



GLBT Alliance of Santa Cruz County Candidate Questionnaire

for endorsement in the November 2016 general election

Dear Candidate,

The GLBT Alliance is Santa Cruz County's queer political organization focusing specifically on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) political issues. We are a membership-driven, local political organization, and have been working on behalf of Santa Cruz LGBTQ community since 2001 to keep us aware of political issues and campaigns impacting LGBTQ and allied civil rights, and to help achieve and enhance those rights through advocacy and action.

As we begin our endorsement process for the 2016 election cycle, we congratulate you on declaring your candidacy and invite you to complete and submit a candidate questionnaire. Participating in our endorsement process allows our membership to get to know you, what you stand for and who you are as a candidate. It also allows us to learn about your understanding of and experiences with LGBTQ issues important to our community.

Please return questionnaires no later than Monday, September 5th, by 8 pm, to:

The GLBT Alliance of Santa Cruz County
glbtalliance@yahoo.com

Candidate and Campaign Information

Candidate Name: Steve Schnaar	
Campaign Address: PO Box 516 Santa Cruz, CA 95061	
Campaign Website: www.steveforcouncil.com	
Campaign Manager Name/Email/Phone: Batya Kagan lchaim@jps.net 419-6574	
Office you seek to be elected to: Santa Cruz City Council	
Please choose the option best describing your candidacy: Open Seat	
Are you a member of the GLBT Alliance? No	
Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ community? If not, do you identify as an LGBTQ ally? Not LGBTQ but very much identify as an ally.	

Questionnaire (please answer questions directly and keep responses succinct and brief)

1. Please describe your qualifications for the position you seek (include your key issues, priorities if elected, and any key endorsements you'd like to share), plus anything else that you'd like our members to know about you and your candidacy.

I've been involved in various community organizing and service work for the entire 15 years I've been in Santa Cruz. I work as a mechanic at the Bike Church, which helps people fix bikes for themselves and serves many low-income individuals. I'm the founder/director of the Santa Cruz Fruit Tree Project, which brings people together to harvest excess fruit and to plant new community orchards. I'm an educator, currently doing after-school programs and in the past outdoor ed and substitute teaching. I'm also on the steering committee for the Resource Center for Nonviolence.

I've worked on many other issues as well like protecting farmworkers and children from a dangerous pesticide, advocating for local campaign finance reform, calling for police accountability, and advocating for an end to mass incarceration and racial disparities in the war on drugs. For a full list of my work please visit: <http://www.steveforcouncil.com/past-work/>. Key issues for me are affordable housing, environmental stewardship, community policing, and positive solutions for homelessness. Some endorsements of note are the People's Democratic Club; Santa Cruz for Bernie; former mayors Celia Scott, Jane Weed, Bruce Van Allen, and Chris Krohn; council member Micah Posner; Nancy Abbey (Affordable Housing Now); Rick Longinotti (Desal Alternatives); Emilio Martínez Castañeda (Beach Flats Garden); Esther Greenburg (Chair of the City Commission of Violence Against Women); Stacey Marie Garcia (City Arts Commission); Nora Hochman (Union Representative, California Nurses Association); Sarah Darant Smith (Resource Center for Nonviolence); Jackie Nuñez (founder, The Last Plastic Straw). For a full list of endorsements and more about my issues, please visit my campaign website.

*Please note organizations are listed for identification, not to imply an endorsement by the organization.

2. Why are you seeking the endorsement of Santa Cruz County's grassroots LGBTQ political organization, the GLBT Alliance?

I know that LGBTQ individuals face systematic bias and oppression, as well as personal prejudice, and I want to hear from leaders in those communities and work with them to lift up their needs and seek policy changes that continue the long journey towards full legal equality and social acceptance.

3. Please tell us about any past or current experiences or involvement you've had addressing LGBTQ issues, or working to support the LGBTQ community.

