



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

June 2022 Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire **Must be completed and submitted no later than ***March 20, 2022:**

Santa Cruz County Democrats, PO Box 7763, Santa Cruz, 95061,
or by email: endorsements@cruzdcc.groups.io

The Santa Cruz County Democratic Central Committee will be considering endorsing eligible Democrats who have qualified to appear on the ballot in the June, 2022 election for both contested and uncontested positions. In order to be eligible, a candidate must be a registered Democrat for at least six months prior to the final filing date for that candidate's race in this election. An endorsement by us automatically carries an endorsement by the California Democratic Party.

All eligible candidates who wish to be considered for endorsement are invited to complete our Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire and return a copy electronically (1) via Google Forms, or (2) by email to endorsements@cruzdcc.groups.io no later than March 20, or (3) by USPS Mail postmarked no later than March 16 to Santa Cruz County Democratic Central Committee, PO Box 7763, Santa Cruz, CA 95061. Due to recently implemented USPS delays, we encourage an electronic reply.

Questions: Please email us at endorsements@cruzdcc.groups.io

***REQUIRED**

Untitled Section

1. Candidate Name:* Ami Chen Mills
2. Elected Office You Seek:*
 - a. X Santa Cruz County Supervisor, 3rd District
 - b. Santa Cruz County Supervisor, 4th District
3. Email Address (this will be our default manner in which to communicate with you, unless you specify otherwise): *amichenmills@gmail.com

4. Preferred Mailing Address (for correspondence relating to endorsement only):* [REDACTED]

5. Home/Office Phone*: [REDACTED]

6. Cell Phone:* [REDACTED]

7. Name of Campaign Committee and FPPC#: * Ami Chen Mills for Supervisor 2022 #1445326

8. Campaign Website: www.AmiChenMills.com

9. Social Media Handle(s): @amichenmills4supe (Instagram); Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AmiChenMillsForSupe> ... Twitter possible.

Democratic Affiliation

10. Approximate number of years as a registered Democrat:* At least 30.

11. **Describe your involvement with the Democratic Party at the Local, State or National level over the last few years:***

Over the last six years, I have been mostly an activist, lobbyist and advocate who has spent the majority of my time writing about, speaking about and advocating extensively against the former administration; and the rising and deeply alarming authoritarian and white supremacist tendencies of the current and recent GOP; as well as climate lobbying and activism with **Citizens Climate Lobby, Extinction Rebellion—local and global, Youth for Climate Justice, SCCAN, Novasutras** and the new **Santa Cruz Climate Justice Crew**.

In 2019, I traveled to DC to lobby several Democratic Senators and **Jimmy Panetta** to pass a carbon tax, with dividends to citizens. I worked on the Declaration of Climate Emergency put forward by **Bernie Sanders, AOC** and others.

Toward these ends (climate justice, social justice and democracy), I risked my own coaching and training career—as I worked previously with clients of different party affiliations and political views. I organized a **Tax Day march and rally with support from Indivisible** in Palo Alto to demand release of Trump's tax returns in 2017—featuring speakers from the Obama administration (**Hal Plotkin**) and **Rep. Anna Eshoo**.

I helped organize an **International Women's Day March** (also in 2017) and the large, local **Climate Strike of 2019** called by Fridays for Future. I have worked to get out the vote with **Rene Bloch** and Swing Left; and with **Deborah Feldstein**, Showing Up for Racial Justice, and others.

I took it upon myself to educate my various professional and spiritual communities about the risks we are facing in terms of climate, species extinction and neofascism/authoritarianism—including the “manlash”/backlash of white supremacist, anti-feminist, and anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment and regression in federal and state policies from the GOP/evangelical side. I supported many Democratic candidates in 2018 and 2020 and shared and encouraged all ways to support them with others in my spheres.

I organized dozens of people in my professional community (3PGC) to sign on to and publicly release a letter endorsing Joe Biden, when many would not otherwise have taken a stand.

In the past, I have also spoken in forums with **John Vasconellos**, who was supporting the work of my nonprofit, and attended Anna Eshoo’s workshops for Democratic activists.

General Informational Questions

12. **List the ten (10) organizational or personal endorsements of your candidacy that you consider to be the most important or most representative of your campaign:***

I would encourage you to see my Endorsements page here:

<https://www.amichenmills.com/copy-of-civic-dialogue-and-engagement>

As you all know, I joined this race in February and am still collecting endorsements.

But, to your question:

Faith Brown, young Black Lives Matter activist who organized marches—and particularly in the San Lorenzo Valley

Jane Weed Pomerantz, Former Mayor, compassionate thinker, Positive Parenting leader

Former Project Partners on my nonprofits’s National Community Resiliency Project, **Dave Nichols** and **Larry Williams** of the Mississippi Delta—both of whom know my work and capacity to respond to and deal with complexity very well.

Gloria Nieto, former two-time woman of the year, DEI consultant and first Lesbian, Latina speaker at the DNC

Cynthia Baker, LMFT, for her words

Lynda Marin (Citizens Climate Lobby) and **Michael Levy** (Transition Town, climate activist, organizer) two community organizers I admire greatly

Mahlon Aldridge of VP at Ecology Action (*title not included in public endorsement*) who has know me since I first moved here and worked for EA as the Master Composter Trainer

Adam Bolanos-Scow, for being a seasoned political person, statewide environmental champion, and believing in me and my candidacy

13. **Briefly describe aspects of your background and experiences that indicate your qualifications for the office you seek:***

Please also see my bio: <https://www.amichenmills.com/biography>

Journalism, investigative journalism and media communications: capacity to dive deeply into various subject matters and process large amounts of often arcane information with an eye toward discrepancies, and with great curiosity. Capacity to communicate complex issues and ideas in a somewhat simplified manner to the public via the written and spoken word. Capacity to retain information.

