

Democratic Party of Contra Costa County Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for seeking the endorsement of the Democratic Party of Contra Costa County (DPCCC).

Please submit your completed questionnaire and remit the endorsement application fee of \$30 no later than , August 12, 2024. Interviews will not be scheduled without both a completed questionnaire and received payment.

- Pay Endorsement Application Fee:

<https://secure.actblue.com/donate/2024campaignunityfund>.

1. Click on "Donate"
2. The page will say "2024 Campaign Unity Funds" - Just fill in \$30 as the amount to pay.

- Complete Candidate Questionnaire.

IMPORTANT INFO

- Your application fee must be paid before questionnaires will be processed.
- Interviews will not be scheduled without both a completed payment and completed questionnaire.
- You must have submitted your questionnaire and payment **before August 12, 2024 before 11:59pm PST.**
- Your completed questionnaire will be added to the DPCCC website after all interviews are conducted.
- The DPCCC membership will vote on endorsements at a **Special Meeting on August 29, 2024.** You will be sent an invitation to the meeting which you are welcome to attend.

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The DPCCC aspires to be an organization where members are empowered and feel safe to be who they are, regardless of ethnic, cultural, or social demographics. We are committed to fostering equity and social justice through our policies and actions.

We hold ourselves accountable for unwanted behavior and we expect decision-making to be based on justice principles. We actively oppose **racism, sexism, classism, ageism, ableism, homophobia, and all other forms of prejudice wherever we see it**, and we take action individually and collectively to right past wrongs in our communities.

Section 1: Candidate Information

Name (First, Last): *

Rafael Menis
.....

Preferred Name (if different than campaign name):
.....

Age *

- Under 18
- 18 to 24
- 25-44
- 45-65
- Over 65
- Prefer not to disclose

Pronouns: *

- She/Her/Hers
- He/Him/His
- They/Them/Theirs
- Ze/Zie/Hir/Hirs
- Prefer not to disclose
- Other: He/Them

Gender Identity (*check all that apply.*): *

- Gender non-conforming
- Genderqueer
- Genderfluid
- Non-binary
- Woman
- Man
- Transgender
- Prefer not to disclose
- Other:

Sexual Identity (*check all that apply.*): *

- Bisexual
- Queer
- Gay
- Heterosexual or straight
- Lesbian
- Asexual
- Pansexual
- Prefer not to disclose
- Other:

With which racial or ethnic group(s) do you identify? (*Mark all that apply.*): *

Native American or Indigenous

Black, African-American

Eastern European

Latino/a/x/e

Pacific Islander

Asian

East Asian

South Asian

Southeast Asian

Middle Eastern, Northern African

Native Hawaiian

East African

West African

South African

Central African

White

Multiracial/Mixed Race

Prefer not to disclose

Other:

Which office are you seeking? *

Pinole City Treasurer

CA FPPC ID # *

1467612

Campaign Website *

<https://menisfortreasurer.org>

Campaign Consultant/Manager *

None

.....

Social Media Handles *

menisfortreasurer2024- facebook
.....

1.1 - Why are you running for this office? Give no more than your top 3 reasons. *

- 1. Because I can be a better Treasurer than Roy Swearingen- I can get core concepts across to the public more clearly and propose higher yield investment strategies.
 - 2. Because I think the community doesn't understand the threats the city is facing, and the need for new revenue sources
 - 3. Because I think the role of Treasurer needs to change and become broader to support what Pinole needs to do, and I would be the best at that expanded role.
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1.2 - What are the responsibilities that come with the office you are running for? *

Make sure that all funds received by the city are kept safe. Ensure receipt, deposit, disbursement and investment of city funds are governed by city policy and generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).
.....

1.3 - What are your personal or professional qualifications that you believe make you the best candidate? *

Prior candidacy- I ran for this position in 2020 and got 3606 votes. Time spent studying and explaining city budgets and investment reports over the past five years. Professional accounting experience with Flourishing daylilies and training through the adult schools program. And finally, my autism makes me better at identifying patterns and focusing on details, which would make me a better treasurer.
.....