I have been a strong ally in favor of making the Bike Church a safe(r) space, both within our collective and for the patrons. For example, way back around 2003 one of our main mechanics who was a friend and mentor, was being very disrespectful to a transgender man who was one of our volunteers, and resisting the idea of us offering womens/trans shop hours. This person also made many women feel uncomfortable. I had to be a strong voice against him, letting our friendship end because it was more important to me to remove him from the group and make it a safe(r) space. In the years after we kicked him out, we became a much more diverse organization, at least in terms of gender, sexual orientation,

and gender identification. My guess is that over 1/3 of our mechanics have been LGBT or Q, and a significant portion of our patrons as well.

In addition to our internal development as staff and volunteers, at the bike Church we also work to challenge unsafe behavior by our patrons. I don't tolerate offensive language by visitors to the shop; I try to engage politely with the goal of achieving understanding and empathy, but also sometimes just have to tell people they are not welcome.

Another way I've been an ally is in my shared housing situations. My wife and I are renters but we also sublet an extra room, and about half of our housemates over the years have been LGBTQ. Usually that is just the people who seemed like the best fit, and their sexual orientation is not even really taken as part of the decision. Although once we lived with a gay man who probably wasn't a good fit, but we felt bad as he reported having been turned down for other housing because people didn't feel comfortable with him being openly gay. We ended up living with him for some time, and once went to see him in a drag show back when Dakota was still around.

Lastly I will mention that as an educator, I always take seriously actions or language that are inappropriate, disrespectful, or bullying, and try to engage as constructively as I can. Which mostly I am talking about students being mean or not thoughtful about how their words are harming others. Although there are little ways that I also end up modeling a different version of masculinity, by talking about LGBTQ friends, or being a tough athletic guy (e.g. with 2 black belts) who favors deescalation over aggression. Even weirdly just the fact I wore a pink shirt one day, or I have tassles on my handlebars, that elicits a response from middle school boys and can be a conversation starter.

4. What political or civil rights issues were you aware of, prior to reading the attached informational materials, regarding LGBTQ equality?

Of course a big one over recent years has been marriage equality. I know that can make a big difference in terms of things like visitation rights and other things taken for granted by others. Another thing is job discrimination. My mom is a recently-retired school teacher in Maryland, who noted that the older generation almost everyone was closeted, only the newest hires of younger folks have felt comfortable being out.

I appreciate in Aptos High where my wife used to work, a staff person transitioned as a transgender person, and the staff and administration were very supportive, and in their support that facilitated support and acceptance from students. I know from friends and from working in the schools, it can be very hard for LGBTQ youth, high rates of bullying and suicide, and parents kicking kids out of their house. Then if there is no other friends or family to house them, these youth who already are going through so much difficulty end up in foster care.

Another hot topic politically is bathroom access, be it allowing people to use the bathroom they feel most comfortable with, or gender-neutral bathrooms. Worse yet is the high rate of violence and murder against transgender people, as well as suicide. Things have come a long way in recent years but there is still far to go to bring transgender people into full legal protection and into the circle of social acceptance and appreciation.

Other political issues I'm aware of are discrimination in housing and medical treatment. Whether or not it is legal, these things still happen. Another one is adequate services to minimize the spread of HIV/AIDS, which is not exactly a gay issue but perhaps still an issue for gay men more than the national average. I was very dismayed to see the County and City restrict needle exchange programs a few years ago, based on the false idea that would reduce littered needles. I helped organize a public education campaign demonstrating that quite to the contrary, robust needle exchange programs both reduce disease, and reduce littered needles.

Lastly, another issue I've heard from friends in the LGBTQ community is that sometimes people have false assumptions that lead to inadequate response to problems, e.g. lesbians less likely to be diagnosed

with HPV based on the idea they are not at risk, or inadequate awareness and response to domestic abuse within same-sex couples.

5. 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 LGBTQ community?

