

Santa Monica Democratic Club

2024 College Board Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in the Santa Monica Democratic Club endorsement. Candidates seeking the endorsement of our Club must complete and return the following questionnaire. Only registered Democrats are eligible for our consideration. Submitting this questionnaire constitutes acknowledgment that its contents are now part of the public record and may be reproduced and distributed by the Santa Monica Democratic Club.

Please send the completed questionnaire to smdemocrats@gmail.com by 11:59pm on May 18, 2024. Interview appointment times with our Executive Committee will be scheduled on a first come first served basis for the weekend of May 25/26 as the questionnaires are returned.

None of these questions shall be construed as litmus tests. There are no questions that must be answered a certain way to be considered for our endorsement.

General Information

Candidate Name: Anastasia Foster
Email Address: arfoster888@gmail.com
Candidate's Current Occupation: Political Organizer
Candidate's Employer: Schiff for US Senate
Campaign Contact Person (if other than candidate):

1. What qualifications do you bring to this office?

I believe I am ready to serve on Day 1. I have been in elected office for over 8 years where I've immersed myself in the processes surrounding public service, working with others in a collegial and collaborative way, served my full terms and learned how to balance the needs of constituents with the processes of governing. My background is in Education, as I hold a B.S. in Secondary Education and History, and I am the product of public schools and public higher education, having paid my own way to complete my education. I founded and operated a small business which has taught me management techniques, workforce development, budgeting and benefits administration. I'm a 20+ year union member, and I have participated in many bargaining unit negotiations at the Rent Board. I have California legislative experience and relationships that I hope to utilize to improve SMC's budget picture. I have sought out a dozen individuals at SMC, including every Trustee, who have spent hours with me, bringing me up to speed on the history of the college, their experiences, their wish lists for the future and more. I have taken courses at SMC, and I have been on the SMC GAB for 7 years where we have learned about dozens of programs and offerings. I have volunteered at the Bodega since its opening and have served Thanksgiving dinners at the college with my family. My child and I have both availed ourselves of the fabulous pool complex, and I have attended the 4th of July celebration, and I vote at the College. I love this College, and I want to help it grow and to help it serve its students, its faculty and the community.

2. Why are you running?

I am running for Santa Monica College Board of Trustees because public education matters, and it is one of the best resources our society has for the improvement of lives among all our youth, our youth of color and non-traditional students, as well as the surrounding community. The development of our workforce is a big priority for me in an

uncertain jobs market where skills of all kinds will be needed for success. Community College is on the forefront of those skills and opportunities, especially for marginalized groups. I believe I can deliver quality leadership to the College, its students and its faculty from my years of experience in good governance and my background in education. The big, 4-year universities have billion-dollar endowments. I want to use the leadership qualifications that I have to serve our local community college, where I think I can do the most good.

3. What are the top issues of your campaign? How do you plan to address those issues once elected?

The top goals I want to achieve at SMC include increasing enrollment, helping to stabilize community college funding at the state level, enhancing the offerings for our local communities in both Malibu and Santa Monica, increasing the transfer rate of our students of color, continuing to build upon our DEI successes and making sure all of our students, faculty and staff feel supported by the Board of Trustees.

4. Please list all of your individual and/or organizational endorsements.

Congressman Ted Lieu
Board of Equalization Member Tony Vazquez
Former Assemblymember Richard Bloom
SMC Board Chair Dr. Margaret Quinones-Perez
SMC Board Trustee Dr. Susan Aminoff
SMC Board Vice-Chair Dr. Nancy Greenstein
SMC Board Trustee Dr. Tom Peters
SMC Board Trustee Dr. Susan Aminoff
SMC Board Trustee Rob Rader
SMC Board Trustee Dr. Sion Roy
SMC Board Trustee Barry Snell
Former SMC Board Trustee Dr. Louise Jaffe
SMMUSD Board President Jennifer Smith
SMMUSD Board Member Jon Keane
SMMUSD Board Member Laurie Lieberman
SMMUSD Board Member Alicia Mignano
SMMUSD Board Member Richard Tahvildaran-Jesswein
Santa Monica City Councilmember Gleam Davis
Santa Monica City Councilmember Caroline Torosis
Santa Monica City Councilmember Jesse Zwick
Jon Katz - Santa Monica Democratic Club President
Derek Devermont - DNC Member
Dan Hall - Pier Board Commissioner & City Council Candidate
Ellis Raskin - Planning Commissioner City of Santa Monica & City Council Candidate
Kay Ambriz - Social Services Commissioner & Rent Board Candidate
Phillis Dudick - Rent Board Candidate
Anjuli Kronheim Katz - Campaign Director, Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
Shari Davis – Community Leader, Education Advocate
Debbie Mulvaney – CEPS Steering Committee Member
Jason Brown – Meals on Wheels Board Member

