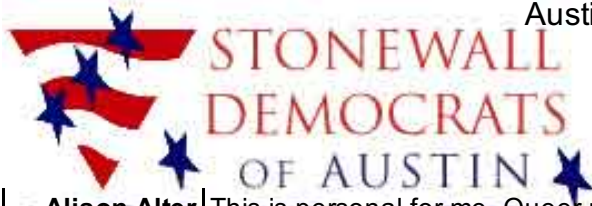


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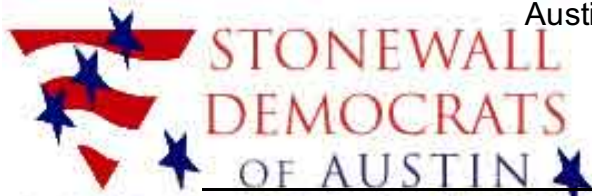
<p>Question 1</p>	<p>Please tell us why you are seeking the endorsement of SDA. Do you consider yourself to be a Democrat? Do you have a history of involvement in Democratic politics and/or LGBTQIA+ issues? If so, please briefly describe this history.</p>
<p>Alison Alter</p>	<p>I am a proud ally to the LGBTQIA+ community, and I am a lifelong Democrat. I care deeply about the queer community and I have been proud to support them and work on their behalf during my time on Council. I have two queer staffers in my office who have been with me since my first year in office, and their life experiences and diverse perspectives add enormous value to my office and to our deliberations on policy and current events. I have been proud to walk with them through the streets of Austin in the annual Pride Parade, celebrating their identities and those of our LGBTQIA+ community. I also am a proud supporter of the KIND Clinic, which is in my district, as well as a staunch supporter of the protection and expansion of accessible LGBTQIA+ healthcare coverage. On Council, I was proud to vote for the creation of the LGBTQIA+ Quality of Life Commission to help us advance policies that protect and celebrate the queer community, such as the ban we enacted in 2019 on using city funds to contract with businesses with ties to conversion therapy. I will always be an unwavering ally to the LGBTQIA+ community.</p>
<p>Pooja Sethi</p>	<p>The work of SDA is very important, and uplifting the voices of the LGBTQIA+ communities are extremely important. I have a history of fighting for equity and justice in our city and I understand the importance of having a diversity of voices at the table. I would be honored to have the support of SDA and fight to protect and support each of SDA's members. I am a Democrat and I have a history of being involved in Democratic politics. I volunteered for and supported Mayor Adler's 2018 campaign, Mike Siegel for Congress, Arati Singh for AISD Trustee, and Jessica Cisneros for Congress. I was also one of the original founders of Blue Action North Austin created in 2019 to get out the vote in Central and North Austin. I have also advocated for our LGBTQIA+ community by ensuring our local small businesses to get trained on the APD Safe Place Initiative, and have represented transgender asylees at the Pearsall Detention Centers.</p>
<p>Question 2</p>	<p>Although the landmark Supreme Court decision on June 15th affirming that the 1964 Civil Right Act protects gay, lesbian, and transgender from discrimination in employment was a huge victory in our fight of equality, LGBTQI+ Austinites faces continued attacks from a hostile state government. How will you protect and strengthen our local protections and support passage of a comprehensive non-discrimination state law?</p>



