

STONEWALL DEMOCRATS OF DALLAS

2024 Endorsement Screening

Day 3 Questionnaires

US Senate

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Note: The answers provided in this document are direct copies of the answers provided by the candidates. They have not been edited or changed in any way by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas.

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US Senate Questionnaires

Candidates:

Steven Keough

A Robert Hassan

Heli Rodriguez Prilliman

US Rep. Colin Allred

TX Senator Roland Gutierrez

TX Rep. Carl Sherman

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Question 3: Pronouns

Keough - He/His

Prilliman - she/her

Gutierrez - he/him/ his

Hassan - The Republican Party is no longer the party of former president Ronald Reagan, nor is it even the party of long-serving conservatives like Representative Liz Cheney. That is because leaders of this new Republican faction are not only further right but are also far less committed to democratic institutions, practices, and norms.

Allred - he/him

Sherman - He/him/his

Question 4: As an organization affiliated with the Texas Democratic Party, Stonewall Democrats of Dallas will only endorse candidates who affirm an affiliation with the platform and policies of the Texas Democratic Party. Do you make such an affirmation? What is your previous voting history?

Keough - Absolutely- Democratic voter

Prilliman - Yes, I'm running as a Democrat and affirm that affiliation. I've voted consistently since 2016 for Democrats.

Gutierrez - Yes. I am a strong Democrat with a voting record that reflects the principles and values of our Party. I have been endorsed by the Stonewall Democrats several times in my time as a Texas State Representative and State Senator. During the most recent legislative session, I strongly and forcefully advocated against the passage of SB 12, which outlaws most drag performances in public. On that day, I was one of the few Democratic legislators to question the bill author about the utter absurdity and illegality of that law. This is exactly the kind of forceful, passionate advocacy that I will take to the U.S. Senate. Read here: <https://www.texastribune.org/2023/04/04/texas-drag-queen-shows-senate>.

Hassan - The age and consolidation of U.S. democracy provides resilience, but Americans should not expect too much from the country's historical strength. Many of the laws that form institutional guardrails were written poorly in the aftermath of the Civil War, with loopholes that are easily challenged given a lack of precedent. Moreover, the country's age means that much of what are presumed to be laws and institutions are, in fact, simply norms. These norms are eroding quickly.

Allred - Yes

Sherman - Yes. I affirm the platforms and policies of the Texas Democratic Party, and have manifest that commitment as Texas House Representative for the 109th district. I have used my vote to serve and protect all Texans. I sponsored Texas HB567, relating to discrimination on the basis of hair texture or protective hairstyle associated with race. Expanding and making healthcare more affordable is essential to this campaign. I sponsored HB12, which extends the Medicaid coverage for mothers should the pregnancy be compromised. I voted against SB 1280, which banned elective abortions in the state. I am the proud author of the Botham Jean Act to create systemic accountability in policing. This law provides law enforcement policies and procedures regarding body worn cameras.

Question 5: Please share any experience that illustrates your understanding of and interest in the needs of the LGBTQ+ community in your District/Role sought.

Keough - I have found that diversity is a key strength of our American Military. Diversity defends us every day around the world, and I have always championed the needs of the few as a strength for the many.

Prilliman - It's extremely important to me to support and invest in young entrepreneurs from the LGBTQ+ community and others historically excluded from business ownership. As an Indigenous Mexican American female founder, I saw first hand how the venture capitalists, the ones with the power to write the +\$100,000 checks to invest in startups, are still mostly straight white men who came from wealthy backgrounds and elite institutions that continue to invest in entrepreneurs who resemble themselves. That means big innovative ideas from, and/or built to serve, the LGBTQ+ community aren't getting funded that could be solving some of our country's biggest problems, creating jobs, and boosting our economy. I've worked alongside, mentored, and partnered with many technologists and startup founders from the LGBTQ+ community within my work as a Backstage Capital founder (founded by Arlan Hamilton to invest in startup founders from marginalized backgrounds), an Entrepreneur-in-Residence at FourthWave.io (startup accelerator for female entrepreneurs), and Black Ambition Futurists Program Mentor (accelerator for Black and Latine founders) to further opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs from LGBTQ+ and other marginalized communities.

Gutierrez - The fight for social justice is the reason I ran for office. I saw a neighborhood that had been ignored by its elected leaders for too long. It had broken sidewalks and an underserved community long forgotten by a generation of leaders. That is why I ran for City Council. I just wanted to make my neighborhood better. It is my belief people are ignored and mistreated for a myriad of illegitimate reasons, including sexual orientation and gender identity. People with money and power never really want to share and they won't unless you force them to do so.

In my opinion, you have to fight to be treated fairly and equally. You have to ask tough questions and make your opponents uncomfortable. Equality, justice, and fairness are not given; they have to be fought for.

Hassan - Since the end of the Cold War, most democratic failure globally has been caused by elected governments using legal methods, such technical rule changes, to derail democracy. Their destructions of their own democracies have been supported by pluralities or majorities of their citizenries, whose polarization leads them to back policies that harm democracy to ensure their side prevails. America is on precisely this path.

Allred - Since my first race for Congress, I have been a proud and outspoken ally of the LGBTQ+ community. I am proud to have worked alongside leaders in the LGBTQ+ community and to have earned the endorsements of folks such as y'all and HRC. During my time in Congress, I have worked to continue that support by not only being a public voice but also working to pass the Equality Act and other anti-discrimination legislation and to secure \$1 million in federal funding for the Resource Center to build affordable housing for LGBTQ+ seniors in our region. In the Senate, I look forward to continuing those efforts and being a critical vote to pass long-awaited priorities. I will also continue to be outspoken about the harmful attacks from extremists in our state and the real life impact they have on young people and all Texans.

Sherman - LGBTQ+ Texans and their families are being targeted statewide: limited access to gender affirming healthcare, restricted participation in school sports, and teachers reprimanded for offering support and safe spaces. Now more than ever these issues require action and support from our representatives. I position myself staunchly in favor of all Texans, regardless of their sexuality, gender identity or expression. I have scored favorably with Equality Texas' legislative scorecard, during the 2019 and 2021 legislative sessions. On his voting track record, he has voted against policies that would harm the LGBTQ+ community, such as SB 1978.

