

**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: Janani Ramachandran**

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**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 am running for State Assembly because **this is our moment to be fearless in the fight for justice. California doesn't need another timid Democrat in Sacramento – we need leaders willing to take on the giant corporations trying to buy our elections and block progressive change. I will fight for the changes communities need –starting with a \$22/hour minimum wage in 2022 and a wealth tax on billionaires and mega-millionaires. I will fight for tenants so that communities stop being displaced because of gentrification, and pass legislation to make building affordable housing an immediate priority. I will work with my fellow legislators to create a 10-year comprehensive plan to deal with our growing homelessness crisis, rather than piecemeal solutions. I will fight to pass Medicare for All because healthcare is a human right. And I will fight for a Green New Deal with a racial equity lens – creating hundreds of thousands of high-wage jobs. As a social justice attorney in Oakland, I have defended elderly tenants being evicted from their homes, helped survivors of domestic violence achieve safety, and supported individuals in mental health crises. I worked to clean up corrupt politics as an Oakland Public Ethics Commissioner, and I serve as a California Commissioner for API**

**American Affairs – and now I will use both my direct legal services experiences and leadership experiences to be an impactful policymaker.**

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

**Our racist history of redlining and exclusionary zoning, coupled with active targeting of communities of color for subprime loans, has led to our growing housing inequities. We must reverse this by ensuring that we eliminate exclusively single-family zoned housing, and make sure the long-term rent controlled tenants are not displaced from their neighborhoods.**

**Our housing stock does not nearly meet demand – especially for affordable housing. We need to build 250,000 units a year for the next few years to address these shortages, with at least 1.2 million units being affordable.**

**The cost of land is also far too high because of rampant speculation. We need to implement a speculator land tax if over a certain number of properties are owned in a specified zip code.**

**And because of high land costs (and bureaucratic inefficiencies), it's extremely difficult to presently build affordable housing. Which is why we need to implement social housing programs, and form an agency that includes a public real estate developer along with a GC and land trusts.**

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

**160,000 Californians are unhoused on a given night. Shameful for a state led by a party that pretends to claim housing is a human right.**

**First, I believe we need to re-strategize how we allocate funding towards services for our unhoused communities, and take into consideration the wide range of needs actually voiced by the unhoused community, rather than simply policy wonks in Sacramento. There are disproportionately large numbers of Black communities, for example, becoming unhoused in Oakland – reasons connected to historic racist redlining and predatory lending policies. 80% of all women with children who are unhoused, were survivors of domestic violence. And BIPOC**

**LGBTQ, particularly transgender, youth, experience homelessness at much higher rates than their cis-gender counterparts. We need to take into consideration these realities when implementing solutions to our homelessness crisis.**

**The solution should not be to create failed programs like Oakland's Tuff Sheds, which do not offer unhoused individuals true dignity and individual liberties in their own residences. Addressing homelessness requires a long-term, intersectional strategy – because people do not experience homelessness for the same reason or by the same mechanisms. We need a 10-year comprehensive plan, along the lines of Roadmap Home 2030. We also need better funding of social and mental health services, that is trauma-informed, culturally-competent, and accessible, so that people *remain* housed.**

**Second, we need to restore the ability of local governments to use redevelopment authorities to fund social housing programs for low-income communities – so we can work towards a California where no individual has to pay more than one-third of their salary on rent. And we must partner with minority owned developers for such local construction – those who are so often left out of the contracting process.**

**Third, we need to repeal Article 34, which is a major block to funding housing that is truly affordable.**

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

**See above for discussion on affordable housing.**

**I would also promote bills that promote expanded middle-class affordable housing such as Wicks' AB 1485, and providing incentives to projects that dedicate a certain percentage (ideally for me, 1/3) of units with households that make no more than 120% AMI. There are many professionals in various trades who deserve to live where they work, especially those who work in AD-18. People shouldn't have to spend hours on car or public transit from places like Vallejo Modest Stockton to work in Oakland – precious time they should be spending with their families or just to get a break.**

**With regard to preservation – I strongly believe in greater tenant protections, including repealing the Ellis Act (an issue I’ve worked on closely) so that tenants can remain in their neighborhoods and not be evicted to make ways for condos. I helped advocate for AB 854 - and helped spearhead its initial iterations with a broad-based coalition. I worked to ensure its language was inclusive and relevant to the wide variety of communities across California experiencing Ellis Act evictions especially during the pandemic. One of my driving reasons for choosing to enter this race was in fact, was working with numerous individuals who were being evicted during the pandemic because of the Ellis Act and the fact that such evictions were not covered by the statewide (nor more local) eviction moratoriums.**

I support the repeal of Costa Hawkins so that cities have the ability to implement vacancy control, and so that cities can choose to cover more units under local rent control ordinances (like SFH and buildings built after 1995).