1.4 - What are your top goals for this office? How do you plan on achieving them? *

Make clear to the community the fiscal challenges Pinole faces, and what the effects would be of each option we can choose to face them. I would do this through social media outreach and through modifying the regular reports submitted to the council, as well as specialized reports as necessary.

Expand the Treasurer's role to more of a Treasurer-Auditor role, to improve public confidence in city government.

Engage with city government more as the Council sees fit, by being at Council meetings.

Increase the yield on the city of Pinole's investments by shifting to higher yield strategies (which will require altering policy). Right now we have substantial funds in the investment fund in equity which is underperforming ****cash****. While we remain in a high interest rate environment, we should exploit that.

1.5 - How do you plan on engaging your constituents in dialogue after you are elected? *

Social media outreach, being at community events, being at city council meetings, having open contact information for people to ask questions directly. And also hosting regular (monthly) events where the community can come talk to me directly- Chat with the Treasurer or the like.

1.6 - This is a 3-Part Question: Why are you seeking the endorsement of the DPCCC? How will you use our endorsement? How will you support other endorsed candidates and issues? *

Because the Democratic party's values align with mine, and I want people to know that. Additionally, 60% of the voting population of Pinole are members of the Democratic party. If I could get every Democrat to vote and vote for me, I would win.

I would use the DPCCC's endorsement on social media, my website and campaign materials (walk cards, ect).

I will support other endorsed candidates and issues by door-knocking with them and speaking in their favor, as I have done for several years now.

1.7 - Please feel free to include any additional information you would like us to consider in evaluating your candidacy. *

I am honored to have been endorsed by the Pinole Progressive Alliance, Pinole for Fair Government, Devin Murphy (Pinole City Councilmember), Anthony Tave (Pinole City Councilmember), Jamela Smith-Folds (WCCUSD Ward 1 Trustee), Vincent Salimi (former Pinole Mayor), Anthony Caro, Alex Walker-Griffin (Hercules Councilmember), Jovanka Beckles (AC Transit District 1 representative), Claudia Jiminez (Richmond Councilmember), Alfred Twu, Jeremy Levine, Stephen Tilton, John Bender (Planning Commissioner), Christy Lam-Julian (Planning Commissioner), Adam Benzuly (former Planning Commissioner), Gabriel Sandoval (Planning Commissioner), Andrew Uch (Planning Commissioner), Irma Ruport (Community Services Commissioner).

Section 2: Democratic History

2.1 - List your previous and current party affiliations. When did you first register as a Democrat and why? *

Democrat, since I was first eligible to vote in 2006 because George W. Bush was doing a terrible job as president.

2.2 - I have read and acknowledge the California Democratic Party's current platform (value statement) and will adhere to these values in the performance of my elected position. *

To learn about the CADEM Platform, please click [here](#).

Yes

No

2.3 - In your opinion, which elements of the CADEM Platform are most relevant to the position you are seeking? If elected, how do you plan to advance them? *

Reducing waste and fraud, by making sure that all expenditures align with what they should be per council direction.

- Support a just and inclusive society by speaking out with a public and unified voice against all forms of racism, discrimination, harassment, hatred, and violence directed at racial and ethnic minorities- the council already backs United Against Hate, but it's worth reiterating and expanding on as I have done in the past and will do in the future.

Support ongoing research and implementation of best practices that use the Internet to foster collaboration and give

stronger voice to communities- yes, through more use of elements like the Balancing Act and other methods that lead to community input. We've already seen one case in Pinole where public input changed a policy outcome.

Demand transparency and implementation of accountability measures for all levels of the government and the

Democratic Party, including federal, state, and local governments- yes, a core policy goal of my campaign is to increase accessibility and accountability for the city of Pinole's finances, by making charts to clarify key data about the city's finances and reporting on how the city's funds are being used routinely at meetings.

2.4 - Have you actively supported policies and initiatives that prioritize and protect reproductive healthcare and freedom, and can you affirm your commitment to continuing this support if elected? *

Yes

No

2.5 - If elected, what would you do to advance equity, anti-racism, justice, and belonging? *

Ensure outreach to communities that have not been historically reached out to in Pinole. The city has translations in 4 languages of the general plan updates- great! The sign that those plan announcements are written on? 100% English. In a community that has 36% non-English speakers (page 69, 2/1/22 city council agenda packet), having communications go out in a language people can read is critical to outreach.