Question 6: Please list some of your qualifications and experiences pertinent to the office you are seeking:

Keough - Retired Navy Captain- one rank below Admiral, Undergraduate from U.S. Naval Academy, Master's Degree in Congressional Studies, Law Degree, Teaches at Law School in San Antonio, has practiced IP Law around the world for decades, Union Member- Texas AFT, Appointed by Presidents Bill Clinton and GW Bush to the National Nuclear Assessment Threat Team

Prilliman - My biggest qualifications are that I'm 1.) a real life working mom who was forced out of the workforce because of our country's lack of affordable childcare and knows how to better support working families; 2.) a Mexican American female raised in rural Texas that experienced, first hand, what happens when communities lack health care, reproductive education, and history education that is inclusive of our diverse population (hint: addiction, child abuse, teen pregnancies, domestic violence, racism, homophobia, xenophobia, etc); I've 3.) helped thousands of local business owners, in Texas and across the country, grow their budding companies, 4.) helped build multiple successful tech startups over the past decade and understands the importance of humane tech policy so that technology and social media innovation encourage the best of us instead of the worst; and 5.) fueled entrepreneurial growth that created new jobs and boosted our economy; and 6.) I'm a wildly different and refreshing statewide Texas candidate with a lot of hopeful energy and enthusiasm – and I'm a woman dammit! Lol, but seriously Democrats haven't won a statewide race in 30 years – we need someone different, and I'm your best bet to finally oust Ted Cruz.

Gutierrez - San Antonio City Councilman: 2005-2008/Texas State Rep: 2008-2021/Texas State Senator: 2021- current day

I have represented Texans at many levels of government. In my time as a public servant, I have built libraries, paved streets, and worked to provide treatment to soldiers with PTSD. My legislative life has been dedicated to protecting vulnerable Texans from the worst bullies of our time. In fact, my whole life I have worked to protect people from mistreatment and cruelty at the hands of the powerful. I have often been criticized for my passionate commitment of defending the Uvalde families or trans children. Now is not a time for half measures in defense of freedom or liberty. There is no compromising on our guaranteed rights as Texans. I will fight for your friends and families as forcefully and passionately as I have for all my constituents.

Hassan - Juggling multiple priorities and working long hours, including evenings and weekends are demanding needs that our communities should have met by their government leaders. The Senate must be able to communicate effectively with a variety of people, including colleagues, staff, constituents, and the media. I am most capable of working well under pressure and make decisions quickly and decisively.

Allred - I flipped a district from red to blue in 2018, and beat a 22-year Republican incumbent. Now, I have proudly served 3 terms as a U.S. Representative in Dallas, representing my home of Dallas, where I was born and raised. During my time in Congress I have been proud to champion LGBTQ rights, and work to end discrimination including by fighting to pass the Equality Act. I am proud to have worked alongside groups like y'all, HRC and Equality Texas.

Sherman - Through my leadership, I have bridged the gap between government, business, and faith groups in the district. As a senior pastor, a former mayor, a successful entrepreneur and businessman, I have always prioritized people over partisanship and fight for all Texans. I have had several appointments to various executive boards, chairmanships, caucuses, and bipartisan committees. As mayor of DeSoto, and the first Black mayor at that, I led essential economic development initiatives centered on attracting quality jobs to DeSoto, improving QoL and opportunities for higher paying jobs.

Question 7: Once you are elected, what are some of your plans specific to your office's responsibilities?

Keough - Three major issues: immigration, healthcare, and the economy. Immigration, - border wall is a failed U.S. policy, and there are better ways to keep our border intact. Immigrants, including asylum seekers, migrants, and/or people who have had to move from their home countries due to climate change, insecurity in their country, or a simple desire to participate in the American dream SHOULD be treated in a more humane, ethical, and moral way. I went to an asylum camp in Matamoros, Mexico, across the border from Brownsville, TX and heard horrific stories like women and transgender immigrants who were abused and friends who were beheaded during the journey to the United States. The arrive to US-Mexico border and wait to cross legally. One quick fix is to increase the number of Asylum Judges and immigration lawyers on the border, a number which was significantly reduced during the Trump administration. Healthcare, - abortion and gender affirming care are all part of healthcare, and decisions should be made between their doctor and the patient. We will work towards a nation that covers all healthcare expenses for all its people.

Economy - internal and external threats to the economy. Internally, inflation has been used as a scapegoat by companies looking to get higher profits, without passing those profits down to their employees. External threats: hotspots around the world, I have experience in all the following areas, which affect the price of goods and services traded with the US. China vs. Taiwan, I speak Chinese, worked with Taiwanese Naval vessels, & successfully defended American intellectual property against Chinese companies. Soviet Union/Ukraine, I worked with newly formed pro-democracy governments of Uzbekistan, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan. I am ready to engage in anti-Putin discussions on day one. Middle East, I commanded a unit in Bahrain, and am fully versed in the politics and history of the region These, plus many extremely important issues that I will work on as a United States Senator, like cleaning up toxic water from fracking, addressing climate change, sex trafficking, the importance of unions, and the problem of private prisons,

Prilliman - Opening up our workforce by increasing access to affordable childcare. Pushing for universal health care that's not attached to an employer. Reforming campaign finance laws to get billionaire money out of politics.

Gutierrez - I will seek to expand the U.S. Supreme Court and reform the Federal Judiciary. I will join my fellow senators in changing the rules of the U.S. Senate to end the filibuster, so that we can finally get down to the business of protecting Americans from corporate greed and political corruption. There will be no progress in this country until the federal judiciary and U.S. Senate are reformed. As a U.S. Senator, I will oppose any nominee for a federal appointment that will use that office to harm the LGBTQ+ community.

Hassan - In America, many states have been flooded with laws to alter voting. The worst of these maneuvers have occurred in a dozen states that have passed laws transferring power to more partisan electoral bodies and/or criminalizing their election administrations. These antidemocratic legal moves cannot be overcome by turnout.

Allred - Texas cannot afford six more years of Ted Cruz. We need a Senator we can count on. In my time in Congress I have worked to represent the best of our shared Texas values and fight to ensure no matter who you are, where you live or who you love – everyone can get a fair shot at living their version of the American dream. I am proud to have been named the most bipartisan member of the Texas delegation because in the House I have worked to find compromise to get things done but I do so without sacrificing my values and never backing down from what I know is right. I am proud to have secured huge investments in our state from the Garland VA to the ARPA-H Hub and the Hydrogen Hub in Houston and will work every day to put Texas first and build a Texas where we all have the opportunity to chase our dreams. In the Senate, I will continue to look for areas to find compromise to lower costs, create jobs, protect our rights and deliver for Texas.