I think that the role of an ally/outsider is to be available to listen to the voices of people within other communities, and lift up those voices, and make space for them to be involved in decision-making. I have worked for years as a white person who opposes racism, and I always try to listen to the voices of people of color, and to follow their lead. Or if I'm organizing an event or writing on the topic, I work with people of color and not try to make my voice the front and center. Likewise in my future work with the LGBTQ community, I would want to take the role of facilitating the expression of others' concerns vs trying to act as a voice for a community I'm not a part of.

6. Please describe any programs you know of that impact the LGBTQ community and that are governed by or funded through the elected office you are running for, and include any suggestions you may have for improvements.

I know the City gives to a long list of community organizations. Looking over the list, I'm glad to see at least one organization, the Diversity Center, which is entirely focused on LGBTQ issues. The city also partners with a number of non-governmental organizations doing things like counseling, youth programs, senior services, homeless shelters, etc. I would be interested to work with LGBTQ leaders to determine if any of these agencies could benefit from training, to ensure that staff are prepared to understand and serve particular needs of LGBTQ individuals.

I know that LGBTQ youth especially can face a lot of problems. I'm not sure how much the City Council has influence over school policies, vs the school board, but certainly that is another realm where government can help implement services for LGBTQ youth, as well as education for all students towards the long-term goal of full acceptance and equality.

7. If elected, how would you use your position to help further issues of importance to the LGBTQ community?

I would look to LGBTQ organizations like the GLBT Alliance and the Diversity Center to lead the discussion of what are the most pressing issues, and how might we address them. I am just guessing but I imagine that might include City funding for programs in support of LGBTQ youth, as well as protecting the rights and safety of transgender people and youth in particular.

8. If you receive the GLBT Alliance's endorsement, will you display it in your campaign literature?

Yes!

Attachment 1: Informational Handout on Local, State and National LGBTQ Issues

National LGBTQ Political Landscape

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) recently released a report citing a surge of more than 175 anti-LGBT bills have been introduced across 32 states in 2016, and specifically names 2016 as the most dangerous year on record for transgender Americans.

Current anti-LGBT efforts include attempts to turn back the clock on marriage equality, as well as various “religious exemption” bills that would allow the use of tax-payer dollars to discriminate against same-sex couples, and laws that protect LGBT “conversion therapy,” practices.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has catalogued anti-LGBTQ legislation currently pending in states across the nation and in the federal government, by category, locality and active status. Please read through their list, here: <https://www.aclu.org/lgbt-nondiscrimination-and-anti-lgbt-bills-across-country>.

In particular, there are 44 proposed new laws across 16 states targeting transgender people. These laws would prevent transgender folks from changing the gender marker on their birth certificates, impose humiliating burdens on transgender people seeking to get married, make it harder to access gender-affirming health care, and would deny access to bathrooms that align with one’s gender identity. 23 of these bills specifically target children and students.

HRC Report on Anti-Transgender Legislation Nation-Wide:

<http://hrc-assets.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/files/assets/resources/HRC-Anti-Trans-Issue-Brief-FINAL-REV2.pdf>

The U.S. House of Representatives has introduced the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) to prohibit discrimination in hiring and employment on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity by employers with at least 15 employees. This legislation has been introduced in every Congress since 1994 except the 109th. Protections based on gender identity were first added to ENDA in 2007. At that time, some believed that ENDA did not have enough support with transgender inclusion to pass Congress, and gender identity was dropped it from the bill. It passed the House and then died in the Senate. In 2009, 2011 and 2013, a transgender-inclusive version of ENDA was reintroduced and in 2013, the Senate passed it with bipartisan support. However, as a result of a political maneuvering by the republican majority in 2014, a version of ENDA with a narrow religious exemption amendment was added to the 2015 defense authorization bill and was then rejected by the House Rules Committee. The legislation remains in flux to this day. Read more on ENDA, here: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/815/text>.