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<p>Alison Alter</p>	<p>This is personal for me. Queer members of my staff have firsthand experience with discrimination in the workplace and other public settings, and they moved to Austin precisely to find a welcoming and inclusive community and workplace. I fully support a comprehensive non-discrimination law, and I am proud of the State Legislature's LGBTQ Caucus for vowing to bring this legislation forward. To help advance that legislation and others, I support using the City's lobbying resources to advocate for statewide protections for the LGBTQIA+ community -- for workplace protections, housing protections, healthcare protections, adoption protections, and more. Additionally, Austin is a massive economic hub for Texas, and the business community has shown itself to be a steadfast ally to the queer community as well. We will leverage Austin's business relationships and their economic strength to help in the fight against LGBTQIA+ attacks and discrimination.</p>
<p>Pooja Sethi</p>	<p>Locally, I would work for more "know your rights" town halls for people to better address LGBTQIA+ issues and discrimination in the workplace. I would also support a program to encourage local businesses to implement measures to protect the LGBTQIA+ communities in the workplace. At the state level, I would work with the Central Texas Delegation and the Texas House LGBTQ Caucus to introduce and usher through a comprehensive non-discrimination law. As an attorney who has specialized in civil rights, employment, and immigration, I have experience standing up for those whose rights have been infringed upon. We must take steps to ensure our state and city protect every Texan, especially our LGBTQIA+ communities.</p>

<p>Question 3</p>	<p>If elected would you commit to appointing LGBTQIA+ individuals to City Boards and Commissions? How will you strengthen the city's connections to the LGBTQIA+ community more generally?</p>
<p>Alison Alter</p>	<p>Absolutely. I've appointed a number of commissioners who are members of the LGBTQIA+ community and I will continue to do so. The City must increase the number of partnerships with local organizations that serve the queer community, including grant opportunities, fee waivers for LGBTQIA+ centered events, and more. My door is always open to ideas for new programs, partnerships and policies.</p>
<p>Pooja Sethi</p>	<p>Yes, I would commit to appointing LGBTQIA+ individuals to City Boards and Commissions. I am in my second term on the City's Asian American Quality of Life Commission where I have learned the importance of having every voice represented in local government. Every community in Austin should have a seat at the table. I would hold town halls, increase community engagement, and work to ensure we were hiring people from the LGBTQIA+ community.</p>



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Question 4	Do you support the June 8, 2020 Austin LGBTQ Quality of Life Commission Recommendation 20200608-C related to Black Lives Matter? Describe your position on policing reform in Austin and our LGBTQIA+ community.
Alison Alter	<p>Black Lives Matter. I am proud to be part of a Council that unanimously believes in racial equality and in rectifying long standing inequities. We took unanimous Council action to advance the majority of the recommendations from the LGBTQ QOL Commission and other city commissions, like the African American QOL Commission, the Women’s Commission, and the Human Rights Commission. Some of these actions include the postponement of the cadet academy until reforms are implemented to change the paramilitary culture and end bias/discrimination and a reinvestment of millions of dollars from the police budget into community programs and preventive measures like homelessness services, mental health services, workforce development, Victim Services, an Office of Violence Prevention, and more. We also took steps to significantly restructure the department and shift functions and funds out of the police department, like the forensics lab and 9-1-1 call center, and we initiated a community process to reimagine public safety and determine whether, where and how certain police functions fit into Austin’s vision for a racially equitable and healthy community where we prioritize community investments over punitive measures. I will continue to partner with the community to understand their experiences and continue to build a safer, healthier Austin for all. The actions Council advanced this summer are not the first steps we have taken towards reforming police, and we will continue that work. We know that Black Austinites and Austinites of color are overrepresented in the carceral system and disproportionately impacted by police violence, and we have seen time and time again that queer Austinites are misgendered or deadnamed in reports, disrespecting their identities. These outcomes are unacceptable and must be changed. In addition to supporting the public safety reforms from the summer, I have led on and supported many efforts to transform our policing system. For example, I led Council efforts on the 2018 police contract reforms, which led to the establishment of the Office of Police Oversight and increased transparency and accountability, and I authored legislation to initiate a comprehensive evaluation of APD’s Sex</p>