Sherman - Since taking office in 2018, I have fought for the expansion of Medicaid, Medicare, and healthcare benefits; pursued criminal justice reform, addressing over policing, the student-to-prison pipeline, and second chance hiring; worked to create higher paying jobs; increased awareness for human trafficking and its victims; secured hundreds of millions in funding for higher education programs; advocated for teachers and families following the increase in school shootings nationwide and in Texas; etc. These accomplishments, and the strides made to improve living conditions for Texans, would carry over into my work as our next US Senator.

Question 8: If elected how will you recruit, retain, and create a supportive environment for LGBTQ+ staff and affirming staff?

Keough - Recruitment and retention is of utmost importance to me. We will make sure there is a diverse staff. It is illegal to promise a particular type of staff member will be hired, however, when recruiting staff, we will make sure that all communities are aware of the job opportunities and given equal consideration during the hiring process.

Prilliman - In my previous work I've led DEI programming and I helped create policies to ensure LGBTQ+ staff feel welcomed and included. I posted policies on the company website to inform current and potential employees of how we expect everyone on our team to treat people with respect and compassion. To recruit, I'll work with leaders of diverse organizations and networks to find great candidates.

Gutierrez - My office has always been a safe place for all genders and sexual orientations. I am responsible for the actions of my staff and I take seriously any action by anyone in my employ that silences or ignores the concerns of the LGBTQ+ community or staff members. I feel that the best way to ensure that LGBTQ+ staffers feel protected is to ensure that their voices are heard and to hold every member of the team accountable for their actions.

Hassan - The confirmation of federal appointments is a crucial role when ensuring the continued function of the US Federal Government, including judges, cabinet members, and other executive branch officials. All nominees should be meticulously screened for qualifications and fitness for the position and vote to confirm or reject the official.

Allred - I am proud that both my campaign and U.S. House office have been welcoming to all who seek employment. I am also proud that my campaign has staff, including senior staff, who are proud members of the LGBTQ+ community. It's a small symbol, but I proudly display an LGBTQ+ pride flag outside of my office in Washington D.C. I want my staff and all of those who are visiting to know it is a welcoming and supportive environment for the LGBTQ+ community. I will continue to work to foster an inclusive and welcoming environment as a U.S. Senator.

Sherman - Just as the state legislature recognizes our caucus of LGBTQ+ members, we recognize all the ways LGBTQ+ staff and affirming staff make our work better. We recognize Pride as essential and worth celebrating all year round. Advocating specifically for their needs, and showing up as their senator, I will continue to foster a welcoming and safe environment, and welcome LGBTQ+ members to my team who wish to create meaningful change.

Question 9: Would you be willing to appoint a liaison to meet with the LGBTQ community on an ongoing basis? If not, why?

Keough - Yes- We need to have an ear to the ground to ensure all constituents are heard.

Prilliman - Yes

Gutierrez - Yes

Hassan - American democracy is at a dangerous inflection point. The moment requires a step-change in strategy and support. Without such momentum, the country faces a democratic setback.

Allred - Leaders and individuals representing the LGBTQ+ community are always welcome in my office and campaign. I also have made it a priority during my time in Congress and will continue to make it a priority in the Senate to meet with LGBTQ+ leaders and attend community events.

Sherman - Yes

Question 10: What non-discrimination policies will you support for employment and protection of LGBTQ+ constituents based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression?

Keough - The EEOC has good guidelines in place for this purpose. As the US Senator, I will make sure that whistleblowers will feel heard and action will be taken when they call my office. I am the kind of person who has led a diverse culture of people around the world, and I will promote that same ethos.

Prilliman - Allow people to bring their full-selves to work, let people be who they are, and encourage folks to mind their damn business about their peers' lives outside of work. A no tolerance policy for bullying. Celebrate pride month!

Gutierrez - I have supported and advocated for San Antonio's Non-Discrimination Ordinance. I fully support employment and legal protection for all people based on sexual orientation and gender identity. No one should ever lose their job because they are gay or trans. No one should ever have their children taken from them on account of their sexual orientation or gender identity. In short, the same protections that exist for racial minorities or women should exist for the LGBTQ+ community.

Hassan - The Senate and House maintain authority under Article One of the U.S. Constitution to pass or defeat federal legislation. The U.S. Senate has exclusive power to confirm U.S. presidential appointments, ratify treaties, exercise advice and consent powers, try cases of impeachment brought by the House, all of which provide a check and balance on the powers of the executive and judicial branches of government.

Allred - Before being elected to Congress, I was a civil rights lawyer and worked at HUD to protect the civil rights of all Americans. I think it's a shame that in Texas you can get married on a Saturday and fired on a Monday because of who you love. That is why I am a proud champion of the Equality Act that would extend federal anti-discrimination protections to LGBTQ+ folks.

Sherman - LGBTQ+ students should not have to worry about safely using the restroom in school that reflects their identity and expression. Nor should they be barred from competing in sports because rhetoric would have you believe they are cheating. Rep. Sherman would support legislation, amendments, and non-discrimination policies aimed at protecting and making LGBTQ+ constituents equal under the law everywhere. TX SB 210 should be passed to better facilitate gender marker changes on official documents. TX SB 129, should be passed to remove the provisions regarding criminality of same sex marriages and parenting relationships in Texas, upholding the Supreme Courts' decision in Windsor and Obergefell.

Question 11: How can congress play a role to get Roe v. Wade codified into law?

Keough - It is time for congress to pass a safe and secure abortion law for all.

Prilliman - Can't do much without 60 Democratic Senators now can we? SO, we need to do a better job of finding new Democratic faces (especially women and birthing people!) that aren't the traditional establishment money backed ones (a.k.a. don't have access to establishment political networks or wealthy connections) and try to get through to some of the hard-headed knuckleheads on the Republican side. I'll talk to anyone to get this done. I'm going to do whatever I can to help get us those 60 votes in the U.S. Senate, and inspire more women and young people to run in the process.

Gutierrez - I fully support the effort to codify Roe. But, the real truth is that we have to do much more to protect the right to seek and provide an abortion. First, if the U.S. Senate tried to pass a bill to codify Roe, it would fall far short of the necessary cloture vote. So, the filibuster must be reformed to codify and protect Roe. Any candidate that says they will codify Roe, but won't commit to reforming the filibuster is not doing enough.

