

NCAAT In Action

2022 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

NCAAT IN ACTION

Candidate Name and Pronouns: Jennifer Alexis Banwart, she/her

Office Sought: United States Senator for North Carolina

Party Affiliation: Republican

Candidate Committee: JEN 4 SEN NC

Campaign Contact: Jen Banwart

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City/State/Zip: Holly Springs, NC 27540

I am respectfully declining pre-Primary endorsements because I believe strongly that North Carolinians – not PACs and interest groups – should decide who is best to serve them in office. I am running a self-funded campaign for the same reason. As a candidate, if elected to office, I am committed to working professionally with any/all organized groups that can demonstrate that they directly and substantially represent the interests of North Carolinians.

About NCAAT in Action: NCAAT in Action is committed to supporting equity and justice for all by building political power among AAPIs (Asian American Pacific Islanders) and allies in North Carolina through voter education, progressive advocacy, and leadership development. Please limit your responses to 250 words per question.

1. Why are you running for office?

I am running for office to curb out-of-control spending, defend the Constitution (including enforcement of States' Rights through despoiling of federal departments and agencies), balance and pass a budget on time, and reestablish a coordinated and cohesive foreign policy. These areas are critical to the health and prosperity of America, benefit all Americans, and are likely planks where we can find some common ground across party lines.

2. Why do you believe you are qualified to run for office?

I am qualified to run for the United States Senate seat for North Carolina because I have 25 years of studying, researching, reading, writing, executing, and answering to federal policy and budget. In

addition to having the most practitioner experience at the federal level of any U.S. Senate Candidate, I have worked for the legislative and executive branches and hold advanced academic degrees in political science, international relations and security, intelligence studies, and counterterrorism. I have spent my entire adult life as a public servant – not a politician. It would be an honor and a pleasure to take all of the skills and experience I have to serve North Carolinians and Americans.

3. Have you previously engaged with the AAPI community in NC? If so, please give one or more specific examples of how your actions have impacted this community.

I have not previously engaged with the AAPI community. My goal is to represent North Carolinians and their interests at the federal level, and I am committed to working professionally with any/all interest groups that can demonstrate that they directly and substantially represent the interests of North Carolinians.

4. From 2012 to 2018, the number of eligible AAPI voters in North Carolina grew 55%, more than 6 times faster than the statewide growth rate. Officials and candidates seeking elected office who familiarized themselves with the AAPI community have experienced positive electoral outcomes. How do you intend to actively engage with the AAPI community and community organizations during the course of your campaign? If elected, how would you expand opportunities for AAPI political engagement outside of elections?

Pre-Primary and General elections, I am glad to meet with as many North Carolinians as possible – whatever the forum. If elected, and if the AAPI can provide metrics that demonstrate that they directly and substantially represent the interests of North Carolinians, I will:

1. Host an initial meeting to identify areas of mutual interest,
2. Provide a scoping statement that outlines which areas are of substantial interest to North Carolinians AND are appropriately worked at the federal level, and
3. Report progress at an increment appropriate for the scope and scale of our joint work.

I will also ensure that informal channels of communication are available to all North Carolinians and associated groups, and consider any specific case work brought to my attention.

5. According to the 2020 census, Asians are the fastest-growing racial group in the state of North Carolina, with a population increase of 65% since the 2010 census. NCAAT in Action believes in diversification, especially in AAPI representation in a candidate's staff to reflect the constituent's population. a. Do you have members of the AAPI community as part of your paid staff? b. How are you ensuring that your volunteer recruitment efforts are inclusive of and attractive to AAPIs? c. If elected, what will you do to show your commitment to building AAPI representation in political spaces?

Currently, and through the pre-Primary phase of candidacy, I am the only staff on this campaign and there are no volunteers. If elected, I will build a staff that is qualified to represent the interests of North Carolinians. Communication is absolutely critical to proper representation, and I fully intend to hire the most qualified applicants for employment in this area.

6. In an October 2020 poll performed by the US Immigration Policy Center and NCAAT, it was found that AAPI voters in North Carolina support increasing family-based immigration and promoting family reunification. How will your office seek to engage in immigration reform issues that immigrant and refugee communities in NC face? What specific policies would you support to protect AAPI immigrant and refugee rights?

All categories of immigration status should be determined by a combination of metrics that help us to determine 1) what the demand is, and 2) whether/how many immigrants the United States is positioned to accommodate while maintaining health, stability, and prosperity domestically. Due to the high demand for immigration to the United States, any blanket policy placing family-based immigration above other priorities would likely be very short-term or not enforced. That said, the goal in all circumstances – immigration or other – should always be to keep families together whenever and wherever possible. With regards to current immigration policies, they need to be completely overhauled and replaced with balanced, bipartisan, enduring, and transparent immigration policy. Once agreed upon, this policy must be strictly enforced by federal, state, and local departments, as illegal immigrants unfairly take opportunities away from individuals who are following processes and procedures. Executive and Legislative must work together to shore up the border – by plusing up manning for land, sea, and air patrol, providing departments and agencies with the best technology, and making sure that clear and uniform processes and procedures are established and mapped to the immigration policy. Appropriate departments and agencies should be looking across available data in order to anticipate when there is a world event or surge of migrants at the border, and leaders should work together to get ahead of the wave by deciding if/how any additional guidance is being provided regarding: explicit and specific instructions about the handling of immigrants arriving at the border, preparation for housing/return flights/other supporting logistics, and whether there are any exceptions. Finally, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of a coordinated and holistic foreign policy strategy as a way to encourage countries around the world to establish a universal human rights standard.

7. NCAAT in Action is committed to fighting against hate crimes and AAPI discrimination, which remains a significant statewide issue. In that same October 2020 poll, 37% of AAPI voters say they want more done to address hate crimes against people of color. While hate crimes are overall down by 7% in 2020, crimes targeting AAPIs rose by 150% in America. How will you address hate incidents against AAPIs?

Though I am not a legal expert or a lawyer, the North Carolina State Legislature appears to have filed HB354 – the Hate Crimes Prevention Act. If passed, this bill will increase the scope and punishment of hate crimes, which I believe is in-line with what NCAAT is asking for.

8. NCAAT in Action believes that language access is a key component of—but a major challenge to—voter engagement, voter education, and voter participation. Among AAPIs in the state, 70% speak a language besides English at home, and more than 42% speak English less than “very well.” A third of Asian Americans living in this state’s four major urban counties report themselves as having Limited English Proficiency. What is your position on, and how do you intend to engage in, language assistance to increase AAPI participation in voter engagement?

The answer to this question falls within the scope of state and local elections, and therefore is best and most accurately determined by state and local officials as appropriate. As a federal candidate, a Republican, and a Constitutional conservative, I defer to States and protect States' rights to make choices about how they handle elections, so long as there is not substantial and demonstrable evidence of tampering, corruption, or ill will.

9. If elected, are you willing to work with NCAAT in Action to increase AAPI access to translation services during the voting process and beyond?

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Jennifer Alexis Banwart _____ Candidate's Original Signature
15 March 2022 Date

Please return the completed original questionnaire and direct questions to: Chavi Koneru, Executive Director 711 Hillsborough Street, Suite 106, Raleigh NC 27603 chavi@ncaatinaction.org Office: (919) 591-2432 Cell: (919) 949-9184