



ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE 2022

Anna V. Eskamani

**Running for
Florida House of Representatives
District 42**

Candidate Information

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1. What motivated you to run for this position?

My love for my hometown coupled w/ a deep commitment for public service.

2. What does being an ally or advocate for the LGBTQ+ community mean to you?

It means showing up for the LGBTQ+ community even when we're met with gross homophobia and transphobia, fighting against dangerous bills while proactively fighting for good ones, and being intentional in building relationships with LGBTQ+ people and community groups.

3. Please summarize your history of community involvement. This may include city boards, civic associations, non-profits, etc.

There is a lot to list, but I currently serve on the boards of the Winter Park Playhouse and Orlando Gay Chorus. You can see more here:
<https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Representatives/details.aspx?MemberId=4746&LegislativeTermId=89>

4. Please summarize any work you have performed in the past five years to further LGBTQ+ rights. This may include paid positions, volunteer work, and donations.

Every year in the Florida Legislature we have sponsored and co-sponsored pro-active bills to improve the health and well-being of LGBTQ+ people. We've helped organized events and rallies both in the Capitol and in Central FL to do the same, while simultaneously fight unapologetically against bigoted homophobic and transphobic bills and people. In fact, we are currently helping to plan a protest outside of Dave Rubin/DeSantis event happening in Orlando.

We also raise money and support local LGBTQ+ focused organizations, amplify initiatives to amplify the needs and concerns of LGBTQ+ people, and lead w/an intersectional lens to ensure that LGBTQ+ perspectives are included with other policy issues/fights too.

But even before I ran for office I worked to be an accomplice to the LGBTQ+ community, working to provide HRT services at our Planned Parenthood Health Centers, supporting

Pulse survivors, and organizing some of the first vigils and protests in response to the Pulse shooting.

Questions

- 5. The rise in anti-LGBTQ+ legislation barreling down from Tallahassee has caused a sharp increase in discrimination and violence against the LGBTQ+ community in Orange County. How would you go about reducing discrimination in your district or local community? How would you measure your progress?**

Representation matters and I am proud to hire LGBTQ+ staff that play leadership roles on my team, and we are very intentional in uplifting LGBTQ+ stories and lived experiences through our multiple social media outlets.

In addition to supporting local policy solutions (like banning "conversion therapy") we've also stood up against homophobic/transphobic issues taking place in our schools (both private and public) and called out businesses who are being bigoted in who they host or cater to.

We need to measure success through not reported hate crimes, but also the One Orlando Alliance's needs assessment survey, which can offer more insight into the attitudes and opinions of local LGBTQ+ community members.

- 6. Elected officials and office staff are still woefully under-educated on the transgender community. This means that the services their offices provide are often ignorant of the needs of the transgender community. What actions would you take to ensure that the services your office will provide will be educated on and cognizant of the needs of the transgender community?**

The House Democratic Minority Office along with our team have hosted several trainings focused on the transgender and gender non-confirming community. We also are intentional in using and teaching gender neutral language to our peers. We need to continue these trainings and hold ourselves and our peers accountable.

- 7. The Florida Republican Party is leading the country in stripping away LGBTQ+ rights, starting with our children. Students are having their lives and livelihoods placed at risk by laws such as the Transgender Sports Ban, the so-called Parental Bill of Rights, and now Don't Say Gay. These shamelessly discriminatory bills are forcing LGBTQ+ families to reconsider their future in Florida. What would you tell the parents of LGBTQ+ children in your district who feel they need to leave Florida in order to protect their children?**

You must do what's best for your kids, but know that we are fighting for you and your family and refuse to leave anyone behind or stand back while our most marginalized kids are used as political pawns.

- 8. The Trevor Project's 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health found that 45% of LGBTQ+ students seriously considered attempting suicide and 1-in-5 LGBTQ+ attempt it. How would you lead on this issue and work to decrease these statistics over the course of your term in office?**

It's important that we keep sharing these statistics so people who vote for these terrible anti-LGBTQ+ bills understand the harm they are causing. We must not only repeal those bills, but work to invest in community based program that are inclusive to all kids, including LGBTQ+. We also need to keep pushing back against book bans and other homophobic/transphobic campaigns happening in FL.

- 9. The same survey by The Trevor Project found that nearly all transgender and non-binary students have had to worry about their access to gender-affirming healthcare, bathrooms, and sports teams being taken away from them. How would you work to take this fear off their shoulders so that they can go back to just being kids?**

We must repeal policies that demonize transgender and non-binary students, and pursue policies that ensure the safety of our kids no matter their gender identity.

- 10. Far-right groups are pushing to ban books on any topic they find disagreeable, such as books on Black history and experiences, immigration, the LGBTQ+ community, climate change, etc. Do you support these book bans? If not, what is your plan to counter them and ensure students have access to a full array of age-appropriate knowledge and experiences?**

I do not, and fought back against book bans in the FL legislature. We need to urge school board members to hold the line and not fall for these homophobic and transphobic attacks.

- 11. During a town hall in your district, a constituent describes being gay or transgender as a "lifestyle choice." What is incorrect about their description? How would you constructively respond in this situation?**

It's not a choice -- it's who people are, and we should love them for who they are not judge and shame.

- 12. During a board meeting, the board chair purposely refers to a transgender woman as "he" and "him" as the woman attempts to give her public comment. The woman corrects the board chair each time, insisting that her pronouns are "she" and "her." The board chair continues to misgender the woman until she eventually leaves the chamber in tears. How would you respond in this situation?**

If possible, I would first check in with the impacted person and see what would be the most helpful way for me to support them as everyone could have a different preferred next step. If I am unable to make immediate contact with that person, I would approach staff and/or the board member and explain to them what they did was wrong. If they are not responding to my feedback, I would likely turn to social media to call them out.

- 13. A parent approaches you at an event, insisting that her son's teachers have "groomed" him into liking boys. Her son is at her side when she says this. How do respond to the parent's statement such that the young boy leaves feeling better about himself?**

That is not true, your son is perfect the way he is, and I would love to introduce you to PFLAG so you can learn how to better support the awesome kid your son is.

- 14. Orange County continues to embrace urban sprawl, despite a plethora of data that links urban sprawl to severe strains on our housing, employment, healthcare, and public transit systems (to name a few). What are your thoughts on Orange County's growth? What could Orange County in terms of development that would better serve the communities in your district?**

We need less sprawl and more density. I have also filed many bills to use TDT money to help fund public infrastructure (including transit and workforce housing).

- 15. Do you support the idea of constructing more multi-family homes in neighborhoods traditionally zoned for single-family homes? What impact would this have on your district?**

Yes, and it would help ease the affordable housing crisis.

16. Homeowner Associations often prevent homeowners from transitioning their lawns away from non-functional grasses such as turf and towards sustainable options such as native Florida plants and edible landscapes. HOAs insist that moving away from the traditional pristine green lawn would lower housing prices. What is your opinion on this issue?

The more native plants, the better!

17. What are the top environmental concerns you are seeing in your District and what are the solutions you plan to bring forward if you were elected?

Water quality is #1, along with the expansion of clean energy. We've filed many bills on the issues and have worked with local advocacy groups on local campaigns like Orange County's fertilizer ordinance and sewage spills at Lake Formosa.

18. Contributions are typically linked to poor environmental policies being passed. Are you pledging to stay away from any particular contributions?

Yes, many: Fossil fuel companies, agriculture (including sugar), phosphorus mines to just name a few!

19. Understanding our economic position, how do you plan to localize and strengthen our food system?

By supporting regenerative agriculture and the expansion of fleet farming!