

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 submitting your completed questionnaire is 11:59 PM on Thursday, May 13th for the AD 18 endorsement meeting tentatively scheduled for the evening of May 26th. 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 *

Janani@jananiforca.com

Name (First Last) *

Janani Ramachandran

Are you a registered Democrat *

Yes

No

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

California Assembly

Jurisdiction *

California Assembly Seat 18 (most of Oakland, San Leandro, Alameda)

District *

Assembly District 18

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 am affiliated with the following organizations and fellowships:

LGBTQ Victory Empowerment Fellow 2020
Equality California NorCal Leadership Fellow 2019
East Bay Young Democrats- Member
California Young Democrats- API Caucus- Member
California Democratic Renters Council- Member
Wellstone Democratic Club - Member
Our Revolution East Bay- Member
East Bay DSA- Member
APA Dems- Member
Oakland East Bay Democratic Club- Member
Queers United in Revolutionary Subversion - Past member

I have not participated heavily with the East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club, but I have been to several meetings with the EBSDC, and I have been involved with these above-listed organizations.
.....

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. *

I openly identify as lesbian and queer, and have also been deeply connected to various LGBTQ communities in California and beyond my personal and professional capacities. If elected, I would be California's first LGBTQ API female-identified state legislator. I would also be California's first South Asian female-identified state legislator.

One of the social justice areas in which I have fiercely advocated for in my career includes domestic violence, with a particular focus on addressing the needs of LGBTQ survivors. I am deeply aware of how survivors face seemingly insurmountable barriers from every direction. I witnessed these challenges first-hand during my post-college employment at a network of community health clinics as a home visiting case manager. My clients were low-income, immigrant domestic violence survivors. Most of them did not have a lawyer and were forced to navigate complex court systems independently. Many were still trapped in abusive relationships, desperately trying to leave but unable to find shelters with available beds. I advocated for these individuals to the extent that I could, provided basic education on their fundamental legal rights, and liaised with government agencies, shelters, and hospitals. I recognized how LGBTQ individuals face disproportionately high levels of assault, stalking, rape, and familial violence compared to their heterosexual counterparts throughout this work. Because these realities are vastly underreported, queer victims of violence remain invisible. Queer survivors, mainly from non-white communities, often do not seek support because they fear being outed, discredited, and publicly gaslighted. Many victims even fear that perpetrators of violence will utilize criminal justice institutions against them as a threat to silence their voices.

In my first half of law school, I had meaningful experiences representing low-income domestic violence survivors at legal aid agencies. However, I questioned the lack of outreach to potential LGBTQ clients, as well as the apparent absence of LGBTQ attorneys and policy leaders in this space. This led me to engage in constructive conversations with academics and family law practitioners and seek mentorship from pioneering LGBTQ rights lawyers. One of my key projects has been researching ways that the organization can expand to working with LGBTQ perpetrators of violence, empowering them to heal and transform their lives. I later began a clerkship with a family law firm, Ross Family Law, which was founded and led by a well-known openly lesbian attorney. I have worked on several domestic violence and family law cases representing LGBTQ individuals.

During law school, I founded Berkeley Resistance Against Inter-Partner Violence (BRAIV), which advocated for survivors through court observations, educational campaigns, and partnerships with legal aid organizations. As most of my group leaders were also queer, BRAIV worked to ensure that campus conversations around violence were intersectional, and inclusive of diverse gender identities, sexualities, and races. We collaborated with other student groups I held leadership positions in, including Queers United In Revolutionary Subversion and Berkeley Law Womxn of Color Collective.

In recent years, I sought opportunities to engage with other aspiring LGBTQ political leadership and was selected to be an Equality California fellow at the 2019 Northern California Leadership Academy. In this program, I was inspired by the several LGBTQ elected officials, government leaders, and campaign strategists that we spoke with. I also developed a community with dozens of aspiring queer political leaders and still continue to collaborate with them. In 2020, I was selected to be an LGBTQ Victory Empowerment Fellow, where I had similarly positive experiences in learning from and collaborating with elected LGBTQ leaders and others involved in politics.