Next, codifying Roe, itself, is not enough. As soon as our party loses both chambers of Congress then it will be repealed. No one should have a fundamental right taken from them because of a bad election. So, I am committed to expanding the U.S. Supreme Court and reforming the federal judiciary to ensure that this essential right is protected. If a candidate

announces their support for protecting the right to an abortion and is opposed to reforming the judiciary, then they are not doing enough to protect this right.

Finally, we should seek a Constitutional Amendment to enshrine the right to terminate a pregnancy in the U.S. Constitution. That is the best, and perhaps, the only way to protect this right for all time. It will be difficult to achieve, but it is necessary.

Hassan - The drafting, introduction, and voting on legislation in committees and on the Senate floor to amend bills, and to pass legislation that can be signed into law by the President.

Allred - I was proud to champion the Women's Health Protection Act in the House, as the next U.S. Senator from Texas, I will vote to ensure these protections are enshrined into law.

Sherman - Congress must continue to champion for a federally-codified right to bodily autonomy. I believe in a woman's right to choose. As senator, I will support the Women's Health Protection Act of 2023, a bill aimed at protecting the choices and freedom of patients and their doctors. Every person should have the right to make their own healthcare decisions. Access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare, including authorized and safe legal abortion services, is essential for women to have control over their own bodies and futures. I am committed to protecting this fundamental right and ensuring that women in Texas have access to the care they need without facing unnecessary barriers or restrictions. These are distressing decisions; they're moral decisions, sometimes requiring a woman to decide if she will risk her life for a pregnancy. Abortion is a very serious pronouncement and each decision depends on circumstances. I am not pro-abortion, but pro-choice.

Question 12: How would you lead or support efforts to provide better funding for health care and better health care options for all Texas residents?

Keough - I am in favor of getting the most healthcare to the greatest number of people given our resources. I will always work for getting every American covered for all medical expenses.

Prilliman - I would push for Medicare for All – a universal health insurance system that offers mental & maternal health care that is not attached to an employer. We also burned out so many of our health care workers and many have left the workforce in the aftermath of the pandemic. Because of our severe lack of caregivers, I would also lead efforts to invest in recruiting more doctors, nurses, therapists, and psychologists by covering medical or technical school tuition for anyone wanting to join these fields. Same for teachers!!!

Gutierrez - I support Medicare for all that want it. In the coming decades, healthcare related costs will become 40% of our gross domestic product. Healthcare costs are escalating at an untenable rate. In short, Americans pay more for a healthcare system that leaves them bankrupt and, often, dead before their time. Medicare for all that want it allows all Americans to receive quality and affordable health care. In addition, I support incentivizing federal dollars to force the hands of states that have yet to expand Medicaid to comply with the Affordable Care Act.

Hassan - Since the end of the Cold War, most democratic failure globally has been caused by elected governments using legal methods, such technical rule changes, to derail democracy. Their destructions of their own democracies have been supported by pluralities or majorities of their citizenries, whose polarization leads them to back policies that harm democracy to ensure their side prevails. America is on precisely this path.

Allred - I believe every Texan should have access to quality, affordable health care close to home. My first act in Congress was to fight back against Trump's harmful lawsuit that would rip away protections for folks with pre-existing conditions. I am proud that we have worked to lower the cost of insurance on healthcare.gov plans and we have made significant progress in lowering the cost of prescription drugs for folks on Medicare, including capping the cost of insulin at \$35. I will continue to fight to extend these savings on prescriptions to folks on the private market, and will keep fighting to push Texas leaders to finally expand Medicaid.

Sherman - Since Texas has the highest rate of uninsured people in the entire country, championing healthcare is one of the most important issues I plan to address. I am ready to advocate for expanding Medicaid, which would create hundreds of thousands of jobs for Texans and lower the cost of private insurance for everyone. The increase of healthcare inequality because of the COVID-19 pandemic makes this inequity even more dangerous, which is why I am committed to advocating for Medicaid and Medicare for All.

Since Texas has the largest rural population in the country and many of these communities live in areas with few to no healthcare providers, this issue is particularly important to me. Texas also has some of the highest number of hospital closures and uninsured seniors. I will encourage more residency programs in rural areas for doctors, increase the amount of telemedicine appointments, establish clinics when the population of an area is too small for a hospital, expand Medicare, expand broadband coverage, and fund rural hospitals, pharmacies, and clinics. Since this is an intersectional issue that particularly affects the most marginalized people (people of color, poor and working-class people, people with disabilities) my other fights for disenfranchised Texans will impact this issue as well.

Question 13: How would you lead or support an effort to establish universal or single payer health care for the United States of America? What improvements, if any, should be made to strengthen the Affordable Care Act?

Keough - Currently, the Department of Education is allowed to give grants directly to schools and school districts without going through the state. Healthcare should be treated the same way. Medicaid monies should be distributed directly to county hospitals and communities in need, without the need for approval for Texas government.

Prilliman - I would work with current members of Congress who have already championed single payer healthcare (for example, Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez). I'm not saying the Affordable Care Act can't be improved, but I'm gonna spend my time trying to get Medicare for All because I'm not confident in a health care system still driven by profits not people.

Gutierrez - I support Medicare for All, which is the best available option for single payer healthcare in the United States. In addition, more must be done to incentivize states to expand Medicaid, including using all federal healthcare dollars to mandate expansion.

Hassan - The Republican Party is no longer the party of former president Ronald Reagan, nor is it even the party of long-serving conservatives like Representative Liz Cheney. That is because leaders of this new Republican faction are not only further right but are also far less committed to democratic institutions, practices, and norms.

Allred - Health care is a right, not a privilege and I will work to continue to strengthen and improve the Affordable Care Act by making permanent the expanded financial assistance that we passed into law. I also support creating an option for individuals to buy-in to a Medicare type plan.

Sherman - The Affordable Care Act Marketplace enrollment continues to increase at a record-breaking pace, providing more Americans with health care coverage and lower prescription drug costs. But we can act to improve health care in our rural communities and help rural health care providers stay open. We can have more outreach to rural Americans to enroll on the ACA Marketplace, increase access to low-income subsidy under the Medicare Part D prescription drug program and help keep more rural hospitals open to provide critical services in their communities.