Ensuring that outreach goes to community groups particularly those not traditionally represented. Ideally, having the city's meetings broadcast in English, Spanish, Cantonese and Tagalog.

2.6 - Have you actively opposed LGBTQIA+ issues, which may involve voting against solidarity, supporting harmful or exclusionary policies, or publicly expressing opposition through statements or comments? (i.e. voting against or making disparaging remarks about the display of pride flags, marriage equality, trans-inclusive policies, or queer-inclusive curricula). *

Yes

No

2.7 - Have you previously sought the endorsement of the DPCCC? If yes, for what elected office? Were you endorsed? *

Yes- for City Council in 2022, and for Treasurer in 2020. I was endorsed in 2020 and not endorsed in 2022.

2.8 - Please list any elected offices, positions and date(s), which you hold/held or campaigned for as a candidate. *

Pinole City Council, candidate, 2018. Pinole City Treasurer, candidate, 2020. Pinole City Council, candidate, 2022.

2.9 - In what ways have you supported and actively participated in the Democratic Party at the local, state, and national levels? *

I have been part of and contributed to local democratic clubs, such as the Contra Costa Young Dems and the West County Democratic Club. I have donated to the statewide party. I have backed local Democratic officials running for office thorough campaign donations and canvassing, such as Devin Murphy and Anthony Tave.

2.10 - Please list any clubs, boards, commissions, and /or organizations with which you are an active member, including the length of your affiliation and any leadership position you hold/held. *

West County Democratic Club, since 2024. Contra Costa Young Dems, since 2022, served as Treasurer and Political Director. Pinole Planning Commission- since 2021, Chair since 2024. Pinole Progressive Alliance- since 2017, Facilitator and Secretary at various different times.

2.11 - Have you ever endorsed non-Democrats? *

Yes

No

2.11a - If so, what were the circumstances?

Backing candidates who I thought had a better platform- for example, Bernie Sanders in the 2016 and 2020 primaries.

Section 3: References & Club Endorsements

3.1 - Please list any other endorsements you have received for this campaign. *

Devin Murphy (Pinole City Councilmember), Anthony Tave (Pinole City Councilmember), Jamela Smith-Folds (WCCUSD Ward 1 Trustee), Vincent Salimi (former Pinole Mayor), Anthony Caro, Alex Walker-Griffin (Hercules Councilmember), Jovanka Beckles (AC Transit District 1 representative), Claudia Jiminez (Richmond Councilmember), Alfred Twu, Jeremy Levine, Stephen Tilton, John Bender (Planning Commissioner), Christy Lam-Julian (Planning Commissioner), Adam Benzuly (former Planning Commissioner), Gabriel Sandoval (Planning Commissioner), Andrew Uch (Planning Commissioner), Irma Ruport (Community Services Commissioner), Pinole Progressive Alliance, Pinole for Fair Government, Ivette Ricco, Franke Martinez (Planning Commissioner).

3.2 - What other endorsements are you seeking? *

ASFCME Local 1, Local 512, IAFF, PPEA, Sierra Club, Our Revolution East Bay, Contra Costa County Labor Council

Some of the Democratic Clubs use this questionnaire in their endorsement process. If you would like to be considered for Democratic club endorsement(s), please contact the club(s) directly by going to our DPCCC website club's page:

<https://contracostadems.com/clubs/>

Part 2: DPCCC Values Section

Please proceed to fill out the 2nd section of the Candidate Questionnaire on the Democratic Party of Contra Costa County's Values.

DPCCC Value: Criminal Justice & Conflict Resolution

- *Opposes criminalization of low level offenses, advocates for Community Support Services, funding for prompt rape kit processing, gun violence prevention measures; Opposes scapegoating, racial profiling, religious profiling, bigotry, vigilantism, exploitation, and any xenophobic conduct that polarize communities and denounce actions by the government or individuals that keep undocumented immigrants in the shadows of our society; Supports Law Enforcement Training, Civilian Oversight Committees, independent investigators for cases involving the use of deadly force or in-custody deaths, restorative justice;*
- *Supports a properly funded and staffed the U.S. foreign service that promotes democracy and human rights around the world; Supports candidates who work to de-escalate tension especially in areas of conflict like Israel/Gaza, Sudan, Haiti, and other parts of the world through good faith negotiations and work for world peace; Endorse candidates who support the Democratic Party as it works to counter aggression by countries that violate the sovereignty of other countries and that fund and implement physical, cyber, and financial attacks on democracies and developing countries.*