There are many more nuanced issues facing the LGBTQ community, nationally. We encourage you to learn more about issues facing LGBTQ youth, seniors, the Latino/a LGBTQ community, immigrants and same-sex immigrant couples, transgender healthcare, transgender issues in the criminal justice system, “bathroom safety bills” and religious exemption efforts nation-wide. Please review these and more:

- Federal Judge Strikes Down Mississippi’s Same-Sex Adoption Ban, <https://www.frontiersmedia.com/frontiers-blog/2016/04/01/federal-judge-strikes-mississippi-sex-adoption-ban/>
- Why So Many States Are Fighting Over LGBT Rights in 2016, <http://time.com/4277247/north-carolina-georgia-lgbt-rights-religious-liberty-bills/>
- DHS urged to take action for LGBT people in immigration detention, <https://www.washingtonblade.com/2016/03/28/dhs-urged-to-take-action-for-lgbt-people-in-immigration-detention/>
- Honda protests LGBT detainees’ treatment: <http://ebar.com/news/article.php?sec=news&article=71414>.
- Escaping the cartel, a trans woman seeks asylum at the border, <http://sdgln.com/news/2016/04/01/escaping-cartel-trans-woman-seeks-asylum-border>.
- Activists Try to Calm Fears Over Transgender Bathroom Access, <http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/activists-calm-fears-transgender-bathroom-access-38119244>.

California State LGBTQ Political Issues

Here in California, we have seen the election of many LGBTQ and allied state representatives who have helped pass progressive legislation to help protect LGBTQ people from workplace, housing and medical discriminations, to ensure same sex married couples can access partner benefits, to prohibit LGBTQ school bullying and include LGBTQ history in school curriculum, and to make sure transgender students can safely access bathrooms in schools that align with their gender identity. While great progress has been made toward equality, there is still much more to be done.

Equality California (EQCA) is our state's largest LGBTQ organization working to advance the health and well-being of LGBT Californians through direct healthcare service advocacy and education in Sacramento and beyond. Through electoral, advocacy, education and mobilization programs, EQCA forwards a robust state legislative platform in tandem with progressive LGBTQ and allied state law makers to advance equality and social justice for LGBTQ people state-wide. Learn more about EQCA's current legislative platform here: <http://www.eqca.org/category/legislation/2015/>, and the history of recent LGBTQ legislation in California, here: <http://www.eqca.org/legislation/past-legislation/>.

Locally and throughout the state, LGBTQ youth still face bullying in schools. Our seniors still face isolation and discrimination as they seek care for aging. While denying transgender people access to healthcare, training and advocacy is desperately needed to help curb illegal denial of coverage by insurance companies, and better quality healthcare by providers. HIV/AIDS funding is on the decline even though we've seen an uptick in infection rates. We encourage you to learn more about the issues facing LGBTQ people throughout California. Please review these issues covering just some of the challenges LGBTQ people face in our state:

- Anti-gay state laws aid push for CA travel ban bill, <http://ebar.com/news/article.php?sec=news&article=71412>
- A unique Hollywood housing complex will mix LGBT youth and seniors, <http://www.scp.org/news/2016/03/30/59004/planned-hollywood-center-to-house-lgbt-youth-senior/>.
- Exploring Housing Alternatives to Aid Sexually Exploited Youth, <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/featured/exploring-housing-alternatives-to-aid-sexually-exploited-youth/16934>.
- Why Aging and Caregiving Are Harder for LGBT Adults, <http://www.nextavenue.org/why-aging-and-caregiving-are-harder-for-lgbt-adults/>
- LGBT curriculum riles some East Bay middle school parents, http://www.mercurynews.com/news/ci_29710289/lgbt-curriculum-riles-some-east-bay-middle-school.
- Deaf lesbian couple who were attacked with a bat: 'We're scared to walk the streets', <http://sdgln.com/news/2016/03/26/deaf-lesbian-couple-who-were-attacked-bat-were-sacred-walk-streets>.
- New Racist and Homophobic Texts Between Officers Part of Deeper 'Systemic' Culture at SFPD, <http://www.towleroad.com/2016/04/homophobic-texts/>

Local LGBTQ Community Issues

HRC manages a "Municipality Equality Index", or MEI score-card, rating cities across the nation for the ways they support the LGBTQ people who live and work there, even where states and the federal government have failed to do so. Please review the MEI, here: <http://www.hrc.org/resources/mei-2015-see-your-city-score>.