Nonprofit founder and director: capacity to rally support for a cause, line up funders, seek RFP's, apply for grants and oversee projects with an eye toward stated outcomes. Capacity to evaluate outcomes and communicate these outcomes. Capacity to oversee an annual budget, as well as project budgets and to manage a staff and board of directors, as well as to manage and oversee multiple project partners

Mental health and resiliency work/training, Santa Clara County: capacity to understand "separate realities," to connect with others despite differences; exposure to many different county environments, including: juvenile hall, youth correctional ranches, work furlough, main jail, supportive housing, sober living environments, homeless shelters—and more intensive work with specific departments, as well as exposure to multiple county employees and their issues through quarterly 2.5-day trainings open to all employees and also the general public. My own understanding of the resiliency principles I taught (and continue to share) allows me to not take attacks personally and remain connected to people even through conflicts and disagreements. I am also very good at listening and have taught "deep listening" for 25+ years. I really do love most other human beings.

Activism and advocacy: Passion. Capacity to spot and call out BS. Capacity to "fight" and advocate for issues when needed and rally people to the cause. Capacity to step back and assess. Capacity to persist in sharing information and persuading others so that minds change. Capacity to speak with passion when the situation warrants. Capacity to be in the minority. Strength. Thick skin. Public speaker. Hundreds of public speaking engagements.

Training also in convergent facilitation, dynamic facilitation, non-violent communication, wisdom councils.

Major Constituency Issues

14. What are the top five major issues facing this office?:*

- 1) Climate crisis, including water resources, possible future food shortages (food supply chain disruption), increasingly intense wildfires and subsequent possible flooding/runoff/slide issues. Fire prevention. Rebuilding. Hope.
- 2) Homelessness, **public education about homelessness and mental health**, NIMBY-ism, effective strategies to get people housed and in treatment and into proper support services if needed.
- 3) Housing affordability, public education about the housing crisis; the need for “workforce” housing, low income and very low income housing.
- 4) Mental Health—including impacts from the Pandemic, the climate crisis, general national and global instability; post-trauma from fires; mental health deterioration and increased drug use due to being without shelter
- 5) Division and conflict among constituency around issues/NIMBY-ism

15. Candidates in the past have said, let the voters decide on controversial issues such as Greenway. Now that the voters will decide, specifically how are you going to vote on the Greenway initiative?*

- Support the Greenway Initiative as written
 Oppose the Greenway Initiative as written

16. Many people look at the big issues facing us and are frustrated at the lack of progress; they feel government just isn't being effective. Given that our housing challenges are complex, what should be the top priorities for the Board of Supervisors in tackling the housing crisis in our county:*

- 1) Low income and affordable housing, landlord education regarding Section 8 rental, securing maximum state and federal funding; possible bond measure.
- 2) Proper and wise use of county lands and monies to achieve maximum value toward solving the housing crisis, including solid affordable housing covenants and non-profit development.
- 3) Support services for housing that include the (hopefully former) homeless population if they have mental health issues, so that neighborhoods can feel safe and see these projects, such as Turn Key projects, as successful and a benefit to our community.

17. Can you give us an example of **when and how input and/or evidence** has convinced you to override your initial opinion on a public policy issues?:*

I tend to resist attempts to criminalize homelessness and have been highly critical of such attempts by the City—not just because I disagree ethically (which I do) but because I feel this approach does not work, both legally; and because there is also a very vocal and passionate constituency (along with those who are vocally “anti-homeless”) who will block these efforts anyway.

On the homelessness Advisory Committee, we were being asked to unlock the London Nelson bathroom doors by advocates. After hearing stories of staff at London Nelson having to deal with drug use and other issues in the bathroom, I voted to keep the bathrooms locked.

London staff are not trained for, nor prepared to handle such issues, and the proximity of a playground was troubling. We need trained professionals to work with those who have mental health and substance abuse problems and in this regard, I see good things happening now at the County level—including street level mental health care and increased funding for harm reduction, etc.

18. Anything further you would like us to know about you?:*

I was asked to take a stand on the Rail/Tail issue and not just the Greenway measure (our campaign is and has been an endorser and co-sponsor of **No Way On Greenway**, since I first talked to Fred Keely about this). I made a point to speak to those I consider “experts” in the field, including Sally Arnold (attended a presentation with her) of Friends of the Rail and Trail, Sandy Brown of the RTC, and Lani Faulkner of Equity Transit. I watched videos sent to me from the “other side”/Greenway. I felt it my responsibility to hear from all sides. I also heard Manu Koenig speak about Greenway at the Women’s Democratic Club Forum. My position, after having reflected on all of this, is that I am PRO Rail AND Trail. I believe that my advocate and activist energy on the Board and the RTC would be useful and even necessary to move Rail and Trail forward.

Thank you for submitting your questionnaire. We look forward to hearing from you at the forum on Wednesday, March 23 at 7pm via ZOOM. Questions? endorsements@cruzdcc.groups.io