and are impacted by all of the same issues that impact the community at large. In many cases, such as access to healthcare, income disparities and access to employment, LGBTQ people face larger disparities than our straight counterparts. This is particularly true for the transgender members of our community.

Specifically in the area of education, I have worked for full inclusion and end to discrimination and bullying for many years. While we have made great strides in providing safe spaces for many young gay and lesbian students, there is still much work to do in many parts of the state. The next frontier of this work needs to help gender non-binary and Transgender achieve gain full inclusion in schools.

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

Some of my early legislation will focus on these areas:

High quality public education for all students.

Safe and welcoming school environments.

End the school to prison pipeline.

Get the state involved in solving homelessness; this is not just a local challenge.

Promote affordable, green, transit oriented housing.

Eliminate post-conviction barriers to employment by allowing people with convictions to access licences that are currently not available to them.

Help with bail reform.

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### **Q21** Why do you feel you can win this race?

For more than 25 years, I have been a leader in Assembly District 15. As a result, my record of service in this community, is unmatched on issues ranging from education to affordable housing, access to health care, support for working families, LGBTQ equality, and criminal justice reform.

More than 200 local leaders and members of the AD-15 community have publicly declared their support for my campaign for State Assembly, including ten state legislators, retired State Senator Loni Hancock, civil rights leader Eva Paterson, Richmond Councilmember Jael Myrick, Berkeley City Vice Mayor Linda Maio, Berkeley City Councilmembers Susan Wengraf and Lori Droste, School Board members Beatriz Levya-Cutler, Roseanne Torres and Jody London, Ella Baker Center co-founder Van Jones and dozens of local activists and leaders. The California Teachers Association, California Federation of Teachers, Peralta Federation of Teachers, Berkeley Federation of Teachers and Equality California have also weighed in with early endorsements for my campaign.

Fundraising is off to a strong start, and the depth of my longtime relationships within Assembly District 15, with progressives throughout the community and state and advocates for social justice nationally has yielded over 400 individual donors, donating over \$175,000. My hard work and broad network have helped me break through a crowded field and earn the support of contributors large and small.

In 2016, I was re-elected to the Berkeley School Board in a citywide election. I received nearly 40,000 votes in that election. That vote share earned me the top spot of any candidate in any Berkeley race that year, garnering more votes than the mayor.

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