Most recently, as an attorney at Family Violence Appellate Project, I engaged in legal advocacy efforts that furthered the rights of the LGBTQ community. For example, I wrote letters opposing HUD's proposed attacks on eliminating shelter options for the transgender community and advocating for greater family leave protections that expanded the definition of what a family could consist of (which significantly benefitted LGBTQ families). I also conducted legal education presentations on the intersections of tenants' rights, workers' rights, and domestic violence for LGBTQ immigrant and youth advocacy organizations based in the Bay Area.

Throughout my life, I have been committed to furthering the goals of the LGBTQ community in all that I do. I fully intend to continue to pursue this through my work as a state legislator.

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

Yes – I have promoted candidates endorsed by Equality California and LGBTQ Victory Fund on my social media accounts and have spread the word. And I have made small financial contributions to the campaigns of LGBTQ candidates as well.

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

Bobbi Lopez, Alameda County Democratic Party Central Committee Member
 Kieryn Darkwater, District 18 ADEM delegate
 Rodney Nickens, District 18 ADEM delegate
 Sophia Andary, Commissioner, Commission on the Status of Women San Francisco
 Aziz Akbari, President of Alameda County Water District
 Shanell Williams, President, Board of Trustees at City College of San Francisco
 Olaywa Austin, Founder and ED of Oakland Black Pride
 Minister Cherri Murphy, Lead Organizer with Gig Workers Rising and Faith Organizer with EBASE.
 Reverend Sandhya Jha, Oakland Housing and Labor Activist
 Chaney Turner, Founder, Town Biz and Beyond Equity

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

I plan to support legislation to address a number of issues faced by the LGBTQ Community, and would support bills prioritized by the California Legislative LGBTQ Caucus.

In addition, I would draft bills that address domestic violence in LGBTQ communities. I believe that violence against LGBTQ individuals must be recognized as a public health crisis in California, and given far greater attention and resources on a state-wide basis. LGBTQ individuals face greater incidents of abuse than their heterosexual counterparts; 61% of bisexual women, 44% of lesbian women, 37% of bisexual men, and 26% of gay men experience rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner during their lives. In addition, in a national 2015 survey, 54% of transgender individuals reported that they experienced some form of intimate partner violence, and 47% reported that they had been sexually assaulted. This violence, in turn, leads to immense consequences to physical health and longevity, higher rates of mental health struggles and suicide, economic instability, and homelessness, particularly among youth and transgender victims.

I would also advocate for policies that address the need for greater services for our houseless LGBTQ population and discrimination in the housing and rental industry. LGBTQ adults are twice as likely as the general population to experience homelessness, which is significantly higher among Black and Latinx LGBTQ communities. 30% of transgender individuals in California have experienced homelessness during their lives.

I would also work to address the many issues that exasperate homelessness. For example, it is clear that LGBTQ individuals are more likely to live in poverty; in 2018, 612,000 LGBTQ California lived below 200% of the federal poverty line, with an average income of \$24,000 per person per year. 20% of LGBTQ Californians experience food insecurity.

I would also fight for greater workplace protections for LGBTQ individuals. 1 in 5 LGBTQ Americans have experienced discrimination in the workplace or housing, compounded among LGBTQ people of color. Transgender Californians are three times more likely to be unemployed than cis-gender Californians. In a recent survey, 26% reported being fired, denied a promotion, or not hired because of their gender identity or expression.

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

This Special Election is about more than just winning State Assembly in District 18. It's about what kind of California we want and deserve as Californians. It's about leadership that restores the faith and trust generations of Californians that many past leaders have squandered. Do we believe that honesty, integrity, compassion and justice still matter? Do we believe that we can be a state of widely progressive diverse ideas and beliefs that can take our state to the next level? Can we be a state that, when the rest of the nation is watching, will be a beacon of freedom, truth and goodness to all who watch? My campaign proudly focuses on essential progressive issues, and will never compromise its progressive values or objectives. Ultimately, I am running a corporate-free campaign, and I am fighting for bold, progressive policies starting with implementing a \$22 minimum wage, Medicare for All, and a Green New Deal with a racial equity lens. I am the only candidate running on such a progressive platform, and I do believe that being the only Oakland candidate, with deep community ties and engagement on issues. I also firmly believe that I can establish myself in all three cities, Oakland, Alameda, and San Leandro as the progressive candidate focused on fighting for justice for all. I believe voters will recognize this, and will vote for my campaign principles come June 29th.

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms