



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: Martine Watkins	
Campaign Address: 222 Columbia St. Apt. #222 Santa Cruz, CA 95060	Phone: (831) 316-4727
Campaign Website: www.martinewatkins.com	Email: watkinsforcitycouncil@gmail.com
Campaign Manager Name/Email/Phone: Yvette Brooks Email: ybrooks916@gmail.com Phone: (831) 325-1984	
Office you seek to be elected to: Santa Cruz City Council	District Number:
Please choose the option best describing your candidacy: Challenger Incumbent X Open Seat	
Are you a member of the GLBT Alliance? Yes If so, when did you first join? September 2016	
Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ community? If not, do you identify as an LGBTQ ally? I absolutely 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 feel that I have done all that I can to be professionally and personally qualified for this position. I grew up in Santa Cruz County and my husband and I are now raising our two young daughters (1.5 and 6) here.

- Professional Experience: I work in education and have done so for over 10 years. In my position as Senior Community Organizer of numerous educational programs, I am able to apply my background in student services, community organizing, grant writing, government and health policy, strategic planning, program management, and data analysis to support the success of students and programs. In addition to directly overseeing support service programs, I act as the Educational Services community liaison through the participation and leadership of multiple collaborative partnerships, including Keeping Kids in School and Out of Court (KKIS), and our local School Mental Health Partnership.

- Education: I have a B.A. from UCSC in Legal Studies, and a Master's degree in Public Policy from CSUMB and the Leon and Sylvia Panetta Institute of Public Policy.

- Volunteer: I've volunteered with organizations and efforts focusing on social justice for over 15 years, including the Digital NEST, Dominican Hospital, the Child Care Planning Council, ACLU, and the Commission for Prevention of Violence Against Women.

- **Approach:** I strive to be a person and leader of integrity - open-minded, collaborative, and reflective. My intent is to apply my passion for public service to positively influence social change. I aim to be a policy leader that analyzes and solves complex social problems in diverse environments by applying my experience, knowledge, and skills in public policy, social research, education administration, and community organizing.

Key Issues and priorities if elected: I want to shift how we design policies from a band-aide approach that is often reactive to the latest symptom of a much deeper program. I want to be part of our cities foresight in designing policies that work to ensure our city is safe, economically vibrant and sustainable for all of our children and community members.

- **Public Health** – I want to embed public health considerations into the city’s policy decision-making process. This can be at minimum a no-cost approach to assess the social determinants of health (such as: community safety, economic vitality, access to healthy foods, quality education, healthcare, mental health service, open space and clean environments, etc.) related to our city councils policy decisions.

- **Safety** – I want to work toward a city that is free of crime and violence and prioritizes preventative approaches. I want to increase the cities resources and revenue so that we can most effectively address and prevent crime in our city – this can include 21st Century Policing, AB-109 re-entry services, and Restorative Justice programs.

- **Economic opportunity** – Socioeconomic security is fundamental to stability and social mobility. I specifically want to bridge my experience in education to forge public and private partners so the next generation is prepared to be our future workforce. I want to support local businesses, good jobs, and livable wages. Avenues for youth employment can include supporting programs such as Work4Youth, Career Pathways, Regional Occupational Programs, and the Digital NEST.

- **Housing: Providing affordable housing and childcare for working people and families** – I value diversity and believe this needs to be reflected in our housing options. Overall, I’m interested in developing a robust and comprehensive approach to truly move the dial on the affordability of housing in the city. I specifically want to continue the work the city has started with collaborating with large local employers (including, health and education) to collectively address the need for workforce housing in Santa Cruz. I want to work on increasing the number of affordable quality childcare facilities.

- **Environmental** – I want to preserve our remarkable environment. I will provide leadership for climate change planning, water policy and ensuring safe drinking

water, preserving our open spaces, air quality, clean oceans, a healthy environment, informed and responsible transportation and development policies, and responsible growth.

- **Endorsements** – I am proud to have a broad and diverse list of supporters, from local elected officials, business leaders, to government, nonprofit, and health leaders in Santa Cruz. I am honored to have received the endorsements of SEIU and the Democratic Women’s Club. Please visit my website to see my growing list of supporters. www.martinewatkins.com

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

I would be honored to receive the GLBT Alliances endorsement. Civil rights and the rights of all citizens have been long hard fought in our country. Although progress has been made, our work is far from done. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people are still denied many basic rights.

