

ROB BONTA
Seeking Position For: Alameda City Council
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1. If elected, what are your top priorities during your term? What would you like to accomplish and how would you go about doing so? Please be specific.

As a City Councilmember, I will promote sound economic development, preserve public safety, exercise fiscal responsibility, build a partnership with our schools, and protect services for our community's most vulnerable. Working closely with the community and fellow City leaders, I will work to improve the lives of all Alamedans and ensure that we maintain and enhance the quality of life in Alameda that we all love.

The biggest problem in Alameda is the fiscal challenge the City faces, and the attendant threat to our valued public services. Addressing these challenges, will require a comprehensive approach that includes both revenue generation and increased efficiencies/cost-cutting, similar to the successful approach I took at Alameda Hospital when we effected the financial turnaround that turned a deficit into a surplus.

As a City Councilmember, I will exercise the same fiscal discipline and responsibility that I demonstrated as a publicly-elected official representing all of Alameda as a Director of the Alameda Hospital Board. There I helped oversee the greatest financial turnaround in the history of Alameda Hospital— moving from approximately a \$2.5M deficit to a \$.5M profit, a \$3M swing over the course of one year—while providing critical, high quality health care services to the community. And the Hospital added over \$1M to that surplus the following year for a total surplus of \$1.8M. During the time that I served on the Hospital Board, the hospital moved in a positive financial direction every single year, which amounted to a total move of \$5.5M in a positive direction, and put together the only two consecutive years of a financial surplus in the history of the City of Alameda Health Care District.

The work I have done as Chair of the Economic Development commission in cultivating sound and responsible economic development, particularly in promoting efforts for business attraction and business retention, will be a critical part of this strategy. If we pursue sound economic development at Alameda Point, our business parks, our business districts, in West Alameda, and elsewhere, we can substantially improve the quality of life for all Alamedans while also generating important tax revenue (transfer tax, property tax, sales tax, etc.) to support the services we care about most in Alameda, such as our public schools and our public safety (police and fire).

The recently-approved VF Outdoor project at Harbor Bay Business Park is an exciting economic development project that the City should build on and replicate. Alameda recently attracted VF Outdoor (The North Face, JanSport, Eagle Creek, etc.) to relocate their corporate headquarters to Harbor Bay Business Park. VF Outdoor will build a five-building campus of all new construction, thereby generating numerous union construction jobs. It will generate \$3M in tax revenues over 12 years and another \$3M

in AMP commercial rate energy payments. It will become one of the highest property tax sources in the City (as well as one of the largest private employers in the City with 650 jobs). And it will be a catalyst for additional quality development, as high quality companies attract other high quality companies.

Working effectively and collaboratively with our labor unions will also be critical and is something I have demonstrated I have the ability to do. In an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect, Alameda Hospital was able to negotiate fair contracts with its labor unions that also planned for Alameda Hospital's future. For example, the membership of the California Nurses' Association (CNA) *unanimously* ratified a contract that contributed significantly to the financial health of the Hospital. In addition, Hospital management was asked, and agreed, to give salary reductions to help prepare for the future. I will employ this same respectful, trustworthy, and effective approach in working with the City's labor unions to secure Alameda's future. Our city employees want what we all want—a thriving, healthy City—and they are willing to contribute appropriately to ensure that outcome. But, recently, the City has not been able to bargain successfully with labor. I will continue to work with labor effectively, with an open mind and an open ear and in a spirit of mutual trust and respect, so that together we can face the significant challenges our City faces.

The City must also consider new and creative ways to generate additional revenue. This could take the form of accessing federal monies, such as the recently-approved Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant which provided funding to put 6 laid off firefighters back to work. We must also, among other possibilities, work to improve collections on emergency ambulance services and seriously explore the possibility of the Fire Department providing interfacility ambulance services, both of which could provide valuable dollars to the City's bottom line.

I have demonstrated that I am an effective and experienced leader, who brings energy, commitment and fresh ideas to address the challenges our residents are facing. I have demonstrated that I am not afraid of and will not shy away from a challenge. For example, when I joined the Alameda Hospital Board, the Hospital was just closing the books on a fiscal year that ended in a multi-million dollar financial deficit. Some warned against my joining the Board because they believed the Hospital could potentially close on my watch. But, working closely with my colleagues and staff, I helped turn the Hospital around financially and worked to preserve this valuable community asset. The challenges that our City faces today are major, and require the same leadership abilities that I demonstrated on the Hospital Board.