It's too early to know at this time, but in the last two election cycles, I was endorsed by SMDC, LACDP, SMRR, Unite Here 11, Stonewall, Sierra Club, and many more for my two terms on the Rent Control Board and for ADEMS. I plan to add even more support to the current list in the coming weeks.

5. How long have you lived in Santa Monica or Malibu? Where else have you lived? 18 years in Santa Monica, Chicago for 5 years, Missouri as a child

6. Will you pledge to serve on the College Board for your entire four-year term?

Yes, I certainly will. I think it's important to follow through.

Campaign Finance

1. How much money have you raised for your campaign to date? \$4,705.00
2. How much do you intend to raise by Election Day 2024? If we are contested, then \$20k.
3. Candidates for local office often choose not to take campaign contributions from particular types of organizations or industries. Are there any such sources from which you would decline donations? If so, which?

The fossil fuels industry, firearms, fur and others to be considered on a case by case basis should it happen.

Party / Activism

1. How long have you been a registered Democrat? I believe it's been about 19-20 years. Have you ever been registered as a member of another political party, or as Decline To State? If so, which party and why? Nope!
2. What is your experience with political activism? Have you ever volunteered or worked for a political campaign other than your own, and if so, in what capacity were you involved?

I have worked joyfully and extensively for other Democrats up and down the ticket since 2014 when I joined SMRR and then the Dem Club. I walked and knocked doors for Kevin McKeown, Sue Himmelrich, Jennifer Kennedy, Ben Allen, Rick Zbur, Measure SMS, Measure V, Measure RC & EM, Measure GS/GSH, Measure GS and many more SMDC-endorsed School and College Board and Council candidates. I always volunteered for the other RCB members, helping with their campaigns and door knocking for them. I traveled with Dem Club to knock doors for Christy Smith in Palmdale, and I have phone banked and postcard written for numerous campaigns and voter registration efforts in Arizona and Orange County. I've helped do the financial appeal for SMDC, and most recently I was proud to volunteer for my friend, Caroline Torosis, for City Council. I have been an employee of the Adam Schiff for US Senate campaign since September of 2023.

3. Which political candidates have you endorsed or supported publicly in the past? Please list as many as possible, *especially where you endorsed during a contested primary.*

I would refer you to the answer in question 2 above. In contested races, I have endorsed and/or supported Adam Schiff, Tony Vazquez, Caroline Torosis, Gleam Davis, Sue Himmelrich, Jesse Zwick, Ellis Raskin, Naomi Sultan, Steve Duron, Nicole Phillis, Maria Leon-Vazquez, Jennifer Smith, Jon Keane, Laurie Lieberman, Alicia Mignano, Richard T-J, Stacey Rouse, Nancy Greenstein, Shy Roy, Barry Snell, Margaret Quinones-Perez, Louise Jaffe, Tom Peters, Susan Aminoff and Rob Rader when they had opponents.

4. Have you ever signed for or publicly supported efforts to recall a public official from office? NO

5. Please list any organizations with which you are a member, including any leadership position you have held in each organization.

Meals on Wheels West – Executive Board Member
SMC General Advisory Board Member
California Democratic Party Executive Board Member
California Democratic Party Credentials Committee Vice-Chair
Franklin Elementary School PTA Legislative Chair
Communities for Excellent Public Schools Steering Committee Member
Santa Monica's for Renters' Rights Housing Committee
California Democratic Party Renters Council
SMDC Former Legislative Chair

6. Please confirm that you have read the latest version of the California Democratic Party Platform, as found below. List any items in the CDP Platform with which you disagree.

