



## Asian Pacific American Democratic Caucus of Alameda County

[www.apacaucus.org](http://www.apacaucus.org)

### 2014 Endorsement Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in being considered for endorsement by the Asian Pacific American Democratic Caucus of Alameda County. Please answer each question in 250 words or less. Be honest and direct. Brief answers are satisfactory.

**Please note: your questionnaire will be posted on our website for Caucus members to review.**

#### Candidate/Campaign Information

Candidate Name: Abel Guillen

Home City, State, Zip: Oakland CA 94612

Office Sought: Oakland City Council

District: 2

Are you the incumbent? Yes  No

Campaign Website: AbelforOakland.com

Campaign Email: abel@abelforoakland.com

Campaign Phone: 510-454-8307

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION

a) Are you a registered Democrat? Yes  No

- (The APA Democratic Caucus can only endorse registered Democrats)

b) Are you an APA Caucus member? Yes  No

c) Why are you seeking the Caucus's endorsement?

I would be honored to receive your endorsement of my candidacy. District 2 is one of the most diverse districts in Oakland, with large Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, including a thriving Chinatown, Vietnamese commercial districts and local Korean merchants, among others. I am committed to serving the needs of all Asian American and Pacific Islander residents and business owners who deserve a Councilmember with the necessary experience, financial background and consensus-building skills to be a strong advocate for District 2 on the City Council.

d) List the top 10-15 endorsements ONLY. (Please reference your website if you want to alert us to more).

I am proud to be endorsed by:

Assemblymember Rob Bonta  
 Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan  
 Board of Equalization Member Betty Yee  
 Oakland City Council President Pat Kernighan  
 Oakland Mayor Jean Quan  
 Peralta Colleges Trustee Nicky Gonzalez Yuen  
 Alameda City Councilmember Lena Tam  
 Oakland City Council Member Henry Chang Jr. (Ret.)  
 Carl Chan, Business Leader  
 Sherry Hirota, Executive Director, Asian Health Services  
 Edward W. Yu, Chinese American Citizens Alliance, Oakland  
 Malcolm Amado Uno, Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance  
 Greg Chan, Asian Pacific American Democratic Club  
 Alameda Labor Council  
 Building and Construction Trades of Alameda County

Please visit my website [AbelforOakland.com](http://AbelforOakland.com) for a full list of over 100 endorsers.

If we endorse you, will you use our name in your campaign materials? Yes  \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

e) How long have you lived in the district which you are seeking to represent? \_\_\_\_\_  
 District 2 has always been the area of Oakland I consider home. Due to the quirks of political redistricting, I had to recently move back into the District. But I have served residents of District 2 as an elected Trustee for the Peralta Community Colleges for 8 years.

f) Education background: Schools you attended, date graduated, major and degree earned  
 I am the first in my family to graduate from college, and earned my B.A. and Master's Degree in Public Policy from the University of California, Berkeley.

g) Employment: Last three (3) paid positions, indicating name of employer, job title and length of employment.

1. Peralta Community Colleges Trustee, 8 years, Current
2. Senior Executive Vice President, Caldwell Flores Winters (Municipal Finance Firm), since 2000
3. Policy Analyst, Gore-Lieberman campaign, in 2000

h) Names of any community or nonprofit organizations in which you have been an active volunteer in the past 3-5 years  
 I have been active in speaking to undergraduates and K-12 students in sharing my path from growing up in a working class neighborhood to being one of 5 seniors who was honored as one of 5 graduates in my entire class for leadership and service. I have served on the boards of Familias Unidas - a mental health agency and am on the board of the League of Conservation Voters, as well as the Diversity in Health Training Institute.

### **CANDIDATE QUESTIONS**

Please limit each response to no more than a total of 250 words.

1. What differentiates you from your opponents for the elected office you seek?

I have more than thirteen years working with various groups and organizations at all levels both professionally as an executive at a prominent California municipal finance firm as well as an elected official as the Board President for the Peralta Community Colleges. I am the only candidate in the race with the necessary experience, financial background and consensus-building skills the Oakland City Council needs now. Our District 2 representative must be able to hit the ground running, identifying solutions and working with the community and other groups to move our city forward. My proven track record of being able to build consensus with my colleagues and negotiate with others will be a valuable asset on the City Council.