I have demonstrated a collaborative and cooperative approach to leadership. I will work with colleagues and staff to move our City forward, rather than participate in any divisiveness that will prevent the City Council from best serving Alameda's residents. I will lead by bringing people from different backgrounds and perspectives together to find common ground. I will represent all residents of Alameda, not just a particular segment. If we are to move forward as a City, we must do so together, with civility, open minds, and a healthy and constructive dialog.

And I will work closely with the community. For example, as a City Councilmember, I will make myself accountable to the voters who elect me by holding regular community meetings. At these meetings, voters will have the opportunity to ask questions and hear from me in person. And, perhaps more importantly, I will have an opportunity to hear from them. I will listen. In addition, I will make myself available to voters through email and telephone. In order to increase the community's access to their government, I was instrumental in ensuring that Alameda Hospital followed a more open and inclusive process for its regular meetings. I spearheaded the effort to film meetings and make the videos available to members of the public on the internet. I also worked to ensure that all meeting agendas were posted and available well in advance of meetings.

2. How have you in the past and how will you in the future use your position to expand the presence and influence of Asian Pacific Americans in public policy and politics?

I served as the President of the Asian Pacific American Democratic Caucus of Alameda County. In that role from Fall 2006 to Fall 2009, I worked to strengthen and empower the API community, to support API Democratic leaders, and to advocate regarding policy issues of importance to the API community and the Democratic Party.

I am a founding member of the Filipino-American Democratic Club of Alameda County (2009-present).

I am on the Board of Asian Pacific American Leadership Project (APALP) whose mission it is to train APA public policy leaders and candidates for public office.

I am involved with, and honored to be endorsed by, KAYA (Filipino Americans for Progress) who are led by young leaders creating a grassroots movement to empower politically the Filipino American community. I am proud to be working in partnership with, and to support, these community leaders.

I have been a Board Member of Filipino Advocates for Justice (formerly Filipinos for Affirmative Action) since 2004. Filipino Advocates is a community-based organization that provides direct services to youth, immigrants, and laborers.

I have served on the Board of Directors and then the Advisory Board of Directors of the Manilatown Heritage Foundation (MHF) since 2003. MHF is a community development organization currently operating the Manilatown Center on the ground floor of the rebuilt International Hotel in San Francisco.

As an Alameda Hospital Boardmember, I encouraged APA Caucus member Stewart Chen to join the Hospital's Community Relations Committee, which he did. He is now running to be a Director on the Hospital Board and I am supporting his candidacy.

The APA and Filipino communities have a strong presence in my campaign as partners, supporters, and volunteers. I am honored to have their support.

In the future, I will continue my work to mentor APA leaders and to “fill the pipeline.” By encouraging and recruiting strong APA leaders to be active partners of my work in elected office, by helping them find positions on important city boards and commissions and other key community leadership roles, and by providing them with opportunities to demonstrate their leadership, I will help recruit and mentor Asian Pacific Americans for important roles in public policy and politics.

3. What have you done that demonstrates your commitment to and effectiveness in promoting Asian Pacific American interests in the following areas (and if you have not contributed in these areas, please discuss any area(s) in which you have made a contribution):

EDUCATION: Fighting For Quality Education For Our Children:

My two daughters Reina and Iliana Bonta are plaintiffs in the *Robles Wong vs. California* lawsuit, which challenges the state of California’s public school finance system. The state’s public school finance system is broken and needs to be fixed so that all of California’s children are given the learning opportunities they deserve. Education is a fundamental right of every child in California. California has set clear requirements for what schools are expected to teach and what students are expected to learn. The state further requires that schools provide numerous services and programs deemed necessary for students to succeed, such as health services. By doing so, the state has an obligation to provide the resources necessary to meet the required standards, but has failed to do so. The lawsuit asks the state to remedy this dire problem and to ensure that children in Alameda and throughout the state receive the financing they need to receive a high quality education.

I served on the Alameda Unified School District Superintendent’s Parcel Tax Advisory Committee which crafted a set of recommendations to the School Board that resulted in the placement of Measure E (the proposed parcel tax to support our schools) on the ballot. I have worked, and will continue to work, to ensure that our schools receive the local funding they need to remain strong.