Question 14: How would you lead or support efforts to ensure the John Lewis Voting Rights Act is enacted?

Keough - In 1979, my father was the superintendent of schools in Teheran, Iran. He contacted me and said “trouble was brewing.” I chartered a plane, flew into Teheran, and was there the day the Shah fell. The next day, I filled the jet plane with educators and military members and their families, and got them out of the country to safety. Later that year, my father returned to claim the paper student records, and was in the Embassy when it was overrun. My father became one of the hostages in Iran. He was captive for 444 days in conditions that included mushrooms and spores growing on the walls of the cell. After his release, he got Lou Gehrig’s disease and died. The Department of Labor sent us a letter confirming his death was a direct result of the time he spent in captivity. We now know, because the Republicans told the story to the Dallas Morning News in 2023, that they negotiated that the captives be held to make President Jimmy Carter look bad, and elect Ronald Regan. Republican voter suppression antics killed my father. I will FIGHT the REPUBLICAN VOTER SUPPRESSION EVERY DAY I AM IN OFFICE.

Prilliman - I would work with current members of Congress who have campaigned for the passing of the Voting Rights Act (Senator Warnock for example) and lead on-going media literacy efforts to educate constituents on our political processes and combat divisive voter misinformation.

Gutierrez - I strongly support a new and improved Voting Rights Act, that reinstates preclearance, clarifies judicial standards of proof, and makes clear that there is a private right of action for this important federal law. I will take any legislative opportunity to seek enacting the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, including reforming the filibuster to ensure its passage. Any candidate for the U.S. Senate that says they supports passage of a new VRA, but who fails to support reforming the Senate’s rules, does not support the VRA.

Hassan - Many Americans view this moment with concern with worthy measure. America’s system is creaky, but the world’s oldest democracy has strong institutions and will pull through.

Allred - As a voting rights attorney, I have seen firsthand how hard it is to vote in Texas and I believe there is nothing more important than our democracy and that the right to vote is protective of all other rights. I have been a leader in pushing for the John Lewis Voting Rights Act in the House, and I will continue to fight for its passage in the Senate. This is a top priority for me – our democracy is at stake.

Sherman - The John Lewis Voting Rights Act is an important step towards safeguarding our democracy. Modernizing the Voting Rights Act will ensure marginalized communities across the country are protected under the law from discriminatory voting practices.

Changing district boundaries and polling locations, and implementing burdensome identification requirements, disenfranchises people of color, transgender people, low-income people, people with disabilities and the elderly. The updated preclearance formula will ensure that changes to our voting laws do not constitute discrimination, and that every person’s right to vote is protected

Question 15: Did the Build Back Better Act in your opinion do enough to address the nation’s needs?

Keough - This jewel of the Biden administration has not received the attention it deserves. Democrats continue to be bad at accepting a “win.” The program does a lot to forward the interest of America and the American worker. For example, critical chip manufacturing is coming home instead of being left to Taiwan and other Asian countries to handle on our behalf. Bridges and other infrastructure projects that have been neglected for decades are finally being repaired. Unions are being given precedence in more government contracting, which in turn builds the middle class. The Act is the best start to the economic success to the US in decades, but it is only a start.

Prilliman - Yes and no – it is nuanced! Compared to what I experienced in the 2008 recession (I was laid off twice, fell behind on student loan payments, had to move back in with family), I think Biden learned from some of the mistakes they made during the Obama/Biden administration. Communities seemed to suffer less because of the child tax credits

and the additional stimulus payments, however, it seemed like the bigger corporations benefited more than small businesses. So many small businesses shut down for good, including both my beauty schools for aspiring nail artists, which caused my family to go through bankruptcy and forced us to move with our newborn. And because affordable and reliable child care has been horrifically hard to find, so many women and parents were forced out of the work force and still haven't been able to return. I wish more was done to address childcare and mental health care.

Gutierrez - Build Back Better is an important bill that has played a critical role in our strong economy. Specifically, the expansion of the EITC and nutritional assistance for children helped to lift many Americans out of poverty.

However, more must be done. The Child Tax Credit must be expanded to include most, if not all, middle-income families. We must do more to prevent climate change, including creating millions of jobs by transitioning to clean renewable energy, and investing in public transit, sustainable and regenerative agriculture, conservation and restoration of critical infrastructure.

Hassan - Budget and appropriations have to be handled by a trusted, successful business person, as much of the Senate time is spent in setting the federal budget and allocating funding for specific programs and projects.

Allred - I believe the Inflation Reduction Act was a huge step forward to address the climate crisis, lower health care and prescription drug costs and teamed with the Infrastructure Law and the CHIPS Act, will help create jobs and grow our economy. Unfortunately, we were not able to make progress on important issues facing Texans, like lowering the cost of child care, universal pre-K and ensuring that every American has access to paid family leave. As a dad myself, I know how quickly those costs add up and, in the Senate, I will reignite the push to lower costs in these areas and work to find compromise so we can finally get this done.

Sherman - The Build Back Better Act was an important start to address the nation's needs to address affordable child care, health care and combat climate change. Unfortunately, these areas have been neglected for far too long and additional investment is needed.

Medicare's ability to negotiate the prices of prescription drugs is critical for seniors to address the unreasonable price increases that are difficult to sustain on a fixed budget. Investing in infrastructure has a positive impact on our overall economic growth and employment, while reducing overall income inequality and poverty levels.

Question 16: Do you or do you not support ending the filibuster?

Keough - Like Robert's Rules of Order, the filibuster is one of the tools within the deliberative process that is neither good or bad in and of itself. Who wields this tool and when they decide not to use the tool is part of the strategy of working within the bounds of the democratic process.

Prilliman - I don't particularly feel strongly about it continuing, but if politicians are gonna keep doing it, they need to be in-person like they used to.

Gutierrez - Yes, I firmly believe that there is no way forward without significantly changing the filibuster.

Hassan - During the Great Depression one-third of all Americans were abjectly poor. Under FDR's New Deal, the federal government took strong measures to ameliorate the suffering. Still, widespread poverty has persisted to this day.

Allred - I believe we need to reform the filibuster. I do believe there must be a carve out for matters of Constitutional rights like voting rights and the right to an abortion and for all other filibusters I believe we must at least go back to a talking filibuster so that if you want to obstruct something you at least need to hold the floor and explain your position.

