



## Candidate Questionnaire – August 2022

Please Answer All Questions

### Section 1: Candidate Information

Name (First, Last): Kristin Connelly

Preferred Name (If different than campaign name):

What Are Your Preferred Pronouns? (she/her/hers)

What office are you seeking? Contra Costa County Clerk-Recorder

CA FPPC ID #: 1441469

Campaign Address: 14 Hawk Canyon Place, Lafayette, CA 94549

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Social Media Handles: Twitter @kristinconnelly ; FB KristinForContraCosta



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

The office of the County Clerk-Recorder requires a leader who operates with the highest integrity, ethics, and attention to detail. I am committed to providing transparency about the elections process, to battling misinformation to maintain confidence in our elections, and to ensuring equitable access to voting. My strengths as a leader and manager, combined with my interest in and passion for increasing civic participation and voter access inspired me to run in 2022.

1.2 - What is your understanding of the job?

- The County Clerk-Recorder is responsible for leading the Clerk-Recorder-Elections Department for Contra Costa County, including its 82 full-time employees, across separate divisions. This role supervises the senior leaders in the department, including the Deputy Clerk-Recorder, Tommy Gong. If elected to this role, I would be responsible for the results of the Department's work and maintaining the high degree of customer service for which the office is known.
- The Elections Division administers all aspects of elections in Contra Costa County, including candidate services and voter registration, as well as all aspects of conducting elections including ballot design, maintaining the voter file, and mailing ballots to voters. Establishing and managing polling places, including the recruitment and training of poll workers is also a crucial part of the Elections Department. Working across jurisdictions in the county to ensure equitable and accessible early voting sites, as well as Election Day polling sites is also part of the work of the office. I would want to work with the Elections Department to expand their outreach efforts and to increase the scale and scope of voter registration efforts to improve access to voting for underserved parts of the county.
- This office also touches on many important life events – birth, marriage, property transactions, trusts and death. The Department is current recruiting a top Recorder position for the office because of the retirement of a longtime leader in the office. Attention to detail and expansion of technology to record documents,



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while keeping personal data secure, will be a priority, if elected.

- If elected, I would work closely with the County Administrator's office to ensure successful funding of the Department's budget, as well as effective union negotiations. Collective bargaining with all unions is handled by the County Administrator's office. County department heads meet regularly through the CAO's office. As needed, I would work with the elected members of the board of supervisors who have ultimate decision-making authority for setting department budgets. My skills as an advocate and with navigating bureaucracy will be helpful in these aspects of the office's duties and responsibilities.

1.3 - What personal and professional qualifications do you believe make you the best candidate?

My professional experiences as a lawyer and non-partisan policy advocate set me apart in this race. I have a long track record of improving every organization with which I am affiliated. My strengths as a leader and manager, as well as my work as an organizational development consultant, make me confident that I am the most experienced and that I will be the most effective in this role. I am proud of my record as an ethical and inspirational leader in both my professional and personal life. It's been gratifying to have been re-elected to the AUHSD Governing Board during these difficult years of the pandemic. I am also proud to have the endorsement of all of my AUHSD Governing Board colleagues. I have the broadest and most diverse coalition of supporters across the county supporting my campaign.

I attended law school in the wake of the Supreme Court's *Bush v. Gore* decision. Throughout law school I focused on learning about the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) which was enacted in the spring of 2002, just months before I started law school. I got involved with the non-partisan Election Protection Coalition. Throughout law school I was a judicial extern, an intern with Environmental Defense and was involved in the Community Economic Development Clinic. After graduating, I worked as an employment litigator at the firm Sidley Austin LLP. Through a program at my firm, I



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spent four months working at a non-profit representing 23 low-income women who had been impacted by personal violence. I also represented a Nepalese asylum seeker. All of these experiences prepare me for leading outreach efforts with diverse communities.

When we moved back to Contra Costa County in 2010, I worked for a statewide non-partisan governance reform organization before briefly working as Chief of Staff to Supervisor Karen Mitchoff. For the last 8 years I have been in my current role as President & CEO of the East Bay Leadership Council and Executive Director of the Contra Costa Economic Partnership (EBLC's sister organization) through which I have gained significant experiences working with the board of supervisors and the County Administrator which will be very beneficial, if elected.