HEALTH CARE: Ensuring The Health & Safety Of Our Community:

As a Director of the City of Alameda Health Care District (Hospital Board) for nearly three years, I helped improve and expand quality health care services to all of Alameda and neighboring areas while ensuring that the Health Care District is financially stable.

CIVIL RIGHTS: Promoting Equality, Social Justice, and Freedom From Discrimination:

I served for three years on the City of Alameda’s Social Service Human Relations Board (SSHRB), including serving as Board President, a role my colleagues on the SSHRB voted me into.

I supported and worked with the SSHRB subcommittee Alamedans Together Against Hate (ATAH) to promote tolerance and ensure that people can live, work, play and

worship in Alameda free of discrimination.

On the SSHRB, I made recommendations to combat housing discrimination in Alameda including holding workshops and providing information regarding tenant rights and landlord obligations.

On the SSHRB, I developed annual priority needs statements and made recommendations to the City Council regarding the allocation of Community Development Block Grant public service funding for social service programs, including those that preserved critical safety net services and maximized the capacity and usage of existing services, which was reviewed and approved by the City Council.

On the SSHRB, I promoted cultural exchange and international relationship-building between Alameda and Wuxi China and Asuchio, El Salvador as the beginnings of the Sister City program. As an outgrowth of this work, the Mayor and City Councilmembers, along with a broader delegation of Alamedans, traveled to Wuxi, China on an ambassadorial trip promoting cultural exchange and economic development.

I worked with the City of Alameda and Girls Inc. of the Island City on a highly successful day-long workshop and forum for mixed race youth and families called "In the Mix". Using highly-skilled and trained community workers, we discussed issues of identity, interfamilial relationships, and discrimination.

As a boardmember of Filipino Advocates for Justice, I have fought for social justice, particularly for youth, immigrants, and laborers.

I worked for approximately four years on a class action racial profiling case against the California Highway Patrol. A settlement was reached in which the CHP committed to implement widespread reforms. These include the CHP no longer using traffic violations as an excuse for stopping and searching a car for illegal drugs unless the officers have probable cause or reasonable suspicion of drug activity. The CHP also declared a moratorium on consent searches. Further, it was required that comprehensive data be collected for each stop including race, the reason for the stop, whether a search was conducted and the legal basis for the search, as well as the results of the stop and search.

I worked in support of Lillian Galeado's efforts to fight for Filipino veterans' equity, including fundraising and Board support. Lillian served as the national co-chair of the National Alliance for Filipino Veterans Equity (NAFVE) and is also the Executive Director of Filipino Advocates for Justice,

Supporting Businesses and Economic Development:

As Chair of the City of Alameda's Economic Development commission I cultivated sound and responsible economic development, particularly in promoting efforts for business attraction and business retention.

Promoting Youth Development:

I served on the Board of Directors, including serving as Board President for three years, of Alternatives In Action (AIA). AIA oversees three high-quality youth programs all centered in the West End of the City of Alameda: (1) a public charter school (B.A.S.E.) for youth who were unsuccessful or unchallenged in traditional schools, (2) a fully-licensed preschool (Home Sweet Home) for children of working families, and (3) a dynamic afterschool enrichment program (H.O.M.E.). AIA is a premiere youth development organization in Alameda that teaches youth to be active participants in, and to have a meaningful impact, on their communities. Project YouthView, a youth film festival in Alameda, is one of AIA's signature events.

Promoting Civic Engagement:

I served for three years as the Co-President of the City of Alameda Democratic Club. Our club informed the community regarding the work of our elected officials and important policy issues facing our community. We registered a substantial number of new voters. We maintained a thriving headquarters during the 2008 campaign season which was the focal point of endless amounts of precinct walking and phonebanking.

Promoting Good Government:

I was instrumental in ensuring that the City of Alameda Health Care District followed a more open and inclusive process for its regular meetings. I spearheaded the effort to film meetings and make the videos available to members of the public on the web. I also worked to ensure that all meeting agendas were posted and available well in advance of meetings.

Protecting Consumers:

As a Deputy City Attorney, I worked to get dangerous alcoholic energy drink products, which adversely affect our underage youth in particular, off of the market in California and throughout the country.