

Name: Rebecca Kaplan Office you are seeking: Mayor of Oakland

East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in obtaining an early 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 (with the exception of candidates for statewide or federal offices) must also complete a candidate questionnaire to be considered for an

endorsement. An LGBTQI candidate may be considered for early endorsement by the membership prior to the close of filing for a particular office provided 60 percent of the current Board members agree on the suitability of doing so. Candidates selected for early endorsement who complete a questionnaire by the deadline will be invited to appear at an early endorsement meeting on Wednesday, July 9, 2014.

Endorsements are decided by the general membership, and candidates must receive at least 60% of votes cast in order to be endorsed.



The deadline to return your completed questionnaire is Wednesday, July 2nd for the July 9th East Bay Stonewall early endorsement meeting for the November general election.

1. *Are you a registered Democrat? If so, for how long? With which Democratic organizations are you affiliated?*

Thank you very much for the opportunity, as a long-time member and previously endorsed candidate, to seek the early endorsement of the Stonewall Democratic Club. I am proudly a registered Democrat and have been a member of the Stonewall Democratic Club for many years. I have been registered in California's Democratic Party since 2008, and also had early experience in Democratic Party efforts.

One of my key political campaign experiences was volunteering in a powerful coalition in Massachusetts in 1994, to re-elect Senator Kennedy when he faced a well-funded challenge from Mitt Romney (after Romney was ahead in early polls). That progressive Democratic victory was based on uniting union members, LGBT activists and the pro-choice movement at a time when such groups had not necessarily been working together. That experience helped form my view of politics and what is possible when groups work together. In addition, I am a member of the Harvey Milk Club, the Alice B. Toklas Club, the MGO Democratic Club, the East Bay Young Democrats, the John George Democratic Club and others.

2. *Are you a member of the East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club? If so, for how long? If not, have you supported or contributed to the Club in some other way? What other lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) organizations are you affiliated with and in what capacity?*

I am proud to be a dues-paying member of the Stonewall Democratic Club for over a decade. I have been active in LGBT organizations and efforts throughout my life, starting from age 17, when I first came out. As an undergraduate at MIT, I served on the Board of our LGBT student organization (GAMIT). As a leader of MIT's LGBT group, within a two years, I grew the organization from 12 people who met in near-secrecy, to a powerful large presence on campus with hundreds of members and

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numerous public events each year. I led the group to advocate for our needs publicly, and together we successfully launched of an LGBT studies program, improved support for LGBT students, passed a non-discrimination policy and convinced the university administration to publicly denounce the anti-gay policies of the U.S. Military. We also worked in coalition with other student activists to win additional efforts, including the divestment of our university from the Apartheid regime in South Africa. For these efforts (and more), I was given an award by MIT for “outstanding contribution” to life on the campus.

I have also been active in the League of California Cities GLBTO Caucus, the Harvey Milk Club, the Alice B. Tolkas Club and participated in trainings with the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund. I’ve led the City of Oakland to support the rebirth of our annual Oakland Pride Festival, and most recently worked closely with a coalition of LGBT-serving youth groups to find new funding for services in Oakland.

3. *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.*

My work to advance LGBT rights began at a young age when I spearheaded my MIT’s premiere LGBT student group to create a welcoming community for LGBT students at the time. Recently, MIT was rated the most gay-friendly school in the country and I’m proud my club’s success could contribute to that distinction.

My political career also includes many efforts to advance LGBT rights and nurture an inclusive community for LGBT people and families. Most recently, I identified over \$1 million in additional grant funding available for the Oakland Fund for Children & Youth (OFCY) to distribute to community organizations that serve youth in Oakland. The previous funding did not include adequate support for LGBTQ youth, who often suffer disproportionate homelessness and victimization. After I identified this key funding, the Oakland City Council joined me in passing a funding package for a 3-year grant cycle that is expected to serve over 500 young people in Oakland per year.

In addition, I supported efforts to provide free HIV testing throughout our communities, helped regenerate Oakland Pride and successfully secured violence prevention funding, especially focused on youth (which includes services for LGBT youth). I have also worked actively in support of laws to protect access to healthcare for the LGBT community, including non-discrimination laws that cover medical care, as well as domestic partner policies and marriage equality with regard to equal access to family medical benefits. I have also supported targeted efforts to specifically reach out to and support LGBT community around health issues such as cigarette smoking cessation, cancer prevention and screening, and preventing bullying.

