



## Candidate Questionnaire 2017

**Instructions:** Please return questionnaire via email, fax, or mail:

Email: JamesParrish@EVAdvocates.org

Fax: 804-643-1554

Mail: 530 East Main St Suite 600

Richmond, VA 23219

**Purpose:** Thank you for taking the time to fill out the Equality Virginia Advocates candidate questionnaire. The questionnaire will help our supporters, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community, and its allies know where candidates stand on issues important to them. Your returned questionnaire will also serve as part of the evaluation process for EVPAC's Board in regards to endorsements.

**Publication:** Your answers are "on the record" and will be circulated to all members of the EVPAC Board, and may be shared outside the organization and published to the EV Advocates website.

### **Candidate and Campaign Information:**

Name: Elizabeth Guzman for Delegate

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Phone: (919) 357-4740

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Campaign Website: [elizabethguzmanforvirginia.com](http://elizabethguzmanforvirginia.com)

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### **Race and Election Information**

Office Sought: House of Delegates District 31

City, County or District of office: District

Select One: **Challenger**

## Positions

- A. Equality Virginia asks all General Assembly members to sign a [statement](#) that they do not discriminate in their office based on sexual orientation or gender identity. If you are an incumbent, have you signed EV's nondiscrimination statement [[check here](#)]? If you are not, will you sign the nondiscrimination statement if elected? Please include other actions you and your office take to create an open and inclusive workplace for gay and transgender employees.

If elected, I will sign EV's nondiscrimination pledge. As an employer, I work hard to make my workplace a welcoming environment for gay and transgender employees. I work for a local government that enforces this non-discrimination statement and makes it a great place to work. As someone who has experienced discrimination firsthand, it is very important for me that no one in my office experiences discrimination in hiring, promotions, or daily workplace interaction.

- B. Please describe your level of support for the following issues that are legislative priorities for Equality Virginia.

**1. Protecting public employees from discrimination based on their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.**

I will do everything in my power to protect public employees against discrimination based on their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. As a candidate, I have stood with our LGBT students and Prince William County public school employees to call for gender identity and sexual orientation to be added to Prince William County Public Schools' non-discrimination policy. As a delegate, I will continue to stand against all forms of discrimination.

**2. Protecting LGBT Virginians from discrimination in housing.**

No one should be denied housing because of their gender identity or sexual orientation. If elected, I will work to add gender identity and sexual orientation protection as part of the Virginia's Fair Housing Law declaration of policy. This will be the only way to prohibit discrimination against LGBT people. I will also work to ensure that these changes are enforced by strengthening Virginia's civil rights enforcement agencies.

**3. Protecting LGBT Virginians from discrimination in public accommodations.**

If elected I will work to end discrimination in public accommodations and push back against efforts to institute discrimination in public accommodations under the guise of "private clubs" and "religious freedom." No one should be discriminated on the basis of sexual orientation and or gender identity in Virginia. Virginia should be a safe place for everyone including the LGBT community.

**C. Please describe your level of support for the following issues that are important to EV and Virginia’s lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and allied community.**

**1. Banning “conversion therapy” practiced on LGBT minors.**

As a social worker, I have seen firsthand the harm that so-called “conversion therapy” does to LGBT minors. As elected officials, we should be protecting Virginia’s children, not aiding in a barbaric practice that harms them. This will help more minors coming out early and find the support systems at school and at home. This is why I support a complete ban on “conversion therapy” for LGBT minors.

**2. Protecting all LGBT Virginians from discrimination in the workplace.**

If elected, I will fight to protect LGBT Virginians from all forms of workplace discrimination. Workplace discrimination against LGBT Virginians is not only morally wrong, it is bad for business in Virginia and it has no place here if we want to make Virginia a welcoming state that is attractive to 21<sup>st</sup> Century businesses. My employer prohibits discrimination against LGBTQ employees and training to all employees is provided as part of onboarding orientation, so everyone understands and respects the LGBTQ community.

**3. Removing the Marshall Newman Marriage Amendment from the Virginia Constitution.**

I will strongly support removing the Marshall Newman amendment because it is unconstitutional, discriminatory, and an embarrassment to Virginia. LGBT couples should be offered the same access to benefits like any other Virginian. There is no prohibition on adoption. As a social worker, I have seen LGBT couples being the first parents to volunteer to become foster parents and then adoptive parents when children are being victims of abuse.

**4. Support for policies in Virginia’s public schools protecting students, teachers, and staff from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.**

I was a strong supporter of banning discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation in Prince William County public schools. If elected I will work to extend those protections to all schools in our state. Our state laws do not protect LGBT students. These students are victims of bullying in their schools and this needs to stop. Many times, LGBT children don’t even have support systems in their own homes and they need to have a place to be who they are without being judged and or bullied, so they could learn.

**5. Opposition to religious exemption bills that exceed the constitutional protection of freedom of religion and provide a license to discriminate against LGBT people.**

I will oppose any legislation that discriminates against LGBT people. The protections for religious freedom in the Constitution do not give license to discriminate against anyone. Legislators should not be acting as

preachers and or pastors. As far as I understand, I know a God who loves everyone and do not judge anybody for who they are.

**D. Provide any additional information regarding your involvement in or support for the LGBT community.**

LGBT issues are very personal to me. I have a cousin who could not come out because of the stigma against LGBT people in the Latino community. When he was discovered, he was kicked out of his house at the age of 16. He was able to survive and found his way to come to America. Once he got here, he fell in love and found a significant other. Two years later, his partner died from AIDS. He is HIV positive now, but he is still alive with medications. These are some the consequences of not having laws that could protect LGBT people and they are so necessary to save lives. As a social worker and Latina, I always find the opportunity to educate my community and explain to them the consequences of not being a support system for our own children. Many LGBT people die because of an illness or due to acts of hate and the only way to stop that is by having laws that could protect the LGBT people. I am PWC Equality Member and I have constituents who belong to this community and I want to represent them to become their voice in the Virginia Assembly.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. If you have any questions, please contact Equality Virginia Advocates at 804-643-4816 or [JamesParrish@EAdvocates.org](mailto:JamesParrish@EAdvocates.org).