Sherman - **No answer provided to this question**

Question 17: What specific ideas do you have and/or what current legislation would you support to strengthen and grow the US economy?

Keough - Economy- internal and external threats to the economy. Internally, inflation has been used as a scapegoat by companies looking to get higher profits, without passing those profits down to their employees. External threats: hotspots around the world- I have experience in all the following areas, which affect the price of goods and services traded with the United States. China vs. Taiwan- I speak Chinese, worked with Taiwanese Naval vessels, and successfully defended American intellectual property against Chinese companies. Soviet Union/Ukraine. I worked with the newly forming pro-democracy governments of Uzbekistan, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan. I am ready to engage in anti-Putin discussions on day one. Middle East. I commanded a unit in Bahrain, and am fully versed in the politics and history of the region

Prilliman - We need to create more access to affordable childcare by investing in and creating better paying jobs for caregivers so more parents can go back to work. We need universal healthcare that is not attached to an employer so small businesses can finally attract more workers. We also need to invest small business capital in a wide variety of young entrepreneurs instead of only investing in those who already come from wealthy backgrounds and lots of assets.

Gutierrez - I support strengthening the economy by: 1) enacting comprehensive immigration reform to ease the immediate labor shortage, 2) offering tax credits for most Americans to pay down their student debt, 3) funding massive infrastructure improvement projects that will help ensure that water flows through our pipes and our streets are paved, while employing millions of Americans, 4) funding the creation of 20 million new energy jobs by transitioning our energy system to include more renewable energy, 5) bringing high tech jobs to North and South America by expanding the CHIP act to incentivize high tech manufacturing in the Americas, and 6) expand affordable housing and build more housing inventory, so that more Americans can own their own home and generate wealth.

Hassan - Of course, we have made some great strides since the 1930s – most significantly the creation of Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and food stamps – but we’re still light years away from guaranteeing all Americans three square meals a day, clothes on their backs, and a roof over their heads.

Allred - During the last Congress, I was proud to help pass the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the CHIPS and Science Act and the Inflation Reduction Act which all invest in American jobs and growing our economy. This year I’ve been working hard to ensure that those investments get home to Texas and have been proud that billions in federal investments have already come to Texas. Going forward, I think we need to pass legislation to lower costs for working families. I believe expanding access to pre-K, lowering the cost of child care and ensuring everyone can access paid family leave will not only help families, but also will create jobs and strengthen our economy.

Sherman - Job creation for all Americans is the key to strengthening and growing the US economy. As we invest in rebuilding our infrastructure, invest in clean-energy, support small businesses, and provide the education training for 21st century jobs, we ensure all Americans have the opportunity to succeed.

Question 18: What could congress do to improve response and preparation for the next pandemic?

Keough - During the pandemic, we were surprised to learn how many critical health care products, like rubber gloves and masks are no longer manufactured in the continental US. Incentives need to be created for manufacturing of these critical products in the US. American medical personnel need to be funded and placed around the world to monitor potential hot spots.

Prilliman - Better and more unified marketing communications so constituents everywhere have the latest helpful information and less confusion. And let doctors and health professionals lead the efforts instead of politicians.

Gutierrez - The most important thing that can be done is a cultural change. One of the reasons we are still struggling with the pandemic is that the vaccine has become a political shibboleth for certain parts of the left and right. When

medicine becomes political, all Americans suffer. To ensure that vaccination is not political, we must educate everyone on its efficacy and offer complete transparency on the vaccine's effectiveness.

In addition, we must do all that we can to ensure that vaccines are available, affordable, and effective. This means we must fully fund NIH and other avenues of medical research to ensure swift and effective medicine that can meet the needs of any future pandemic. It also means putting systems in place to ensure the deliverability of a vaccine to all who want it.

Finally, pandemics will require strong support systems to help all those in need. What we learned from 2020 was that we were not prepared to help most Americans in need. 2020 was a tragedy and it was made worse by callous and politically-motivated leadership driven by dangerous agendas. Every one of us knows someone who died in the worst way possible and often alone during the pandemic. We must train, prepare, and put in place a system of care focused on the needs of hardest-to-reach Americans. This care should not just be the diagnosis and treatment of a global pandemic but also should be about the needs of the patient. The worst tragedies of COVID-19 were the avoidable deaths caused by our inability to meet the needs of our people.

Hassan - Although the world's largest economy, we lag far behind nearly all other relatively rich nations in meeting the three basic needs of our citizens. We can hardly argue that we can't afford to do this if almost every other wealthy nation manages this feat.

Allred - We should continue to invest in the NIH and other top tier government research agencies to ensure we are on the cutting edge. I was proud to help bring the ARPA-H health care research hub to Dallas, because I believe Texans have a huge role to play in the next generation of life saving medical treatments and discoveries.

Sherman - At the most basic level, we need to invest in our healthcare system. This includes ensuring we have the medical and public health workforce to meet the next emergency crisis. We also need to provide real-time information on the spread of any viruses and help direct critical resources where needed. These needs are often greatest with our vulnerable populations. Now is the time to ensure we have processes in place to ensure payment errors are minimized and we reduce fraudulent or ineligible awards for emergency assistance.

Question 19: Would you lead or support legislation to require mandatory sexual harassment and Equal Employment Opportunity training similar to the resolution passed in the U.S. Senate that requires Senators, staff, and interns to complete that training each session and submit certification to be published online that their offices' fulfilled the requirements?

Keough - Yes.

Prilliman - Yes.

Gutierrez - Yes. The Texas legislature has had this in place for some time. It is the bare minimum that we should expect from anyone in public office.

Hassan - By presenting facts, informed opinions on current issues can be reached. This allows Americans to address major issues facing the country, such as the production of graduates capable of competing the today's global market. Education, too, is a heatedly debated issue in the U.S. Testing and achievement in education, dropout trend rates, school violence, and drug use are all major national educational goals to take-on.

Allred - Yes, I think we must work toward adopting common sense requirements for sexual harassment training.