I have been actively leading efforts to stop anti-trans violence in Oakland, including personally convening meetings between police leaders and trans educators and activists, and working to ensure that incidents of anti-trans violence are taken seriously. I introduced a resolution to declare Nov 20 “Transgender Remembrance Day” in Oakland to bring transgender awareness to the greater Oakland area. I was awarded the “Warrior Award” by TransVision for my leadership and continue to work with them today.

I have been the target of anti-lesbian sentiment in the past when my opponent last cycle mocked my lifestyle and style of dress. The East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club stood firm with me then, and I am forever grateful for your support during that moment for me. Just as the East Bay Stonewall

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Democratic Club stood with me then, I will continue to stand with the Stonewall Democratic Club to continue the progress we've made together to fight for a better society.

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

I have the distinct honor of advocating for LGBT issues in a community that is home to one of the largest populations of lesbian households per capita in the nation. My longstanding work in the community has covered many topics, including health and AIDS/HIV, support for local business development, anti-violence, and more.

Furthermore, I facilitated the formation of Oakland Pride and provided staff support for their efforts to create an Oakland Pride celebration. As a city legislator, I repealed a 131-year-old law that banned cross-dressing. While many criticized me for such a "minor" legislative action, I knew that if I did not take on the fight, that the issue would not be addressed and transgender individuals would continue to be persecuted under outdated thinking and laws.

I have also sponsored several pieces of legislation that aid our community, including updating Oakland's cabaret ordinance to ease the permit process for performances.

Alongside a diverse coalition, I am expanding the respect, visibility and participation of the LGBT community in Oakland – while making real improvements in transit and road repair, public safety and jobs in our community. In the years ahead, we can continue to be a key player together in the improvement of Oakland as we work to get illegal guns off the streets – including stopping violence against members of the LGBT community – and improve quality of life by expanding economic opportunity through local job creation, community revitalization and transit-oriented development, and expanding the role and leadership opportunities for LGBT people in Oakland include the city's boards and commissions so that the LGBT community has representation and a voice at every level of government. I ask for your support to continue this important work.

5. *Who are your LGBT supporters? What LGBT candidates have you supported, and did it include financial or campaign support?*

In addition to stepping up to run myself in 2000 as the first openly-lesbian candidate for office in Oakland, I am honored to be endorsed by dedicated LGBT leaders such as (former) State Senator Sheila Kuehl. I am also proud to have supported actively numerous LGBT candidates for office as well.

For example, when John Russo was elected City Attorney, there was a sudden special election to select the District 2 Councilmember. Although some of my allies pushed me hard to support their candidates, I committed myself and worked extensively for Peggy Moore as a candidate for Council District 2. Without that campaign, it is quite likely that the needs and the voice of the LGBT community would not have been heard in that race, despite being a large portion of that district. Other LGBT candidates I have supported include The Honorable Darryl Moore, The Honorable Rebecca Saltzman, State Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins and more.

6. *What makes you uniquely qualified for the office you are seeking? What differentiates you from the other candidates in the race?*

I am the only LGBT candidate in the race. I am most qualified because of my genuine city-wide understanding of what voters are looking for and how to achieve it– the kind of bold vision and

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collaborative energy that I have exemplified for years before this campaign. Oakland residents desire change in leadership of local government, seeking bold ideas and a new vision for our city.

As the only member of the city council that represents the entire city, and as a dynamic candidate that represents this change, I consider the entire city to be my base already. I ran a coalition-building campaign that gained support from a wide community, including both business and labor PACs. I won within every council district throughout the city by over 61% of the vote in November 2012. Currently, many voters have a strong desire for a mayor who will provide proactive leadership. I believe I will connect with the majority of this city's voters again this year.

In addition, my background includes:

- B.A. in Psychology (Phi Beta Kappa) from M.I.T.
- M.A. in Urban and Environmental Policy from Tufts University
- J.D. from Stanford Law School

My work experience also includes working as a housing rights attorney in Oakland.