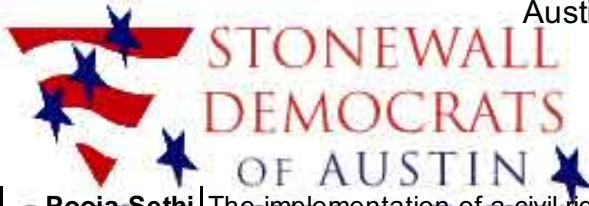
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The commission put forth a thoughtful statement in solidarity with AJC. I support investing in a system of prevention over punishment. I have developed a community center plan (available at poojaforaustin.com) that would bring resources to our communities. These community centers will make our city safer and stronger by increasing access to emergency and mental health providers, resources for people facing domestic violence, property investigators, and services for those experiencing homelessness. I support demilitarizing our law enforcement, limiting police use of force, and support the Black Lives Matter Movement. Moving forward, we must commit to seeking community engagement as we reimagine public safety. In addition to my community center plan, I would advocate for implicit bias training and continued professional development among our law enforcement to ensure we address systemic racism at every level. I would also work to improve the reporting of hate crimes so we can have a more comprehensive picture of the issue in our city and better support communities experiencing discrimination and acts of hate. Finally, I would make sure to expand upon the safe place initiative to provide more neutral spaces for our LGBTQIA+ community to report hate based incidents. I believe it's essential for communities to come together to make our city safer and more just.

Question 5	Do you think the City of Austin is doing enough to ensure equality for its LGBTQIA+ employees?
<p>Alison Alter</p>	<p>I am proud to be part of a city that has passed a citywide non-discrimination ordinance protecting LGBTQIA+ Austinites, and I am proud of the representation of the queer community within our city workforce, from entry level positions all the way to our highest city executive. I have heard experiences from some city employees in which they suffered through managers or co-workers belittling their identities or disrespecting them by intentionally using incorrect pronouns or dismissing physical and mental health needs. There is no room for bigotry in our City workforce, and I support investigations into allegations like these and full accountability for acts of discrimination. On a similar note, we have had recent reports of employees being disallowed from using their pronouns on their email signatures, name tags, or other City documents, and I stand strongly in favor of ensuring equality by allowing and encouraging employees to use their pronouns in the workplace. I am a committed ally to the LGBTQIA+ community, and I will continue to partner with community members and advocates to keep improving their quality of life.</p>



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<p>Pooja Sethi Post Office Box 10898 Austin, TX 78704</p>	<p>The implementation of a civil rights office is the first step to protecting our LGBTQIA+ communities. I would work to ensure that the civil rights office protected our LGBTQIA+ communities against harassment and discrimination in the workplace. This would include training for department heads, anti-discrimination education seminars for employees, and allowing for neutral arbitrators in employment claims of harassment and discrimination.</p>
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<p>Question 6</p>	<p>Describe a step you would take, or have taken, or a proposal you would make, or have made as a member of Austin's City Council that would specifically benefit Austin's LGBTQIA+ community.</p>
<p>Alison Alter</p>	<p>The City's LGBTQ QOL Commission recently reported to Council on issues where City employees have been told they cannot use their pronouns on their email signatures or on official correspondence/documents. I would work with my LGBTQ QOL Commissioner to author a resolution to create an official city policy that gives employees and prospective employees the right to use their pronouns on City correspondence and documents.</p>
<p>Pooja Sethi</p>	<p>As a member of the Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce, I worked to support our LGBTQIA+ community by ensuring our local small businesses get trained on the APD Safe Place Initiative. As a City Council Member, I would advocate for small business grants to include our LGBTQIA+ owned businesses and data to be publicly provided. Currently, there is no data on the City of Austin website of what grants were given to LGBTQIA+ business owners and this data needs to be given publicly. I would also work to ensure the city's civil rights office protected our LGBTQIA+ community on their employment discrimination and workplace harassment claims. Finally, I would advocate to improve the process of reporting hate incidents to APD. Currently, the data only lists incidents that were considered a crime, which excludes hate speech that is protected by the First Amendment or incidents that do not rise to the level of a crime. We need better reporting of these incidents in order to properly gauge the gaps in APD in how they are addressing incidents in the LGBTQIA+ community.</p>