Sherman - Yes

**Question 20: How will you lead or support efforts for comprehensive immigration reform, especially pertaining to:
A. Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM ACT)**

Keough - The border wall is a failed U.S. policy, and there are better ways to keep our border intact. Immigrants, including asylum seekers, migrants, and/or people who have had to move from their home countries due to climate change, insecurity in their country, or a simple desire to participate in the American dream SHOULD be treated in a more humane, ethical, and moral way. I went to an asylum camp in Matamoros, Mexico, across the border from Brownsville, TX and heard horrific stories like women and transgender immigrants who were abused and friends who were beheaded during the journey to the United States. They arrive to US-Mexico border and wait to cross legally. One quick fix is to increase the number of Asylum Judges and immigration lawyers on the border, a number which was significantly reduced during the Trump administration. The DREAM Act is a band-aid solution to a bigger question, which is how to give people a simple and fair path to citizenship.

Prilliman - Give immigrants a fair and humane path to citizenship. If you're here and want to work, we should make it easy: get them social security numbers so they can work and start paying taxes. If they keep a clean record, let them become citizens. We need to fix the visa processing bottlenecks, address the gaps that allow child migrant workers, and force a culture reset by forming a new agency. And give the DREAMers citizenship already, how is this still not a thing?

Gutierrez - I am immigration attorney and I have witnessed first-hand the failures our current immigration system. To read more about my immigration plan, please go to: <https://rolandfortexas.com/immigration>. As part of that plan, I call for immediate normalization and citizenship for all DREAMers in the only country that they have ever known. I fully support citizenship for DREAMers.

Hassan - America will have a growingly serious homeless problem until we build enough affordable housing. But that won't happen until we are willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done, not just symbolic measures that impact just infinitesimal fractions of the homeless. We need to guarantee every American adequate food, clothing and shelter. All we need is the national will to fully meet these basic needs.

Allred - Dreamers are part of the fabric of our state and they know no other home than Texas. I am proud to cosponsor this legislation and will continue to fight for its passage.

Sherman - Rep. Sherman would support any effort for comprehensive immigration reform. The Dream Act's passing has been crucial in providing greater relief for DACA recipients and their families, and this could go further. We need greater pathways to citizenship for Dreamers. Dreamers would contribute hundreds of billions to the U.S. economy and combined taxes over the next decade if they were able to become citizens.

B. Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

Keough - We definitely do not agree with 287.g ICE holds by law enforcement. Nobody should ever be deported because of a traffic stop.

Prilliman - Give immigrants a fair and humane path to citizenship. If you're here and want to work, we should make it easy: get them social security numbers so they can work and start paying taxes. If they keep a clean record, let them become citizens. We need to fix the visa processing bottlenecks, address the gaps that allow child migrant workers, and force a culture reset by forming a new agency. And give the DREAMers citizenship already, how is this still not a thing?

Gutierrez - As stated above, I have my own immigration plan that fully reforms all forms of temporary status and offers a pathway to normalization for most migrants to this country.

I fully support reforming and streamlining our immigration system including raising limits on temporary status and changing the location of migration from the Border to embassies in migrant's country of origin. I firmly believe that most migrants come to our country in search of work, but our current laws are not meeting the needs of our labor shortage.

So, we need to reform those limits and offer a pathway to normalization for most migrants currently in the country. Most members of my party have their heads in the sand on this issue and will not even discuss it. But, if we do not fight back and offer our plan to secure the border and the needs of our economy we will continue to lose this fight and Republicans will have no incentive to compromise their ignorant and ineffective immigration policies. Again, to read more about that plan, please go to: <https://rolandfortexas.com/immigration/>.

Hassan - A functioning and affordable healthcare system remains elusive in the United States. 3 million people owe more than \$10,000. African American adults, people with disabilities, and those in poor health are most likely to have significant medical debt. Overall, Americans owe hundreds of billions of dollars. COVID-19 also exposed many cracks in the healthcare system such as healthcare access, inequity, and the marginalization of public health as the longest-standing systemic problems made worse by the pandemic. The United States system was simply not equipped to handle the pandemic well. To deal with future pandemics and the everyday health and wellness of those within its borders, the United States healthcare system needs an overhaul.

Allred - I also have supported legislation, previously combined with the DREAM Act that would help give TPS holders stability and path to citizenship.

Sherman - Similarly, TPS ensures its beneficiaries may live and work lawfully in the United States. However, they remain at risk of losing their TPS status, should they need to depart the country to have a visa processed at a consular post. People should not be in fear of losing their American life.

Question 21: What are your ideas to respond to evidence of climate change?

Keough - This is a broad category of scientific research. 1. We need to clean up the oil and gas industry in Texas. Dirty frack water is causing earthquakes. 2. On the Texas gulf coast, we are seeing flooding at unheard-of levels, and our cities and counties must prepare for this new reality. 3. Wind and solar farms are important to invest in. Generally speaking, the US Senator from Texas needs to acknowledge the sheer variety of climate challenges.

Prilliman - With aquifers and wells dwindling from climate change and multinational corporate overuse, the federal gov must review all water rights laws, so vulnerable communities don't run out of water. Prioritize weatherization of grids, and housing insulation. Train and transition workers to the clean energy industry as we continue to invest in solar, wind, nuclear, and other renewables.

Gutierrez - I support some aspects of the Green New Deal, including assisting in transitioning our energy economy to include more new energy jobs with renewable energy. I fully support setting goals for our economy to reduce our consumption of carbon. Whatever we do as a Nation, must also be done globally, which will require strong, binational agreements with our trade partners to commit to reducing the global consumption of carbon-producing fuels.

Global climate change is the biggest, long-term problem we face as a nation and as humans. My generation, and previous American generations, have fundamentally failed at communicating the scale and magnitude of climate change and how it will affect us in the coming decades. We must do a better job explaining to all Americans and all global citizens that this is an existential threat to everyone. We got here because for 150 years we burned coal, gas, and petroleum. It's going to take a combined global effort to solve this. My commitment to everyone is to listen, to work, and to make radically reducing our consumption of fossil fuels one of my concerns as a U.S. Senator.

Hassan - Climate change is a major issue that continues to elude solutions. As 2023 was the hottest year on record, 2024 is predicted to be the worst year the world has ever seen in recorded history.

Allred - I was proud the Inflation Reduction Act made the largest ever investment in clean energy and in fighting the climate crisis. I believe because we are in a crisis, we need an all of the above approach to lower emissions and lead the world. I will work to build on the Inflation Reduction Act in common sense ways that will protect Texas's status as an energy leader including in wind and solar, as well as hydrogen. I was proud to help bring a new hydrogen hub to Texas which will help us research the next generation of clean energy while creating jobs.

