

GLBT Alliance Questionnaire

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1. Please tell us why you would like the endorsement of Santa Cruz County's grassroots progressive gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender political organization

I want every citizen in Santa Cruz to know that I fully support equality and justice for the GLBT community. Should I receive your endorsement, I intend to publish it in all of my campaign literature so no one can mistake my absolute commitment to GLBT equality and rights. I consider the GLBT community a significant part of the community and I want to let everyone in the GLBT community know that my long-time support for GLBT rights has not wavered and that they can depend upon me for continued activism in support of GLBT rights.

2. Please tell us about your history with the GLBT community.

I have been an active supporter of GLBT rights and equality since I first understood the issue in 1969 as a result of the Stonewall riots in New York City. I played an active leadership role in fighting the Briggs Amendment in the 1970s, including publishing and distributing 100,000 copies of a brochure I produced responding to that bigoted effort. Since then, I have been a monitor in every Pride parade since they started in Santa Cruz, and as an elected public official I have worked hard to support domestic partnership coverage in the City of Santa Cruz and in the UC system. I am outspoken in my public support for GLBT rights, including marriage rights, and I am very proud of having been named an ally of the GLBT community in past Pride events. I am a member of the Diversity Center.

3. Please describe your philosophy for working with minority communities of which you are not a member and, specifically, how this will manifest itself in working with the GLBT community.

I believe in making myself accessible to all members of our community, and in particular to those segments of the community that have been denied access to power in the past. I have been and will be responsive to the needs of minority communities and will work closely with the leadership of such communities to accomplish goals that they establish for themselves. This approach certainly includes the GLBT community and I believe that my record demonstrates that this is not an empty commitment.

4. If elected, will you be willing to work with the GLBT Alliance to advocate for equal benefits for all city employees, including employees with domestic partners, if your city does not already offer such parity?

Yes. We already have domestic partner benefits in Santa Cruz, thanks to my work along with other councilmembers in the past. But I will work to fix any problems that arise in the system in the future (as has been necessary a number of times in the past).

5. What would you do if your city considered associating with organizations – such as the Boy Scouts and the Salvation Army – that have clearly stated their intent to discriminate against GLBT people?

I would advocate against such associations unless they change their policies. I would seek out GLBT Alliance guidance as to the best way to communicate this position in any particular struggle with such organizations.

6. How would you use your position as a councilmember to advance the cause of equality for GLBT people.

As in the past, I would be open, visible, and active in defending GLBT rights in every public and private arena. I would support resolutions, as I have in the past, in support of GLBT issues, such as marriage equality. As in the past, I will continue to argue that we need to not just “tolerate” the GLBT community, but to welcome and celebrate the many contributions made by members of the GLBT community to every aspect of life in our community.

7. If elected, what will you do to strengthen the city’s relationship with the GLBT community?

I will continue to use my contacts in the GLBT community, as well as developing relationships with new GLBT activists, to discuss appropriate areas for City Council action with respect to promoting a stronger appreciation for the contributions of the GLBT community in Santa Cruz, supporting statewide and national initiatives to improve and/or defend the civil rights of GLBT individuals, and addressing concrete problems and issues that arise in our local community. I will continue to seek out GLBT individuals who would be willing serve on various city advisory bodies – both those that directly relate to issues of concern for the GLBT community, but also those that serve the community as a whole. I will continue to monitor and be responsive to concerns about how the Police Department and the criminal justice system and other City departments respond to the civil rights and other needs of the GLBT community.

8. How would you use your position as a councilmember to advance the cause of marriage equality?

I will continue to advocate publicly, both as an individual councilmember and as a member of the council, for full marriage rights for members of the GLBT community. I will speak out as an individual councilmember and I will support Council resolutions in support of marriage equality and in opposition to attempts at the state and federal level to pass laws, initiatives, or constitutional amendments banning marriage equality.

9. If you receive the GLBT Alliance’s endorsement, will you display it in your campaign literature.

Yes, and therefore I hope you make an early endorsement, so we can get it printed in my walking pieces and direct mail literature.

10. Have you received any endorsements which you believe would be of particular interest to the GLBT community?

It is too early to have any organizational endorsements so far in this election, but in past elections I have been endorsed by the Alliance and BAYMEC. I don’t presume to have those endorsements this time, until the groups make up their mind about whom to endorse. I have been endorsed by about 160 individuals already in this campaign including a number of public officials: Mardi Wormhoudt, Neal Coonerty, Fred Keeley, Sam Farr, Joe Simitian, Ryan Coonerty, Emily Reilly, and Ellen Pirie, Stephanie Harlan, Mark Stone, and Cynthia Mathews. I also have been endorsed already by Cece Pinheiro, Darlene Wilcox, Alan Savat, Gene Smith, and Kaleo Kaluhiwa.

11. Is there anything else you'd like us to know about you?

Just that my commitment to GLBT equality and civil rights is absolute and that I look for opportunities as a teacher and as a public official to educate the public about this important issue. I have been proud to be an outspoken activist on this issue and intend to continue working to defend the gains we have made and to push for further advances in GLBT open participation and equality in our community and our world.