1.4 - What are your top issues? How do you plan on achieving them?

My top three priorities:

1. Access: Combat election misinformation, educate voters on how to cast a ballot and provide equitable and convenient access to voting.
2. Integrity: Maintain a paper trail of every ballot cast, verify voter signatures, and ensure accuracy and security of documents and personal information.
3. Service: Maintain service focused on customer service and ensure continuity of service in the event of a natural disaster through coordinated preparedness exercises.

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

I am the only candidate who was interviewed as a finalist for the appointment of Clerk-Recorder in February 2020. Part of my preparation in that process was taking time off of work to attend the 3-day annual CACEO's New Law's conference in Sacramento in December 2019 to prepare for the interview and for the eventual campaign.



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I have extensive and relevant work experience in Contra Costa and am proud that my strong management experience was highlighted when receiving the endorsement of the East Bay Times. I am also a former lawyer. While I am seeking and have received endorsements, I am not offering any (with the exceptions of local school board races as an elected school board member) because that is not something that is appropriate in my current job nor would be it be appropriate as the elected Clerk-Recorder.

I am a current office holder who has won election twice before. I am supported by more than 70 current and former local elected officials from across all regions of the County including Rep. Mark DeSaulnier, Assemblymembers Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, Tim Grayson and Buffy Wicks, as well as DA Diana Becton. I have raised the resources to run a competitive county-wide campaign. My tenure in elected office and in my professional life is without drama or personal controversy – I get along well with my colleagues and the people I work with. Finally, I have adhered to all election laws and rules.

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

I am seeking your endorsement because I closely associate myself with the expansive and progressive policies of the Democratic Party as it relates to election administration and earning your endorsement will help communicate those shared priorities with Democratic voters.

My job at the East Bay Leadership Council requires me to refrain from making political endorsements, but I would also not be comfortable offering endorsements because the Clerk-Recorder must be trusted by all voters. However, as an elected school board member, I will work tirelessly to ensure that the local school boards across the county will not be overrun with conservative, conspiracy theorists and will gladly lend my endorsement and work hard to get Democrats elected.

2.4 - If elected, what would you do to advance more equity, diversity, and inclusion?

Promoting more diversity, equity, and inclusion is a priority in my work as an elected member of the AUHSD and at the East Bay Leadership Council. Continuing this work as the Contra Costa Clerk-Recorder-Registrar would be a natural extension of my current work. I would develop a comprehensive framework to guide all aspects of the



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Department's internal procedures and policies (e.g. recruitment, hiring, and promotion) as well as our external facing work with the public. This should include expanding existing partnerships with diverse and inclusive community-based organizations on voter access efforts. I would develop performance indicators, in conjunction with the community stakeholders, that would be reported publicly to ensure accountability for these efforts.

2.8 - 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.

Buck Scholars Association, Founding President and Board member (2007-2012) mentor to a first-gen scholar from Stockton (2017-present); boys team charity Lamorinda (parent/son volunteer organization) Board of Directors (president-elect, president, currently past president) (2017- present); Advisory Board of Choice in Aging (Chair) (2020-present); Northern California Small Business Development Center Advisory Board (2014-present); Lafayette City/Schools Subcommittee (focused on safety) (2021-present); Lafayette Partners in Education Board (2021-present); League of Women Voters Diablo Valley (2022-present).

## Kristin Connelly Biography

Kristin Connelly's commitment to fair, impartial, and secure elections was fueled while attending law school, not long after the Supreme Court's *Bush v. Gore* decision. After learning as much as she could about election administration and election law, Kristin put her interest into action, organizing law students to volunteer as non-partisan poll monitors in Cleveland, Ohio and later training lawyers to handle Election Day calls from voters with questions or experiencing difficulties voting.

Kristin saw first-hand the lengths some interests will go to suppress the vote, including fraudulent signs directing voters to a non-existent polling place and a fake "MySpace" page targeted at college students erroneously stating that members of one party voted on Tuesday and members of the other major party were supposed to vote the day after the election, on Wednesday.

Now, more than ever, misinformation about voting and elections is a threat to our democracy and has compelled Kristin to run for Contra Costa County Clerk-Recorder-Registrar. Kristin believes that transparency about the elections process and battling misinformation about how to vote will be critically important to maintaining confidence in the integrity of our elections – and our democracy.