7. *What do you hope to accomplish if you are elected? What would be your main policy goals? How do these goals relate to the LGBT community?*

As the city's top elected officer and head of the executive branch of government, I will take direct action to ensure that policies are implemented on specific issues ranging from genuinely implementing our local hiring policy, to making sure businesses can do their licenses and registration online and thus, avoid wasting time standing in line, to ensuring our zoning is updated to align with our city's goals including "smart growth." My work will benefit the LGBT community both in terms of LGBT specific efforts (such as programs for LGBT youth, senior housing, etc) and also by expanding positive exposure of the LGBT community throughout Oakland and the surrounding area.

My primary policy goals are:

Creating Safe Neighborhoods – improving the trust between the community and the police, filling vacant positions, shutting down illegal gun dealers and making sure we have working equipment like police radios.

Creating Local Jobs – championing job-creating projects that improve infrastructure in the city, improving support for local businesses, and ensuring local hiring.

Giving our City a Fresh Start – working to keep our sports teams and increase economic opportunity, supporting community gardens, cracking down on illegal dumping, and maintaining our parks and playing fields, and making sure key public services are provided to every neighborhood in Oakland.

Specific examples of successes I've had in office include:

- Revised zoning in the downtown area to help attract specific "growth" areas by removing onerous "conditional use permit" requirements in certain situations/areas for businesses like bike shops, restaurants/cafes, yoga studios, and more.
- Expanded our tax credit "Enterprise Zone" and expanded publicity about this program, which provides California employer tax credits with an incentive to hire area residents.

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- Re-started the Oakland LGBT Leadership Roundtable, and helped to launch Oakland Pride.
- Organized broad coalition to pass four Revenue Measures on the ballot (in July 2009), all of which received over 70% of the vote. These included a hotel tax and a cannabis tax.
- Passed new policy to help prevent blighted, vacant, foreclosed properties, and which requires foreclosing companies/banks to take responsibility for the upkeep of their properties.
- Expanded public outreach education and referral materials for residents facing foreclosure, and access to legal help to fight foreclosures and unjust evictions.
- Resolved a years-old council dispute about billboards by negotiating a resolution in which the City of Oakland granted certain freeway-facing billboard permits and received fees, removal of “neighborhood billboards,” and a proportion of future revenue.
- Obtained a grant from an outside agency to launch a new Free Transit Shuttle to connect Oakland’s core areas, from the waterfront and Jack London Square through Old Oakland, Chinatown, Downtown, Uptown and our growing arts and entertainment district.
- Supported efforts to provide free HIV testing throughout our communities, have helped to regenerate Oakland Pride (which prominently features health services for the LGBT community) and successfully secured violence prevention funding, especially focused on youth (which includes services for LGBT youth).
- Worked actively in support of laws to protect access to healthcare for the LGBT community, including non-discrimination laws that cover medical care, as well as domestic partner policies and marriage equality with regard to equal access to family medical benefits.
- Supported targeted efforts to specifically reach out to and support LGBT community around health issues such as cigarette smoking cessation, cancer prevention and screening, and preventing bullying.

8. *Why do you feel you can win this race?*

I am currently leading current polling, which shows I would receive approximately 26% of first place votes. Results of that poll estimate our campaign would earn 59% of the vote after all the ranked-choice votes are tallied (leading my next competitor by almost 30 percentage points).

When I was re-elected to the Oakland City Council in November 2012, I won with 64,933 votes - 61% of the vote (in the final round of vote tallies).

In addition, prior to being elected to the Oakland City Council, I served as an elected representative on the AC Transit board. In that seat, I represented all of Alameda County. In 2006, I was re-elected to that seat by over 80% of the vote for a region that covered all Oakland voters.

This represents a powerful starting place – and though turnout will be lower than when I won in 2008, my demonstrated ability to garner over 84,000 votes in a citywide election in Oakland is a strong foundation for earning a majority of votes cast in November’s mayoral election.

Moreover, because I have been successful in the previous ranked-choice voting system, I know how to attract the largest number of “second choice” votes from the plethora of other candidates. I will be

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using proven strategies to engage voters and earn second place votes for those casting first place votes for lesser-known candidates.

Please return you completed questionnaire to Joseph Greaves, East Bay Stonewall PAC Chair, by email at jsphgreaves@gmail.com. If you have questions, please contact Mr. Greaves at 415-987-9639.