I hope my experience and ongoing commitment to working for social justice and equity in our community is made clear to the GLBT Alliance and makes me a candidate creditable and worthy of your endorsement.

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’ve had the privilege of working on youth LGBTQ issues in our community for a very long time. I have worked with the local ACLU chapter for several years, focusing on civil rights issues impacting our community, state, and country.

Working in Education, specifically for the Student Support Services Department, I’ve been able to apply my passion for supporting vulnerable youth populations and collaborative efforts to do so as well. My work with LGBTQ youth began with support for the coordination of the Queer Youth Task Force in 2006.

I also work with adjudicated youth through our law-related prevention programs with several of our youth involved in the program identify as LGBTQ. Through our program we are able to identify the needs of the students and the resources for their success. I have been closely involved with countywide school efforts to establish safe and support schools - working to provide resources, including evidenced based practices, to schools districts to ensure their school policies reflect a positive school climate that reduces bullying.

Student Support Services is also the lead of the School Mental Health Partnership bringing together education stakeholders and community providers, such as the Diversity Center, Suicide Prevention, Encompass and NAMI, to come together to discuss how to best serve the mental health needs of those most at risk in our schools. Stopping bullying and suicide prevention have been

the focus of a number of our efforts.

I have also coordinated professional symposiums to highlight school climate for student success. I worked with a friend and colleague to speak as the keynote of one of symposiums. She is a Latino mom of a gay child who spoke about her experience of having her child come out as gay in middle school. She shared how she knew he was gay when he was 7 years old. She shared how he was relentlessly bullied in middle school and had thoughts of suicide. She highlighted the need for more cultural support for Latino LGBT youth and their families and offered to be a parent mentor.

Lastly, I'd like to share how I also oversee the Tobacco Use Prevention Education (TUPE) efforts for the County. One component of this work is the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS). Since assuming the position in 2013, I've been able to have our large school districts come together to administer the survey countywide and to commit to examining the data results to target the needs of the students. LGBT youth are more at risk for higher rates of mental health, drug and alcohol and homelessness.

Furthermore, I want to mention that I was able to be a part of my organizations conversation around creating transgender bathrooms. As a result a transgender bathroom was established early this year.

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

Despite our principles of equality, we have history of denying certain peoples rights. Sadly discrimination is still very well alive in a variety of ways. I've been aware of the discrimination felt by the LGBT community. I spent many years volunteering with the ACLU – fighting for civil rights and equality. I follow the news and track the national dialogue around marriage equality and all the social impacts facing the LGBT community – hate crimes (the horrific incident in Orlando), homelessness, same sex child adoption, transgender bathrooms, bullying and youth discrimination, and sadly I could go on.

I am bi-racial and have seen discrimination firsthand - growing up, I was made aware of social injustice early in life. I have so many friends from diverse backgrounds and work with many LGBT youth. Sadly, many I fear will hurt themselves because of the pain they feel associated with their sexuality and lack of acceptance by their family members and classmates.

I truly want a more equitable world for all of our children of all genders and I want to be part of the solution to make that happen.

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?

My philosophy is to be authentic and connect with anyone on a personal, human level - no matter who they are and how they identify sexually. I try to operate from a place of deep listening and empathy. I am committed to social justice and equity and will operate from that place for all populations.

I also know in order to move the needle challenging conversations must take place and biases (conscious or subconscious) need to be addressed. Honesty and authenticity is what I'm committed to and will be how I approach my future work with the LGBT community. I love diversity and working and interacting with people from different backgrounds.

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.

The city can:

- Directly provide transgender bathrooms.
- Take a public political stance (for example like prohibiting agency travel to North Carolina because of their inequitable policies).
- Provide gender equity policies for its' employees.
- Support our community's youth with programming and be a place that is safe for the LGBT community.
- Provide cultural competence professional development and training for city and department staff.
- Create an LGBT advisory committee or commission and integrate the unique needs of the LGBT community to the existing commissions and councils.
- Adopt a citywide nondiscrimination ordinance.
- Lastly, city council members must be open to listening to any issues the LGBTQ community brings forth for support.

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

Honestly, however I can. I stand for equal rights.

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

Proudly! Thank you for your consideration.

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 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.pflagsc.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>.