Kristin is currently the President and CEO of the East Bay Leadership Council, an employer-led public policy advocacy organization focused on economic vitality and quality of life in the East Bay. She is also the Executive Director of the Contra Costa Economic Partnership.

In 2018, Kristin was elected to the Acalanes Union High School District Governing Board where she has worked through the complex challenges of educating students during the COVID-19 pandemic and has supported the expansion of both the District's equity work and the wellness resources on each campus.

A native of Martinez, Kristin earned a law degree from Fordham University, a master's in public policy from Georgetown University and a bachelor's from UCLA. After law school, she practiced employment law at the firm Sidley Austin LLP in New York City. Kristin is the co-chair of the statewide REAL Coalition of large business associations across California and serves on the Advisory Board of the Northern California Small Business Development Centers.

Kristin, and her husband T.J, live in Lafayette with their two teenage children.

# KRISTIN BRAUN CONNELLY, JD, MPP

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<b><i>Visionary leader:</i></b>	Proven track record of developing an inspiring vision to motivate staff and volunteers in support of diverse organizations.
<b><i>Effective communicator:</i></b>	Extensive experience representing organizations publicly and delivering concise messaging in-person and across digital media.
<b><i>Proven non-partisan advocate:</i></b>	Experienced leader skilled in policy advocacy and importance of stakeholder engagement.



## **EAST BAY LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**, Walnut Creek, CA

President & CEO (June 2014 – PRESENT)

- Lead staff of 501 (c)(6) organization representing hundreds of East Bay employers, advocating for improving the region's economic vitality and quality of life. Also serve as Executive Director of EBLC's sister organization, the Contra Costa Economic Partnership (CCEP), a 501(c)(3) economic development collaboration between public and private sector leaders.
- Represent the Council/CCEP to business, government, community leaders and media at public meetings.
- Moderate events with local, state and federal elected officials.
- Analyze local, regional and state regulatory and legislative issues of significance for 70-member board of directors, as well as full membership; develop and execute approved advocacy strategies.
- Advocate on regional and state level on diverse policy issues affecting employers including healthcare, transportation and housing.

## **CONTRA COSTA COUNTY**, Concord, CA

Chief of Staff to Supervisor Karen Mitchoff (Nov. 2013 – June 2014)

- Provided strategic advice on all policy issues and supervised district staff.
- Represented Sup. Mitchoff in meetings with county leadership across many functional areas and with constituents.

## **CALIFORNIA FORWARD**, San Francisco, CA

Executive Director, California Forward Action Fund (Feb. 2012 – Oct. 2013)

- Led staff of 501 (c)(4) political arm of governance reform organization that sponsored statewide ballot measure.
- Cultivated major donor to contribute 10x initial investment, in matching funds, towards ballot measure.
- Managed all aspects of fundraising, budget and campaign distributions for statewide campaign and represented CFAF in meetings with elected officials, policy makers and media statewide.

Partnership Coordinator (Oct. 2010 – Jan. 2012)

- Built and communicated the California Forward "brand" of unique governance reform statewide.
- Addressed business, non-profit and other civic leaders, regularly speaking at events and meetings.

## **GLOBAL HIV VACCINE ENTERPRISE**, New York, NY

Organizational Development Consultant (2009)

- Through extensive management coaching, restored productivity and positive work environment by creating new organizational structure for global non-profit funded by the Gates Foundation, speeding the development of an effective HIV vaccine.

## **SIDLEY AUSTIN LLP**, New York, NY

Litigation Associate, Employment & Labor Group (2006 – 2008)

- Responsible for all facets of employment discrimination cases, including conducting legal research, preparing related motions and legal memoranda and liaising with employer clients.
- Elected by peers to lead communications on behalf of the office's Associates with Management Committee.



## **KRISTIN BRAUN CONNELLY, JD, MPP**

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- Selected by litigation partners to represent New York office during firm-wide new associates' orientation.
- Participated in on-campus recruiting and led effort that yielded nearly 300% increase in summer associates from Fordham Law School in first year of interviewing.