2. Describe one issue for the district you want to represent for which you have provided leadership and about which you are passionate (This does not necessarily need to be an issue that particularly affects the Asian community.)

As a Community College Trustee, I have been a leader in advocating for quality affordable education and job preparation for our youth, to ensure they have opportunities that give them a pathway to success and keep them off the streets and out of trouble. Improving safety in our community is top priority for me and for the API community in the District. We need to eliminate blight, illegal dumping, litter, and street crime! Creating safer neighborhoods and improving 911 response times mean that our residents and local merchants will thrive. Prostitution on International Boulevard is unacceptable. As Councilmember, I'll work with State agencies, law enforcement, the District Attorney, and local community members through organizations like EBAYC to go after johns and pimps who are sexually exploiting our youth and ensure that the motels used for sex trafficking remain closed.

3. What percentage of the district you [or intend to] represent are of Asian or Pacific heritage?  
From the 2010 census data, the District is approximately 35% Asian/Pacific Heritage.

4. Please identify the three largest API ethnicities in your district.

1. Chinese (Cantonese speaking)
2. Vietnamese
3. Southeast Asian (Laotian/Cambodian/Burmese)

5. Please identify the most at-risk API community in your district and describe why.

The most at-risk API communities in District 2 are the Laotian and Burmese communities primarily because of the high language barrier, as the City does not have the capacity currently to support translation for these languages on a regular basis. It is therefore difficult for these families to access needed services. Also, due to language and cultural barriers, many are suspicious of government authorities and the police and are unlikely to report crimes, which unfortunately makes them vulnerable targets for crimes like street robberies, which are a problem in the District.

6. List the three top concerns of members of the APIs in your district.

1. Safety
2. Jobs
3. Affordable Housing

7. Based on your observations, how active are members of the API communities in local civic activities? (in your district/city)

Participation is strongly dependent on location and translation services available. Events in Chinatown get high turnout from the API community and the Cantonese-speaking NCPC (Neighborhood Crime

Prevention Council) also has high participation. However, general events that don't take into account these factors or don't do specific outreach to the API community generally receive low participation.

	Rarely	Somewhat	Very active	Comments
Cultural events			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Health/services fairs		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Current affair educational events		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Political events	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

8. What would it take to increase API community participation in these activities? List three strategies you have taken (or intend to take) to increase participation.

1. Make translation services available, particularly for the high populations of Chinese and Vietnamese speakers
2. Include Chinatown, the San Antonio neighborhood and other neighborhoods with significant API populations as venues for a variety of civic events in the District.
3. Partner with organizations like EBAYC (East Bay Asian Youth Center) and APEN (Asian Pacific Environmental Network) that are already doing grassroots outreach and organizing in the API community.

9. Please identify all Asian/Pacific American candidates whom you have personally endorsed over the past 5 years including this election cycle. If there are none, please explain.

Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan  
 Board of Equalization Member Betty Yee  
 Oakland Mayor Jean Quan  
 Peralta Colleges Trustee Nicky Gonzalez Yuen  
 Alameda City Councilmember Lena Tam  
 Amy Eng, Candidate for Oakland School Board  
 Oakland USD School Board member David Kakishiba

10. How can the Caucus help you better understand and represent API constituents? List three strategies.

1. I would work with the Caucus to recruit excellent API constituents to serve on City Boards and Commissions to ensure strong representation from the API community
2. I hope to work closely with the Caucus on policy issues you have identified that are important for the City's API community and look forward to carrying legislation at the City Council.
3. The Caucus has demonstrated a strong commitment to mentoring youth with its "API Political Courage" Scholarship and I would look to the Caucus for suggesting youth candidates for the City's Summer internship programs.

11. How do you see yourself utilizing the resources of the Caucus?

If endorsed, I would proudly display the Caucus endorsement on my website and campaign materials. It would be fantastic if members of the caucus would help volunteer on my campaign, which includes a targeted effort to Chinese voters, in particular.

**Deadline for responses: 5 p.m. Friday, Aug. 22, 2014**

Please save your responses in a **pdf format** and e-mail your completed questionnaire to:  
**karen.fong@sbcglobal.net**

***Thank you for taking the time to seek our endorsement.***