



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

Candidate Name: Jimmy Panetta	
Campaign Address: PO Box 1579, Carmel Valley, CA 93924	Phone: 831-238-7742
Campaign Website: www.jimmypanettaforcongress.com	Email: jimmypanettaforcongress@gmail.com
Campaign Manager Name/Email/Phone: Plasha Fielding Will - plashawill@gmail.com - 831-521-5840	
Office you seek to be elected to: Congress	District Number: 20
Please choose the option best describing your candidacy: Challenger Incumbent Open Seat	
Are you a member of the GLBT Alliance? If so, when did you first join? No, but I had the opportunity to meet with the GLBT Alliance of Santa Cruz County in preparation for running for office.	
Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ community? If not, do you identify as an LGBTQ ally? 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 currently serve as a prosecutor in Monterey County. I began my legal career in 1996, as a prosecutor for the Alameda County District Attorney's Office in Oakland. I received my law degree from Santa Clara University and undergraduate degree in International Relations from the University of California at Davis. In between college and law school, I worked on missile and chemical weapons nonproliferation issues for the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C. and at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. During that period, I also worked as an Outreach Coordinator for Legal Services for Seniors in Monterey and as an Ordinary Seaman assisting with hydrographic research aboard a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) ship off the coast of Alaska. In 2003, I was commissioned as an Officer with the United States Navy Reserve. In 2007, I was mobilized to active duty with a Special Operations task force and deployed to Afghanistan. Based on my meritorious service in a war zone, I was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. In 2015, I was recognized as a Veteran of the Year in Monterey County for my work with homeless Veterans at the Veterans Transition Center, on establishing the Central Coast Veterans Cemetery, and as a major proponent for the first Veterans Treatment Court in Monterey County. I also volunteer on the board of directors for Rancho Cielo At-Risk Youth Campus in Salinas, as the Chair of the Monterey Peninsula College Citizens Bond Oversight Committee, and as a Trustee on the University of California Santa Cruz Foundation.

Together, we must find real solutions for the issues of our time. Our nation must remain strong and secure. The economy needs to grow in a way that creates jobs, raises wages, and returns the focus to small businesses. We must finally get serious about immigration reform and address climate change by promoting the fundamentals of a clean energy economy that creates reliable new jobs. Every American deserves access to a quality affordable education and equal justice under the law. I will do everything in my power to renew the collaborative spirit that is necessary to get things done.

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 your endorsement. I have received the endorsement of Equality California, but to receive the endorsement of the local organizations means much more to me,

as it is the local work, and the constituents of this District that I am asking to represent.

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 many friends and colleagues in the LGBT community and consider myself an ally. As I stated above, in preparation for running for office, I met with the GLBT Alliance of Santa Cruz County to hear about the issues affecting not just our local community, but we discussed state, national and international issues as well.

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

I am aware of the many issues that face LGBT Americans, although I did not realize that there were so many anti-LGBT bills being introduced this year or that 2016 is being called the "most dangerous year on record for transgender Americans." That is frightening, and frankly, sad. Living in California, it is easy to forget that the rest of the nation has a great deal of work to do. We need to continue being a leader on these issues, and a model for other states.

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 am running for office to represent ALL the people in the 20th Congressional District - not just some of them. I will fight for everyone, whether it is issues affecting the LGBT community, gender equality, the disparity in income which is one of the biggest issues we are facing as a nation - for me, it is an issue of equality, and I support full equality.

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.

First and foremost, we must ensure that the federally programs continue to be funded, so our local agencies can continue doing the great work they are doing to support our LGBTQ community. There must be a comprehensive approach to provide sufficient services all levels of government - local, state and federal. In Congress, I will advocate for full equality on all the issues, whether it be spousal rights, protections and benefits, or anti-discrimination protections in our schools and military. There is so much work to be done; anti-discrimination protections for housing, employment, credit, education, public spaces, jury service; Respect for Marriage Act; foster care equality and adoption equality and adjusting the federal code to allow for social security benefits to domestic and same sex couples.

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

I will always be a proud advocate for the LGBTQ community. I will attend rallies, write letters, sponsor bills and fight for our issues. Specifically, I will fight to ensure that ENDA is passed without any exemptions that weaken the purpose of the bill.

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

Yes, I will carry the endorsement proudly.

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:

³⁵₁₇ 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/>

³⁵₁₇ Why So Many States Are Fighting Over LGBT Rights in 2016, <http://time.com/4277247/north-carolina-georgia-lgbt-rights-religious-liberty-bills/>

³⁵₁₇ 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/>

³⁵₁₇ Honda protests LGBT detainees’ treatment: <http://ebar.com/news/article.php?sec=news&article=71414>.

³⁵₁₇ 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>.

³⁵₁₇ 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:

³⁵₁₇ Anti-gay state laws aid push for CA travel ban bill,

<http://ebar.com/news/article.php?sec=news&article=71412>

³⁵₁₇ 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/>.

³⁵₁₇ Exploring Housing Alternatives to Aid Sexually Exploited Youth,

<https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/featured/exploring-housing-alternatives-to-aid-sexually-exploited-youth/16934>.

³⁵₁₇ Why Aging and Caregiving Are Harder for LGBT Adults, <http://www.nextavenue.org/why-aging-and-caregiving-are-harder-for-lgbt-adults/>

³⁵₁₇ LGBT curriculum riles some East Bay middle school parents,

http://www.mercurynews.com/news/ci_29710289/lgbt-curriculum-riles-some-east-bay-middle-school.

³⁵₁₇ 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-scared-walk-streets>.

³⁵₁₇ 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:

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¹⁷ 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>
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¹⁷ The Queer Youth Task Force of Santa Cruz County: <http://www.qytf.org>
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¹⁷ PFLAG of Santa Cruz County: <http://www.pflagscc.org/>
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¹⁷ Out in Our Faith: <https://tbeaptos.org/?q=content/out-our-faith>
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¹⁷ Cantu Queer Center (UCSC): <http://queer.ucsc.edu/>
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¹⁷ Santa Cruz AIDS Project: <http://www.encompasscs.org/community-support-services/santa-cruz-aids-project-scrap>
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¹⁷ Santa Cruz Pride: <http://santacruzpride.org/>
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¹⁷ SOMOS LGBT: <https://www.facebook.com/SOMOS-LGBT-124037564344525/>
- ³⁵
¹⁷ The Community Foundation Diversity Partnership: <http://www.cfsc.org/Nonprofits/Grants/DiversityPartnership.aspx>
- ³⁵
¹⁷ Closet Free Radio (KZSC): <https://www.kzsc.org/blog/tag/closet-free-radio/>
- ³⁵
¹⁷ Out In Santa Cruz (KSCO): <http://outinsantacruz.com>
- ³⁵
¹⁷ Lez Cruz: <http://lezcruz.org>
- ³⁵
¹⁷ SantaCruzGayMen.org: <https://www.santacruzgaymen.org>
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¹⁷ Radical Fairies: <http://www.santacruzradicalfaeries.com/>
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¹⁷ 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-scrap>.