



GLBT Alliance of Santa Cruz County Candidate Questionnaire

for endorsement in the June 2016 primary 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 questionnaire via email no later than April 25, 2016, to:

The GLBT Alliance of Santa Cruz County
glbtalliance@comcast.net

Candidate and Campaign Information

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| Candidate Name: John Leopold | |
| Campaign Address: P.O. Box 2386 Santa Cruz, CA 95063 | Phone: 566-0122 |
| Campaign Website: www.friendsofjohnleopold.com | Email: john@friendsofjohnleopold.com |
| Campaign Manager Name/Email/Phone: Christina Schwabecher Christina@friendsofjohnleopold.com 831-419-4596 | |
| Office you seek to be elected to: Santa Cruz County Supervisor | District Number: 1 |
| Please choose the option best describing your candidacy: Challenger <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Incumbent</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open Seat <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Are you a member of the GLBT Alliance? If so, when did you first join? I am not a member. | |
| Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ community? If not, do you identify as an LGBTQ ally? I identify as an LGBTQ 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 was first elected to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors in November 2008, and then re-elected in 2012. I previously served on the Cabrillo College Governing Board for 8 years, served as the Administrative Director of the Working Partnerships for four years and as the Executive Director of the Santa Cruz AIDS Project for three years.

As a member of the Board of Supervisors, I have worked tirelessly with the community to develop an effective Vacation Rental Ordinance, sensible gun shop regulations, budget policies that prioritize essential community services, and medical cannabis regulations. I reach out to First District residents at regular community meetings to actively listen, inform, and support the interests and concerns of the community. I worked with hundreds of community members in developing community projects as part of the Redevelopment Agency, broadening the dialogue about criminal justice reform efforts in response to state prison realignment, discussing the sustainable future of Santa Cruz County, neighborhood safety issues, and local development projects. With a strong environmental ethic, I led the Board in banning hydraulic fracking in Santa Cruz County and securing Sunny Cove Beach for permanent public use. I have also played a leadership role in the acquisition of the branch rail line through Santa Cruz County and the development of a master plan for the Monterey Bay Scenic Trail (the Rail Trail).

I am proud to have the endorsements of my colleagues, many of the elected officials in my District, neighborhood leaders, non-profit leaders, and business owners. I have been endorsed by a broad

range of organizations including the Monterey Bay Central Labor Council, the Deputy Sheriff's Association, Bike Santa Cruz County, and the Democratic Women's Club. A complete list of my endorsements can be found at www.friendsofjohnleopold.com.

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

I have worked with the GBLT community for a good part of my adult life. This work has transformed me and given me a perspective on human rights that has shaped my life. I have worked to promote civil rights for all individuals and the endorsement of the GLBT Alliance would serve as a key endorsement for my campaign.

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 was honored when I was recognized as an "Ally of the Year" in 1990 at Pride Festivities for my work on the Prop. 96/102 campaigns. As Executive Director of the Santa Cruz AIDS Project, I became acutely aware of the struggles that gay men face. I realized early that most community members assumed that I was a gay man living with HIV. It made me aware of the subtle (and not so subtle) forms of discrimination that gay men face every day. I have proudly walked in the Pride Parade and attended the Pride festival for the last 25 years and will continue to do so regardless of my election.

As a Supervisor, I have coordinated the Board's first "It's Gets Better" video to support LGBTQ youth in our community. For two years it was on the front page of the County's website. Prior to the Supreme Court decision recognizing marriage equality, I regularly wrote letters of support and had the Board endorse legislation in support of marriage equality. Recently I was a co-signer of the Board letter to ban non-essential travel to North Carolina and Mississippi in reaction to the recent homophobic legislation passed in those states.

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

My first primary work in the LGBT community was through my HIV/AIDS activism where I saw firsthand the discrimination faced by the community. I led the county effort against two restrictive and homophobic state ballot measures in 1988 (Props. 96/102), exposing the goals of Republican Congressional candidate, Stanley Monteith, who wanted to have the John Birch Society use the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a way to increase membership. I help created the AIDS Action Network to proactively fight homophobic AIDS measures. As Executive Director of SCAP, I tripled the size of the gay and lesbian staff, expanded our women and AIDS program, doubled the spaces for people living with HIV/AIDS and opened local skilled nursing facilities in the county to our clients.

In the area of LGBT youth services I coordinated the "It's Get Better" video at the Board. Also in the construction of a new Boys & Girls Club in Live Oak, I supported efforts to create designated space for LGBT youth as part of the facility.

I worked with the Diversity Center to acquire their first funding from the County through the Community Programs grant program. I have proudly participated in my congregation's Out In Our Faith services, Queer Youth Leadership Awards ceremonies, and I was very pleased to attend the recent Calciano Forum on Transgender issues and present a proclamation to Shane Hill for his two decades of service to the transgender community.

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?

Working with minority communities requires respect for cultural differences and styles and long term commitment towards working for common goals. I would point to two past experiences:

- Incorporation and expansion of the Equinox program while I was ED at SCAP. Recognizing that young gay men needed positive experiences and support to promote safer sex behavior, I advocated for assuming responsibility of the Equinox program while I was director of SCAP and listened carefully to program participants to services and resource necessary to ensure a successful program
- As a board member at Pacific Collegiate, I participated in the creation of a 5-year diversity program for the school. I encouraged the development of a community wide advisory group that promoted the goals of college education to under-represented students throughout the county. The program resulted in a marked increase in under-represented students attending the school.

In my first year as Supervisor, I recognized that the State was preparing to make devastating cuts to HIV Education services. I brought together a diverse group of providers, educators and community members to devise a plan to supplant the services lost with state funding. It included leveraging resources at the university to help with HIV testing at SCAP; providing a mobile van and resources for community members and volunteers to continue the Needle Exchange program, and sharing of supplies to continue educational services at local clinics and the Diversity Center.

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.

As I mentioned above I worked with the Diversity Center to acquire funding from the County. The County's Health Services Agency plays a critical role in providing funding to local organizations for educational support and direct health services to at-risk members of the LGBT community.

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

The Board of Supervisors needs to continue to take leadership stands in promoting full civil rights for the LGBTQ community, fighting discrimination, and funding HIV/AIDS services and behavior health support. As a member of the Board I will remain vigilant in the fight for civil rights by taking the lead whenever bigotry or homophobia presented itself. I will continue to use my position to promote equality and use the power of the Board to join cases (where appropriate) that promote or expand full civil right for the GLBT community.

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

I will proudly display the GLBT Alliance endorsement on my campaign website and my literature.

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.scpr.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-citys-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.pflagscc.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>.