<https://cadem.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/FinalPlatform2024.pdf>

I agree with our party platform. I am proud to serve in a leadership role in the State Democratic Party as a Credentials Committee Vice-Chair. I participate in Regional meetings where resolutions are voted on and sent to the party to make this platform. I only wish we could reinforce and add an acknowledgment that students from early childhood to community college learn best and succeed in their education when they have a stable roof over their heads. Housing is, of course, addressed well in other parts of the platform, but I'd like to see it listed within the Education section.

SMC

1. What are your top priorities for SMC which you plan to address in this four-year term?

The top goals I want to achieve at SMC include increasing enrollment, helping to stabilize community college funding at the state level, enhancing the offerings for our local communities in both Malibu and Santa Monica, increasing the transfer rate of our students of color who seek to transfer, continuing to build upon our DEI successes and making sure all of our students, faculty and staff feel supported by the Board of Trustees.

I'd also like to expand our certificate program offerings where feasible for ever-greater workforce development and to work with the State to improve relations with the UCs and CSUs so we can work together to serve more students and nurture the careers of our faculty and staff.

2. Deficit-based framing like "achievement gap" can increase challenges students from marginalized backgrounds face in academic environments. More widely, deficit framing can influence how broader communities see foundational complexities of education inequity. As an SMC leader, how are you effectively shaping policy that helps students thrive and promotes healthy public debate?

I agree that deficit-framing is a pessimistic and unfair approach to any students' education and only serves to keep already-marginalized students even further marginalized. I think that comes more into play for K-12 education, and I applaud our amazing SMMUSD administration and teachers for offering an outstanding education to my son and to all of our kids in Santa Monica and Malibu.

I support a high counselor : student ratio. Pathway and persistence are the keys to success for completing our SMC programs and/or for transferring to a 4-year program. Completing Year 2 is a big deal in community college for students with all kinds of life challenges. I would strive to make absolutely certain that we are supporting programs

on campus like Black Collegians, Adelante and other diverse student groups, which have the lived experience to best be in a position to mentor and guide our students.

When considering the budget, we should prioritize services and offerings that are student-facing and make sure that any budget cuts the state forces on us don't come at the expense of communities of color, single parents, veterans, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds or students of different abilities or from protected classes.

3. Should SMC prioritize investments in hybrid instruction or emphasize a return to in-person instruction?

In short: both. While I feel that in-person instruction is truly the best learning and college experience, it's a reality of the times in which we live that technology will enable us to serve students from all corners of the earth with online learning. If technology helps a mom with an infant take our coursework from home, I would applaud the opportunity to make that even easier for her. If out of state students who pay more per credit hour want to take our online offerings, that helps everyone.

That being said, we have so many wonderful programs, facilities and clubs on campus, that I'd like for our students to experience that support. It's widely understood that participation across a broad range of campus programs is the key to student success.

Keeping our facilities updated is crucial to attracting great students who want new and modern classes and degree programs that require hands-on learning.

I believe that in order to stay competitive, we need to invest in both.

4. Given current plans to build housing for SMC students, should priority be given to any particular groups of students (for example, unhoused students, international students, etc.)? Should there also be market rate housing for all SMC students, regardless of need?

When the College starts building student housing, I'd like to see 100% of it devoted to affordable housing, including units for unhoused students and students at risk of becoming unhoused. We also have students with families who need housing, and I'd like to see a mix of units that includes at least a few family units. There are some exciting possibilities surrounding community partners, like UCLA, helping us to administer housing. I'd like to see it include wraparound services to meet student needs in the areas of food insecurity and mental health support.

If we are able, I'd very much support offering a portion of the units to our faculty and staff who may have needs for housing. If it is determined that we have the space and if the demand is met for students who are in need, then we could entertain mixing in some market rate units for students or faculty who want that housing near where they work or learn, as that would lessen the impacts on our local housing for those who want to make Santa Monica their home and could help pay for the other units. I would initially defer to our professional administration to determine the feasibility of all of these options, then take staff, student and public input into consideration in any final decisions.

5. In what ways can SMC better collaborate directly with SMMUSD?

I'd love to see even more interaction with our early childhood education programs and our K-12 with SMC! C2C is much more than just an acronym in our current collaborations, and I'd like to see it grow. The more credits that a high school student can complete, the less expensive their higher education will be overall, keeping them from taking on more crippling student debt than they can bear.

