

## **GLBT Alliance Questionnaire**

**Candidate Name:** Robert Rivas

**Campaign Committee Name:** Robert Rivas for Assembly 2018

**Political Party Affiliation:** Democrat

**Office Sought:** State Assembly District 30

**Primary Contact:** Robert Rivas

**Phone:**

**Email:**



**Campaign Address:** 361 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Hollister, CA 95023

**Cash on Hand:** 170,000

**Please describe your qualifications for the elected position you seek. Include your main issues, priorities if elected, key endorsements, plus anything else that you'd like our members to know about you and your candidacy.**

I have been a San Benito County Supervisor since 2010. Through my role as a Supervisor and an educator at San Benito High School, I strive to promote equality among all people and prevent discrimination based on race, religion, sex, gender, or sexual orientation. As Supervisor, I fought for strong environmental laws to protect our air and water, particularly as a leader for Measure J to ban fracking. I led the effort to build the first homeless resource center in San Benito County. I am a strong advocate for greater investments in public education, improvements to congested roads and highways, and I will fight to make housing more affordable. If elected, I will continue to be a leader for the issues I stood for as

Supervisor in San Benito County. Fighting for equality, comprehensive healthcare, education, clean air and water, more affordable housing, and better roads and highways will be my priorities when in the Assembly.

I am proud to have received endorsements from Equality California, California Teachers Association, California Nurses Association, Service Employees International Union, and the California Democratic Party. I grew up in farmworker housing, the son of an immigrant family, and then became the first in my family to graduate college. I am motivated by the sacrifices my mother and grandparents made to give me a better life--to lead and create better opportunities for everyone in my community.

**Why are you seeking the endorsement of Santa Cruz County's grassroots LGBTIQ political organization, the GLBT Alliance?**

I am seeking the endorsement of the GLBT Alliance because my campaign is one of inclusion. I want my campaign to truly represent the diversity present in AD30. I know that the GLBT Alliance has been fighting hard throughout its history against discriminatory propositions such as Prop 22 and Prop 8. I stand with groups like the GLBT Alliance to ensure marriage equality remains the law of the land, enact stronger laws to protect LGBTIQ youth in schools and provide housing to the homeless, make sure transgender issues are not ignored, provide comprehensive healthcare for everyone, and advocate for better STI and HIV/AIDS education. LGBTIQ rights and equality are important to me. I was the first elected official in San Benito County history to stand up for

our local LGBTIQ community. That is why I am the only candidate endorsed by Equality California.

**Please tell us about any past or current experiences or involvement you've had addressing LGBTIQ issues or work you've done to support the LGBTIQ community.**

I have seen the challenges my brother has faced to succeed as a Gay Mexican-American, who was not given the opportunities in life that someone coming from a family of privilege would have. However, it has been inspiring to see my brother overcome these obstacles to succeed. I know that with more support for our LGBTIQ community, there will be more opportunities for their success. While Chair of the San Benito County Board of Supervisors, I supported the opening of the San Benito County LGBTIQ and Youth Resource Center in downtown Hollister. I worked to hold a town hall meeting to discuss how to support our local LGBTIQ community. I was involved in hosting a discussion supporting our LGBTIQ youth at San Benito High School, featuring Equality California's Executive Director, Rick Zbur. I have also participated in a regional task force to discuss how to best work together to support our LGBTIQ community. I'll be a leader on LGBTIQ equality in the State Assembly.

**What historic political or civil rights struggles are you familiar with that impact LGBTIQ equality?**

Every political and civil rights struggle throughout history has impacted the LGBTIQ community in some way. Of course, I am aware of the history of the equality movement - from Stonewall to marriage equality.

I am fortunate to have a brother who is gay and has fought on the front lines for equal rights. I was proud to march with my brother at the Gay Pride Parade in San Francisco, the weekend following the Supreme Court decision that granted marriage equality throughout the country. While much has been accomplished, I realize there is still a great deal more to achieve to ensure the LGBTIQ population has the equality we all are entitled to.

I want to be very clear here - LGBTIQ equality is personal for me - your struggle is my struggle. You can count on me to be an outspoken champion.

**What is your philosophy about working with minority communities of which you are not a member, and how will this manifest in your future work with the LGBTIQ community?**

My philosophy is that we are all equal. I understand that it is incumbent upon me as an elected official to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to succeed. No one should fear that their race, their culture, their religion, their sexuality, or their gender will leave them vulnerable to discrimination or mistreatment of any kind. In the future, I will continue to be an ally who supports and works with all minority communities, including the LGBTIQ community, as I have in San Benito County. This is what leadership is all about.

**Please describe any programs you know of that impact the LGBTIQ community and that are governed by or funded through the elected office you are running for? Include any suggestions you may have for improving these programs.**

There are a wide variety of programs that impact the LGBTIQ community, which are governed and funded by the state. From comprehensive healthcare reform--including mental health services--to education funding, victim compensation programs, harassment and discrimination laws and prevention programs, HIV healthcare programs, prevention programs, mental health, environmental protection laws, infrastructure improvements, and tackling the homeless issue, all these publicly funded programs affect the LGBTIQ community, as well as other California residents. Improvements would make these programs more inclusive, so everyone will benefit from them based on their needs.

**If elected, how would you use your position to help further issues of importance to the LGBTIQ community?**

If elected, I would use my position to continue as an advocate for the LGBTIQ community. I would continue to host open forums addressing important issues of the LGBTIQ community and vote to fund more LGBTIQ friendly centers like the one I helped open in San Benito County. I will continue to stand proudly with the LGBTIQ community at events that celebrate their accomplishments. I will be a strong voice in support of legislation that empowers the LGBTIQ community.

If elected to the State Assembly, I will make advancing LGBTIQ rights one of my top priorities. I will always be an outspoken ally of the LGBTIQ community – you can always count on my full and unequivocal support.

I will proudly:

- Sponsor pro-LGBTIQ legislation
- Speak at events, meetings, and rallies on behalf of the LGBTIQ community
- Walk in parades or join marches in support of equality
- Create local LGBTIQ taskforces in my community and throughout the 30th Assembly District to deal with pressing issues, including bullying in the classroom, healthcare, etc.
- Raise money for LGBTIQ organizations and LGBTIQ candidates running for office

I pledge to do these things, and more. We must create a future where everyone is treated equally and I plan to be at the forefront of the movement for full equality.

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

Yes, please send me the GLBT Alliance's logo (jpg file) so I can proudly announce the endorsement on my campaign literature, social media and website!