Please expand on your stance and describe the potential impacts on the community that you seek to represent. *

I think that community polarization and scapegoating harm our communities, which is why I have advocated and will continue to advocate for inclusion, as well as policies to ensure that law enforcement is properly trained and has appropriate limits on the tools they use. I do not think that peace at any costs is the correct moral or practical position- if Ukraine surrendered to Russia, we would just find ourselves in the exact same position with Poland or Latvia in under a decade. While the increased costs generated by sanctions do have a negative impact on the community I serve, letting Russia go unchecked would have much more harmful consequences in the medium and long terms. Democracy is critically important at home and around the world, as we have seen time and time again. Authoritarian countries and parties lose the ability to correct course or change leadership, as our own party has done.

DPCCC Value: Criminal Justice & Conflict Resolution

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DPCCC Value: Education & Child Support Services

- *Advocates for high-quality, affordable child care; support programs for low income families including access to parks and job retraining; ensures educational materials (textbooks, library books) are inclusive, historically accurate, and reflect scientific consensus including age-appropriate, medically accurate sex/gender education; replacing sworn peace officers in schools with trained non-police personnel; Supports policies that respect students' civil rights related to gender expression and addresses issues like gender-based violence and harassment.*

Please expand on your stance and describe the potential impacts on the community that you seek to represent. *

I think it is critically important that all children, regardless of gender identity have a safe campus to attend, free from violence based on their gender identity or expression. My own community has been harmed by a student being allowed to sexually harass others for a significant amount of time. That's unacceptable.

DPCCC Value: Seniors & Veteran Support Services

- *Supports the California Master Plan for Aging including dignified living at home housing options that are age, disability, and dementia-friendly; prioritize public housing initiatives over privatization for seniors and adults with disabilities; support retraining for those aged 55-65, and extend unemployment; oppose mandatory retirement; call for stronger oversight of reverse mortgage programs, rigorous prosecution of financial crimes against seniors; support comprehensive single-payer healthcare, with interim Medicare Part D reforms; support HICAP services, affordable mental healthcare including issues around isolation, quality caregiving, and increased funding for In-Home Supportive Services. Preserve programs like Adult Protective Services and home-delivered meals; advocate for the removal of the FICA income limit to strengthen Social Security and preserve pensions.*
- *Champions the needs of veterans and military families by promoting equitable treatment and benefits, access to education including tuition waivers and retraining, adequate healthcare funding including government assistance for those exposed to toxins; elimination of veteran homelessness, establishment of Veterans' Courts and justice programs and support independent investigations of claims of hazing, rape, sexual assault and harassment and that the military remove the chain of command from all investigations and prosecutions; support a path to citizenship for military service members, and protections against discrimination based on ethnicity, disability, gender identity, political affiliation, race, religion, or sexual orientation; oppose deportation of military personnel and limitations on citizenship for children of veterans who are born abroad.*

Please expand on your stance and describe the potential impacts on the community that you seek to represent. *

I support single-payer healthcare, because without it the City of Pinole will go bankrupt even if we can solve our issues with CALPERS. It's also the correct thing to do- everyone deserves to have proper medical care, and proper medical treatment now reduces future costs (and not just for pandemics!).

DPCCC Value: Affordable Housing & Environmental Protections

- *Supports eviction protections, rent control/stabilization, anti-harassment ordinances, and habitability protections; Supports zoning and housing policies that ensure sustainability and affordability, including infill and mixed-use developments that balance job opportunities with housing availability; Promotes the integration of green spaces and community gardens in all communities; Supports local authority in phasing out fossil fuel extraction and preventing the zoning of new extraction sites; Advocates for strong regulatory measures for setting science-based health and safety setbacks from residential areas for industrial sites, including oil and gas wells and toxic dump sites.*

Please expand on your stance and describe the potential impacts on the community that you seek to represent. *

As a renter, I support just cause eviction preventions- I would like for there to be a reason if I'm kicked out of my home other than my landlord's convenience or whim. As Treasurer there's a limited amount I can do to affect any of those categories, unfortunately- but I would continue to advocate for them as a private citizen.