I'd like to explore teacher training and continuing education credits for SMMUSD staff as a potential offering of SMC and an expansion of our lab school and child development program as SMMUSD expands its preschool and TK offerings. Can their teachers take our EGC coursework for example? The district is currently utilizing our wonderful campus facilities for its needs and there may be more opportunities in the future. Maybe more of our SMC students can be a part of the CREST class offerings at our elementary schools. The possibilities are endless, and I look forward to collaborating with SMMUSD.

Social Justice

1. What can SMC do to better implement social justice instruction and otherwise address equity issues?

The Trustees and Administration can continue to listen to their students and faculty and always strive to go to the source of lived experiences when developing or changing policies and programs. Thoughtful oversight of campus security and the interaction between different affinity groups must strike a balance and be as equitable and fair to all as we can be. We must be willing to adjust when new trends or research comes to light.

I think the College is already doing fantastic work in these areas through programs like EPI and EGC. Equity, Pathways and Inclusion is the new program at the College to facilitate infrastructure that addresses equity issues. Equitizing Gateway Courses trains our faculty in a two-semester program to help them make sure their instruction is equitable, made by faculty for faculty. These are only two examples of the many efforts happening at SMC.

2. How can SMC respond to potentially disruptive on-campus protests, balancing the free speech rights of students with the safety of others who feel targeted by their actions and rhetoric?

I believe we can help alleviate tensions that may arise on campus by listening actively to different groups. People are sometimes in great pain or have real grievances, so we should learn as much as we can about the issues. I will encourage the administration to avail themselves of all possible resources for conflict resolution and for safety. It is important to protect the College, so it can achieve its mission of educating our students and supporting our faculty. Best practices from around the education world should be consulted to determine what kind of spaces need to be provided for legal protest, and our positions on what constitutes hate speech should be clear and should change with the times.

3. How would you use your position on the College Board to assist systematically disadvantaged groups of residents of Santa Monica?

I would make sure our communities are aware of the fantastic opportunities at SMC, like the PPI annual symposia, where we can all learn how to better ourselves and our public processes through inclusion. We would continue to work with local organizations and support them in their efforts to help the community. Increasing our budget from the State, making sure we have ample translation services, nurturing our faculty so they can instruct well, helping our Veteran students, staying aware of the well-being of the interactions of our affinity groups so everyone can be safely heard, providing for our students who are in need like the wonderful Bodega offerings, and by expanding our

relationship with the community, our seniors, our neighbors and SMMUSD will all help our community.

4. In light of anti-DEI practices across the nation and state, how is SMC encouraging opportunity based on place and promoting more equitable approaches to public education?

SMC has staff development, EPI, EGC, affinity clubs and a Public Policy Institute through which we already show our dedication to these principles. We work with statewide organizations to spread our good practices and to learn from theirs.

Ballot Measures

Do you support the Justice For Renters Act? YES

Do you support the repeal of Article 34? YES

Do you support the initiative to require new local taxes to pass by a two-thirds vote? Absolutely not

Do you support the potential measure to amend Prop 47? NO

Do you support the proposed amendments to Measure GS to exempt multifamily housing? Absolutely not.

Additional Questions

1. What role do you believe the Santa Monica Democratic Club should have in our City?

I think it already has a huge role and that it should continue and expand. The club has a benevolent mission to help register voters, encourage participation and to elect Democrats. It helps us understand legislation at the state level that affects all Californians and influences other states. It introduces us to candidates and to issues we might not otherwise be exposed to. It keeps us up to speed on local and regional initiatives and holds elected officials to account for their words and their deeds. It also raises funds to help elect Democrats who go through this thorough process.

2. If elected, how would you attempt to interact with the Santa Monica Democratic Club and other political organizations to ensure community buy-in on new proposals?

I hope I am already doing my utmost to communicate regularly with constituents and with club members as a twice-endorsed Rent Board Commissioner. I have and will continue to speak at the club on matters regarding the College, housing, state party business and more. I have and will continue to participate regularly in meetings and events. I appreciate the opportunities.

3. What is the most important topic that was left off of this questionnaire?

I think it's very thorough! I would appreciate your support and your endorsement.

Thank you very much!!!!

Anastasia Foster