### **THE FAMILY CENTER, New York, NY**

Director of Planning and Policy (Oct. 2001 – Aug. 2002)

- Developed customized strategic planning with staff, consumers and Board of Directors at organization offering social and legal services for low-income families affected by life-threatening illness.
- Provided ongoing advocacy updates to Executive Director and senior managers on relevant state and federal legislation.

### **AIDS ALLIANCE FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES, Washington, DC**

Senior Policy Associate (June 2000 – July 2001)

- Developed policy agenda in conjunction with Board of Directors, member organizations and Executive Director for national organization advocating for policy interests of children, youth and families affected by HIV/AIDS.
- Lobbied federal and state policy makers, government agencies, and other advocacy organizations on behalf of AIDS Alliance.

### **LOS ANGELES REGIONAL FOODBANK, Los Angeles, CA**

Development Manager (1997-1998)

- Directed development department of nation's second largest food bank (development budget of \$1million).
- Led the management team through strategic planning and supported board development.
- Staffed the Development Committee of the Board of Directors and expanded event and foundation solicitation.



## **VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

### **BUCK SCHOLARS, Vacaville, CA**

Founding Board President (2008-2011)

- Recruited to serve as founding President of Board for organization of Frank H. Buck Scholars (lifetime, merit-based full scholarship for all costs associated with higher education) to carry on the legacy of the Frank H. and Eva B. Buck Foundation. Led strategic planning, board development and outreach efforts to scholar community to establish association.

Volunteer Mentor (2017-Present)

- Mentoring an extraordinary scholar selected as a Buck Fellow in 2017 in their sophomore year from Stockton, currently enrolled at Stanford. Provide extensive mentoring along with limited financial support to assist with successful college admission and retention.

### **ACALANES UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT**

- Governing Board Dec. 2018 – Present; President, Dec. 2021 - Present

### **LAFAYETTE LIBRARY AND LEARNING CENTER FOUNDATION**

- Board of Trustees Dec. 2012 – March 2013; Dec. 2013 – Dec. 2018
- Past President

### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD OF CONTRA COSTA COUNTY**

- 2016 – 2020

**VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE (cont.)**

**CITIZENS UNION, New York, NY (2009- 2010)**

- Volunteer member of Municipal Affairs Committee and active participant of the Education Subcommittee that developed recommendations regarding reauthorization of mayoral control of New York City public schools.
- Conducted research and contributed to a 2010 report by the Political Reform Subcommittee on term limits.

**ELECTION PROTECTION COALITION, New York, NY (2008)**

- Trained attorneys in basic Election Law to work on national hotline.
- One of four leaders managing call center staffed by hundreds of volunteer lawyers on Election Day; addressed voting problems as State Liaison for Missouri.

**BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE, New York, NY (Aug. – Sept. 2001)**

- Researched academic literature on the impact of disenfranchisement of felons in Florida.

**EDUCATION**

<b>Fordham University School of Law, Juris Doctor, <i>cum laude</i>, 2005</b>	<i>Honors:</i>	Stein Scholars Program in Public Interest Law and Ethics; President, Stein Council; Legal Writing Teaching Assistant, Community Economic Development Clinic, <u>Fordham Urban Law Journal</u> , Staff Member
	<i>Activities:</i>	Trainer and Law School Coordinator for Election Protection Coalition
	<i>Coursework Highlights:</i>	Legislative Drafting, Non-Profit Organizations, Ethics & Public Interest Law, Advanced Seminar in Public Interest Lawyering
<b>Georgetown University, Master of Public Policy (Education Policy) May 2000</b>	<i>Honors:</i>	Elected graduation speaker
	<i>Activities:</i>	Campaign Management Institute, American University, January 2000; Oxford University Summer Program; weekly volunteer Cesar Chavez Public Charter School of Public Policy 1999-2000; Co-chair of the Community Service Committee
	<i>Coursework Highlights:</i>	Public Policy & Children’s Issues, Poverty & the Social Safety Net, Education Inequality
<b>University of California, Los Angeles, Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, <i>magna cum laude</i>, June 1996</b>	<i>Honors:</i>	College Honors, Dean’s List, Chancellor’s Service Award, UCLA Alumni Scholar State Finalist
	<i>Activities:</i>	Education Abroad Program (Spain), UCLA UniCamp, Mortar Board Senior Honor Society, Bruin Belles Service Organization