DPCCC Value: Equality & Human Rights

- *Actively advocates for a just and inclusive society, speaking out against all forms of racism, discrimination, harassment, hatred, and violence; Supports movements and initiatives that address discrimination; Enforces policies that ensure equal opportunities and equal pay for equal work across genders, races, and abilities; Upholds the rights of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals for acknowledgment of their stated name, gender, and pronoun; Supports the use of gender-neutral language to foster an inclusive environment; Promotes the participation of women, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, and people of color in elected office and ensures access to facilities consistent with individuals' gender identity and disability access; Supports the right to free speech, ensuring it does not extend to discriminatory practices against any group based on race, religion, gender identity, or sexual orientation.*

Please expand on your stance and describe the potential impacts on the community that you seek to represent. *

Racism and discrimination harms everyone by limiting us from reaching our fullest potential, both as individuals and as a community. I would support the county's candidate nomination forms having another checkbox for gender other than male or female, as nonbinary individuals could feel forced to select an option lest they be automatically placed into one that does not align with their gender identity. I think that inclusivity makes the City of Pinole stronger, and I would continue to advocate for it in my public statements and who I support.

DPCCC Value: Healthcare & Reproductive Rights

- *Advocates for the preservation of rights under Roe v. Wade, guaranteeing confidential and unrestricted access to reproductive services without the need for consent or judicial intervention, ensuring continued coverage of all healthcare options; Works toward implementing a universal, single-payer healthcare system, while in the interim, seeking reforms to make Medicare Part D more affordable and accessible, including the ability for Medicare to negotiate drug prices.*

Please expand on your stance and describe the potential impacts on the community that you seek to represent. *

The right to bodily autonomy is a core human right, as we've seen with the GOP working to cut away at other rights- from IVF to even the right to travel. California's constitution supports abortion rights, and I think there should be similar protections at a national level. As for single payer healthcare, I'll repeat what I said above- I support single-payer healthcare, because without it the City of Pinole will go bankrupt even if we can solve our issues with CALPERS. It's also the correct thing to do- everyone deserves to have proper medical care, and proper medical treatment now reduces future costs (and not just for pandemics!).

DPCCC Value: Economic Justice & Business Development

- *Support for Small Businesses and Entrepreneurship focusing on women, people of color, and those with limited entrepreneurship opportunities including veterans; Support the rights of employees to organize and Project Labor Agreements; Ensures a safe working environment free from harassment, intimidation, and retaliation; Advocates for the establishment of local banks and credit unions, limiting regressive financial operations like check cashing businesses and pawnshops; Promotes Project Labor Agreements to protect workers; Supports initiatives to counteract "food deserts" by developing local grocery stores and community gardens in underrepresented areas.*

Please expand on your stance and describe the potential impacts on the community that you seek to represent. *

I support the city of Pinole's adopted Project Labor Agreement, which should allow for the timely completion of projects with well-paying union jobs working as a boon to the city's tax base as a whole.

Reminders:

* After submitting this questionnaire, please go and pay your endorsement application fee at:

<https://contracostadems.com/donate>

* Please direct questions to the Endorsements Committee Chair Tamela Hawley or Vice Chair Cameron Sasai at endorsements@contracostadems.com

* The DPCCC Code of Conduct: <https://contracostadems.com/about/code-of-conduct/>

* The CADEM Party Platform: <https://cadem.org/our-platform/>

If you like, you may submit a biography and/or resume in the section below. Not required.

 Add file

Submit Questionnaire

By submitting this questionnaire, I attest that the foregoing is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and to uphold the Code Of Conduct. <https://contracostadems.com/about/code-of-conduct/>

Thank you and good luck with your campaign! We will be in touch with you to schedule your interview time.

Interviews will be scheduled by District Directors.

By submitting this questionnaire, I agree to accepting the endorsement of the DPCCC if offered. *

Yes

No

I have paid my endorsement application fee: <https://contracostadems.com/donate/> *

Yes

No

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