



ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE 2022

Sandra Fatmi-Hall

**Running for
Orange County Board of Commissioners
District 2**

Candidate Information

Website: www.sandrafatmi.com
Facebook: Sandra Fatmi-Hall for Orange County
Commissioner District 2
Twitter: n/a
Instagram: @sandrafatmi_

1. What motivated you to run for this position?

I have been asked for 11 years to run for Orange County Commissioner for District 2 to be the positive change the community needs. I said no in the beginning to focus on the part of the District that I live in, and did just that. For the past 9 years we partnered with community leaders and focused on the needs of the community. It became more pressing when the Pine Hills part of the district showed positive growth and a decrease in crime to name a few. Community Leaders from 50% of the district approached me for the 10th time last year, and called a round table meeting to discuss issues dividing the community such as South Apopka and North Apopka seen as two different countries for years. The uptick in crime. The unjust treatment of people from all walks of life. A concern for how the tax dollars were being spent, and last but not least, the lack of leadership that only recognizes North Apopka and Lockhart, not all 8 areas of the district. I prayed about this ask, and got the answer that this was assignment and new that it was time to take that leap to be the change we need.

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

Being an ally or advocate for the LGBTQ+ means fully supporting, accepting and advocating on behalf of individuals that identify as LGBTQ+. This means giving love and kindness with no judgement at all times.. The same treatment you want for yourself. This means advocating for fair treatment, equal rights. This means as a mentor for our teenagers and young adults to have an open door policy to hear from our voices in the community that are often dismissed.

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

As a community leader and advocate for the past 11 years. I have been President of the Pine Hills Community Council - The advocacy group for the 70,000 plus residents of Pine Hills. President of the United Foundation of Central Florida - A non profit organization formed to empower communities one family at a time, and the Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce - representing over 28 countries all at the same time. These 3 organizations represented only 3 of the 6 organizations I was involved in, and touched all aspects of the community from 2 to 102 years old.

- 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.**

As I think back to the past 5 years and the shooting at the Pulse nightclub. It takes me back to a sad time in our local history and the history of hate in this country against the LGBTQ+. I represented the 3 organizations above as a partner, resource, counselor and human being to help the survivors and their families over the past 5 years. I still stay in touch with a couple of the families today.

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?**

It saddens me that we are having this discussion, and speaks to where we are in this country because of poor leadership and individuals that have no compassion for human beings. Electing people that are human beings that have demonstrated leadership that is progressive, have an open mind and are willing to be the voice for the voiceless is key. To reduce discrimination in District 2 I will partner with LGBTQ+ organizations such as Rainbow Dems and other organizations to work on the best course to take and measure the outcomes through surveys at the beginning and follow up after to check in 6 months later to see where we are.

- 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?**

This is workable. Let's start by partnering with Rainbow Dems and or organizations to bring about the needed education to address the needs of the transgender community.

- 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?**

This mid-term election year is the most crucial in the history of our country. Everyone that can should fully exercise their right to go out to vote and vote, and vote the republicans out of office that are creating these discrimination policies. Your vote is your voice. It's crucial that we create a safe space for all.

- 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?**

The data provided is instrumental in leading the way to decrease these alarming numbers. I would continue to lead as I have by providing the education to the community. If I was not involved in this questionnaire I would not be as knowledgeable about this study, that means others in education, leadership and the community have no idea.

- 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?**

Advocate for policies that bring about access to gender-affirming healthcare, bathrooms and sports. As well as going forward implement this access.

- 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 am not in support of banning books on any topic that the far-right find disagreeable. There is something wrong with supporting banning books, but not banning the sale of AR-15 rifles. We have some serious issues to focus on, and would redirect and educate our community. Education is once again key. As a Founder of a non-profit organization I will continue to use our Solutions Center, classes and educational forum successes that resulted in preventing two LGBTQ+ youth from committing suicide as a guide.

- 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?**

On a daily basis people confuse or link gender and sexual orientation. It is not a lifestyle choice. We will continue to host seminars or workshops to educate our community. Gender is who you are. Some one who is transgender does not feel that who they are on the inside matches their assigned gender on the outside. It is their absolute right.

- 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?**

Immediately, as tastely as possible. Address the situation in the same public manner, and refuse the meeting from continuing if we cannot be respectful to everyone in attendance. Leadership is not just a position, Leadership is action.

- 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?**

As a community leader with a non-profit focused on the community, young people and their parents and daily. I would request that we respectfully have this discussion away from the ear of her son. I would love to role play this prior to getting the job.

- 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?**

Orange County is rapidly growing at 1500 individuals moving to the county weekly. We can utilize the land there without restrictions to help solve the affordable housing crisis.

- 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?**

We have ran out of space to build. In some areas I support constructing some multi-family homes where the zoning will be perfect. Apopka for example is one of the fastest growing cities and there is land sitting there waiting to be utilized.

- 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?**

Natural grass lawns adorn front yards and back yards across the nation, but the cost, maintenance and water requirements for these high maintenance landscaping features have many homeowners on the hunt for lawn alternatives that are better for the planet. Grass alternatives also lower the home's impact on the environment.

- 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?**

One of the most environmental concerns is destruction of wildlife habitat. Air and water pollution, Vast areas of impermeable surfaces in built up areas often replace water absorbing vegetation. I plan to listen to the voice of the community (Split Oak for eg.), work with government to be that leader to find alternative solutions.

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

I am happy to share that my campaign has received donations from individuals that wanted to make sure that their voices for change to remove corruption was heard.

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

Increased funding of the healthy food financing initiative to increase access to healthy foods and provide new market opportunities for farmers is a priority.