None of the cities within the County of Santa Cruz have been entered into the MEI to be rated. Please consider doing so: <http://www.hrc.org/resources/submit-a-municipality-to-be-rated-2015>.

Locally, in addition to the GLBT Alliance as Santa Cruz County's queer political organization, there are many groups providing a wide array of supports and services to the various demographics within the LGBTQ community. Some of these groups include:

- The Diversity Center (includes Triangle Speakers, the 60+ Seniors Program, STRANGE Youth Program, the Trans Program, Conexiones Latino/a LGBT Program): <https://www.diversitycenter.org>
- The Queer Youth Task Force of Santa Cruz County: <http://www.qytf.org>
- PFLAG of Santa Cruz County: <http://www.pflag SCC.org/>
- Out in Our Faith: <https://tbeaptos.org/?q=content/out-our-faith>
- Cantu Queer Center (UCSC): <http://queer.ucsc.edu/>
- Santa Cruz AIDS Project: <http://www.encompasscs.org/community-support-services/santa-cruz-aids-project-scap>
- Santa Cruz Pride: <http://santacruzpride.org/>
- SOMOS LGBT: <https://www.facebook.com/SOMOS-LGBT-124037564344525/>
- The Community Foundation Diversity Partnership: <http://www.cfsc.org/Nonprofits/Grants/DiversityPartnership.aspx>
- Closet Free Radio (KZSC): <https://www.kzsc.org/blog/tag/closet-free-radio/>
- Out In Santa Cruz (KSCO): <http://outinsantacruz.com>
- Lez Cruz: <http://lezcruz.org>
- SantaCruzGayMen.org: <https://www.santacruzgaymen.org>
- Radical Fairies: <http://www.santacruzradicalfaeries.com/>
- Planned Parenthood Transgender Health Program: <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-mar-monte/patient-resources/transgender-services>

The needs of LGBTQ Youth in our area schools are great. While national and state laws aim to protect LGBTQ students, local schools and school districts often lack the funds necessary for training, enforcement and implementation of policies to educate students on equality, and protect students from bullying. While many schools in our areas have Gay-Straight Alliance and Queer-Straight Alliance clubs, not all do, and not all are able to because of complicated local political issues. LGBTQ Youth also face higher rates of homelessness locally and nationally, due to the lack of family support many youth face when they come out of the closet. Please learn more about programs aiming to make youth and student experiences better, here: <http://qytf.org/safe-schools-project/safe-schools-project-report/>.

LGBTQ Seniors often go back into the closet as they pass retirement age, as a result of facing greater risk of isolation and discrimination as they seek specialized aging care in and out of their homes. The Diversity Center's 60+ Seniors Program offers LGBTQ Seniors in Santa Cruz County opportunities to enhance their quality of life through social and recreation activities. Learn more: <http://www.diversitycenter.org/senior>.

HIV/AIDS education and services are an important public health intervention for at-risk communities, which has always centered on the gay male community since the AIDS epidemic first arose in the 1980s. In more recent years, the disease has had an unfortunate resurgence among men who have unprotected sex with other men, and who largely do so without identifying as gay and without seeking medical care or advice accordingly.

The City and County of Santa Cruz each have a long history of responding to the HIV/AIDS epidemic by supporting the Santa Cruz AIDS Project, the work of the County Health Department and syringe exchange programs as proven, successful intervention programs. Continued support for successful health education and intervention programs that curb the disease from spreading and that help eradicate HIV is critical, and local government's role cannot be overlooked—especially among those in the LGBTQ community who have been at ground zero of the epidemic since its beginning.

Please read more:

<http://www.santacruzhealth.org/HSAHome/HSADivisions/PublicHealth/HIVAIDSServices.aspx>,
<http://www.encompasscs.org/community-support-services/santa-cruz-aids-project-scap>.