

Please return completed questionnaires to [greg@eastbayforeveryone.org](mailto:greg@eastbayforeveryone.org) by Th, Jun 3 11:59 pm.



## Candidate Questionnaire Assembly District 18 Special Election

Candidate Name: James Aguilar  
Website: [www.jamesforcalifornia.com](http://www.jamesforcalifornia.com)  
Phone: (510) 500-6973  
Email: [info@jamesforcalifornia.com](mailto:info@jamesforcalifornia.com)

Please respond to each question with 300 words or fewer.

1. Why are you running for this seat and what are your priorities if elected?

**I'm running to represent our community in the Assembly because I am rooted in our district, and also rooted in the fact that we have work to do. California is in a unique position of opportunity to address the racial, environmental, and political mandate before us. I am empowered by my mother's experience being thrown around the California healthcare system, of increased prescription costs. I am empowered by our family's experience as renters being run out by a predatory landlord who didn't care we were low-income. I am empowered by the many students that I serve in both k-12 and higher education. I am the voice at the table and in this race who will bring our community together, uplift the voices of marginalized communities, and get the good work done.**

2. Why do we have a housing crisis in California, and how do we solve it?

**We have a housing crisis due to lack of leadership, and a substantial lack of prioritization on addressing select issues such as exclusionary zoning, transit development, parking minimums, and much more. Many of our California legislators are beholden to the interests of real estate and developers instead of their own constituents – that has to stop. Housing is crucial in crafting a future**

**that employs a ‘California for all’. To do it, we have to build a coalition on both sides of the aisle and of California’s tenants and low-income communities that will work together to tackle the housing crisis head on. We need to create more supportive services, enact strong and bold tenant protections, and deliver affordable transit-oriented housing.**

3. What policies will you put in place to reduce the number of people who experience homelessness and return them to stable housing?

**Just two years ago, Oakland reported an increase of over 47% in homelessness, leaving our own without basic needs. As some of my family has experienced homelessness, this issue is all too close to me. Addressing homelessness starts with empowering community-based organizations to assist the homeless population and uplift them instead of push them out. We have also got to support expansion of navigation centers throughout the state, and encourage the statewide conversion of hotels, motels, apartments, and other residential facilities (all of the above including vacant residential and commercial property) into housing for the homeless.**

4. How do you plan to increase the production and preservation of affordable housing and the production of market-rate housing?

**In the Bay Area, especially, we have nowhere to go but up – we have used all of the land in and around us. We must support upzoning, and take a wraparound approach to housing production: first incentivizing and funding public transit so we can further expand coverage and accessibility. When we do this and during the process, we must still empower cities and counties to build mixed-use, high-density, affordable (low-income) housing oriented toward transit centers and corridors. We also have to get creative with finding solutions – one of which I will advocate for is accessory dwelling units on previously single-family homes, so that we encourage production on another scale. Preservation will come in the form of recurring funding for future projects and development, and strengthening of tenant protections.**

5. What additional protections and assistance for renters do you support?

**I unequivocally support the repeal of both the Ellis Act and Costa Hawkins – one step to addressing the division of our communities through legislation. We have also got to support an indefinite eviction moratorium, and enhance supports for renters from all around: community-based organizations, full rent relief with utility coverage, and housing assistance.**

6. Do you support ending single-family zoning? That is to say, should gentle density housing such as duplexes, triplexes, or fourplexes be permitted wherever single-family homes are allowed, including high-income neighborhoods?

**Yes. Single-family zoning is a primary driver of modern segregation in the State of California – it's a purely systematic barrier to getting low-income communities of color housed and fully supported. If we do not get bold, specifically with ending single-family zoning, then we cannot create more housing options for the vast amount of people who need them.**

7. Do you support re-prioritizing transit and pedestrian infrastructure over cars? Have you worked on any measures to support pedestrians, mass transit, travelers with disabilities, or bike infrastructure, or to reduce traffic deaths and injuries?

**Absolutely, unreservedly, yes. If we are going to get serious about housing as well as the climate crisis, we have to completely re-prioritize transit in the conversation. Re-prioritization means passing a transit agency merger for the Bay Area to better address internal transit infrastructure, and impact funding for the transit agencies hit the hardest by COVID. In my term on the San Leandro USD Board of Trustees as well as in my work at San Francisco State University, I have worked with members of the BART and AC Transit Board of Directors to ensure students are taken care of in regard to transit. Specifically with my role at San Francisco State, I have engaged with members of the Board of Supervisors to support various measures to move toward free (and/or more affordable) transit options and increasing of accessibility and reliability through all MUNI service.**

8. Please indicate whether you support the following current legislation (yes/no preferred):

- a. AB 71 **Yes** Corporate tax rate increase for housing and shelter for the homeless
- b. AB 328 **Yes** Divert savings from upcoming prison closures to house people coming out of incarceration
- c. AB 339 **Yes** Require localities to allow remote participation and comment of legislative meetings after end of pandemic
- d. AB 387 **Yes** To establish state housing authority to directly develop mixed income rental and limited equity homeownership housing at scale (as introduced)
- e. AB 455 **Yes** Bus-only lanes on the Bay Bridge
- f. AB 854 **Yes (we should repeal the Ellis Act altogether)** Ellis Act reform
- g. AB 946 **Yes** Eliminate mortgage interest deduction on second homes to assist first-time homebuyers
- h. AB 1322 **Yes** Prevent city charters (like Article 26 in Alameda) from blocking cities from having housing elements meeting their obligations

- i. AB 1401 **Yes** Eliminate parking requirements near transit or in low vehicle-miles-traveled areas
- j. AB 1487 **Yes** Funding eviction defense
- k. ACA 1 **Yes** Constitutional amendment so localities can fund housing, transit, other infrastructure with 55% vote instead of current 67%
- l. SB 2 **Yes** Information-sharing on and decertification of unfit police
- m. SB 5 **Yes** State affordable housing bonds
- n. SB 6 **Yes** Require cities to allow housing in commercial zones
- o. SB 8 **Yes** Extend sunset of Housing Crisis Act to 2030
- p. SB 9 **Yes** Allow duplexes or lot splits for two homes in single-family-zoned areas
- q. SB 10 **Yes** Allow city councils to choose to rezone up to 10 homes per parcel
- r. SB 271 **Yes** End law reserving office of county sheriff to police
- s. SB 478 **Yes** Prevent cities from using certain design standards to make 2-10 units infeasible on land they have officially designated as for 2-10 units
- t. SCA 2 **Yes** Repeal Article 34 of the California Constitution, racist measure from 1950 that made it harder for cities to build affordable housing

9. Is there anything else you would like to convey to East Bay for Everyone?

**You'll find that I am the young voice in the room. When I was eighteen, I did something not every high schooler does as they're about to walk the stage: I ran for school board. For three years now I have served as an elected school board member – the youngest elected official in the Bay Area as well as the youngest LGBTQ+ elected official in the State of California. Aside from my experience, it is the journey that has inspired my stepping up to run.**

**I have been at the forefront of local community issues. Most recently, I have led the school district's push to make our policies and document language gender neutral – following similar developments in the City of Berkeley. Throughout my term thus far, I have also advocated alongside my colleagues for curriculum recognizing the LGBTQ+ leaders of our era and in the past – individuals of color who are typically unrecognized in traditional education – as well as their respective world-changing accomplishments. Moreover, we have implemented comprehensive LGBTQ+ inclusive sex education, including the furthering of menstrual, reproductive, and other health products and services for our students, teachers, and staff. I have also authored various resolution committing the district to action against the climate crisis, as well as worked with our board to implement ethnic studies as a graduation requirement.**