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

**In addition to introducing legislation to repeal the Ellis Act and Costa-Hawkins (see above), I would introduce a bill to implement a “right to free counsel” for tenants facing eviction** because it is unjust that 90% of landlords have an attorney yet 90% of tenants do not. I would introduce **a bill to amend and extend our eviction moratorium – which ends the very day after this special election – to prevent evictions and foreclosure moratoriums during the pandemic and post-pandemic economic recovery period. I would also enact a more equitable rent relief** programs: SB 91 leaves hundreds of thousands of renters in a vulnerable position, who do not qualify for rental relief or whose landlords did not opt-in to the program. We must use our massive budget surplus to offer stronger assistance to vulnerable tenants immediately, and also in the many months after SB 91’s eviction moratorium expires. I also support increasing penalties for fraudulent Ellis Act and owner move-ins. Too many landlords fraudulently use owner move-ins or the Ellis Act to evict tenants. However, DAs are reluctant to actively pursue such cases. I would support stronger statewide penalties for landlords who are found to evict tenants on these grounds in bad faith, and financial incentives for private and nonprofit tenant rights attorneys to affirmatively pursue such cases. I also support masking of all evictions, and banning “banking” of annual allowable rent increases, including when properties are transferred to new owners.

**Tenants' rights and affordable housing is a priority issue in AD18 because thousands of individuals in recent years have been displaced out of the district due to gentrification and rising housing costs. The majority of the district are renters, and evictions are at the forefront of people's minds because many are unable to pay rent and are concerned about losing their homes when the state and county moratoriums end shortly. I intend on standing up and fighting for these renters by fighting for true renters protections and renters rights.**

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.**

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?

**Yes.**

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

- a. AB 71 Corporate tax rate increase for housing and shelter for the homeless - **Yes**
- b. AB 328 Divert savings from upcoming prison closures to house people coming out of incarceration – **Yes**
- c. AB 339 Require localities to allow remote participation and comment of legislative meetings after end of pandemic - **Yes**
- d. AB 387 To establish state housing authority to directly develop mixed income rental and limited equity homeownership housing at scale (as introduced) – **Yes**
- e. AB 455 Bus-only lanes on the Bay Bridge – **Yes**
- f. AB 854 Ellis Act reform– **Yes**

- g. AB 946 Eliminate mortgage interest deduction on second homes to assist first-time homebuyers – **Yes**
- h. AB 1322 Prevent city charters (like Article 26 in Alameda) from blocking cities from having housing elements meeting their obligations – **Yes**
- i. AB 1401 Eliminate parking requirements near transit or in low vehicle-miles-traveled areas – **Yes**
- j. AB 1487 Funding eviction defense – **Yes**
- k. ACA 1 Constitutional amendment so localities can fund housing, transit, other infrastructure with 55% vote instead of current 67% - – **Yes**
- l. SB 2 Information-sharing on and decertification of unfit police - – **Yes**
- m. SB 5 State affordable housing bonds - – **Yes**
- n. SB 6 Require cities to allow housing in commercial zones - – **Yes**
- o. SB 8 Extend sunset of Housing Crisis Act to 2030 - – **Yes**
- p. SB 9 Allow duplexes or lot splits for two homes in single-family-zoned areas - – **Yes**
- q. SB 10 Allow city councils to choose to rezone up to 10 homes per parcel - – **Yes**
- r. SB 271 End law reserving office of county sheriff to police - – **Yes**
- s. SB 478 Prevent cities from using certain design standards to make 2-10 units infeasible on land they have officially designated as for 2-10 units - – **Yes**
- t. SCA 2 Repeal Article 34 of the California Constitution, racist measure from 1950 that made it harder for cities to build affordable housing - – **Yes**

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

Thank you for your consideration!!