Sherman - We are currently witnessing a global climate emergency, which is the greatest threat facing our planet. The effects of this are particularly damaging in Texas, where we are facing rising sea levels, intensifying hurricanes, failing electrical infrastructure, a decrease in water resources, and dangerous rising temperatures that affect not only our generation, but many future generations to come. I will advocate for the implementation of the Green New Deal, which would not just protect the environment: the millions of jobs it creates would be a crucial step towards addressing economic inequality and addressing the environmental racism and classism that disproportionately affects people of color and low-income communities.

Question 22: Is there anything in your past or background that has not been covered by the previous questions that might – without careful explanation - cause our organization to reconsider or withdraw our endorsement of you?

Keough - No

Prilliman - No – I've generally tried to do right by people, and if I mess up, I always try to mend and reconcile. When you know better, do better.

Gutierrez - No

Hassan - By presenting facts, informed opinions on current issues can be reached. This allows Americans to address major issues facing the country. Together, breaking old barriers and staying in tune with modern times allows us to create effective change. We cannot continue to prosper as a nation and a people, without fresh and unbiased opinions that we can collectively agree upon for the good of the people.

Allred - No

Sherman - No

Question 23: How would you showcase your endorsement by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas if received? Would you include the endorsement in your campaign media?

Keough - Absolutely! I would be proud to represent the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas.

Prilliman - I would 100% post on my social media, website, and campaign media with pride!

Gutierrez - It would be placed on my endorsement page, a full communications roll out that includes announcements to the press and social media accounts. I will publicize it and it will become a prominent feature of every discussion I have with others about the importance of my candidacy.

Hassan - Yes.

Allred – I'd proudly showcase my endorsement of Stonewall Democrats alongside other endorsements I've received.

Sherman - Yes, we would include endorsement on our website and various campaign media including Facebook, X, and Instagram

Question 24: How long have you been a current member of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas? If you are not a member, will you pledge to join before the endorsement screenings? If no, why not?

Keough - Yes, will pledge

Prilliman - Not currently a member. Yes I would pledge to join before the endorsement screenings.

Gutierrez - I am not a member, because I live in San Antonio. I will pledge to join if I meet membership requirements.

Hassan - Yes.

Allred - I have been proud to work alongside Stonewall Democrats since my first election in 2018.

Sherman - Yes, willing to pledge to join

This completes the questions and answers for this race.

STONEWALL DEMOCRATS OF DALLAS

2024 Endorsement Screening

Judicial Questionnaires

5th Court of Appeals Pl 13

Candidates:

Judge Tonya Parker – TP

Note: The answers provided in this document are direct copies of the answers provided by the candidates. They have not been edited or changed in any way by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas.

Question 3: Pronouns

TP - She/her

Question 4: As an organization affiliated with the Texas Democratic Party, Stonewall Democrats of Dallas will only endorse candidates who affirm an affiliation with the platform and policies of the Texas Democratic Party. Do you make such an affirmation? What is your previous voting history?

TP - Yes. I am a lifelong Democrat and have only voted in Democratic Primaries.

Question 5: Please share any experience that illustrates your understanding of and interest in the needs of the LGBTQ+ community in your District/Role sought.

TP - I am a member of the LGBTQ+ community. I have a long and well-documented history of standing-up for the rights of our community as well as working to improve it. These efforts include my almost 20 year support of Lambda Legal's efforts to advance our victories in the courts, and supporting Stonewall and the LGBT Bar association by speaking at and sponsoring club events.

Years prior to the marriage equality decision (*Obergefell v. Hodges*), I stood-up for our fundamental right to marry by refusing to exercise a privilege of my office to officiate wedding ceremonies until ALL couples could be married in our State. In addition, I was a founding organizer of the LezTalk Conference—twice hosted at the Resource Center—for LGBTQ+ women and our allies. Both conferences were held with sold-out crowds, and the attendees reported the conference content was as empowering as it was enriching. All of these experiences inform my perspective that LGBTQ+ people need equal protection under the law and full recognition and dignity in court proceedings. These are principles that will undergird my review of cases, and treatment of LGBTQ+ parties, attorneys, and staff.

Question 6: Please list some of your qualifications and experiences pertinent to the office you are seeking:

TP - I seek a position as an associate justice in Place 13 on the Fifth District Court of Appeals—the intermediate appellate court for Dallas and five surrounding counties. My qualifications for this position include the knowledge and experience I've garnered as a 13-year veteran trial judge, presiding over the 116th Civil District Court in Dallas. Such experience uniquely postures me to review trial court decisions because I will be familiar with the law in civil proceedings which encompasses a vast majority of the appeals to the Fifth District Court.

Moreover, the length of my tenure as a trial judge has allowed me to preside over hundreds of jury trials and thousands of evidentiary hearings on a wide range of issues. As a consequence, I am knowledgeable about the rules of evidence and procedure and I know what to look for in a record. That is, I will be able to approach a record with a sense of what evidence likely came in to support the trial court's ruling or should have been offered/admitted. This will help me in digesting voluminous records and efficiently processing the appeals. Finally, I am a perpetual "student" of the law who studies and contributes to its improvement, including as an adjunct law instructor and executive board member at SMU Dedman School of Law, an Advisor in the American Law Institute, and a regular continuing legal education speaker at Dallas Bar and State Bar of Texas events/conferences.

Question 7: Once you are elected, what are some of your plans specific to your office's responsibilities?

TP - My number one goal during the first year is to master the internal processes of the Court. As a trial judge who has shown great regard for the line of demarcation between myself and those on the appellate court who review my rulings, I will be excited to use the two months between Election Day and taking office in January 2025 to get insider access to the internal workings of the Court by shadowing several of the sitting justices, meeting with the briefing attorneys who

currently serve Place 13, and meeting with the Clerk of the Court. Through these efforts, I plan to establish workflow processes that ensure effective collaboration with associate justices, efficient record and brief review, and timely authoring of opinions.

Question 8: If elected how will you recruit, retain, and create a supportive environment for LGBTQ+ staff and affirming staff?

TP - Any open positions that are advertised will be posted with all of the bar associations, including the LGBT Bar Association. Further, I will have signage in my office that makes it clear, the office/judge is a “safe space.” Additionally, I will recruit summer clerks from law school OUTlaw clubs.

Question 9: How would you handle a situation in which you or a subordinate felt the need to not fulfill all the lawful work duties due to “deeply held religious beliefs”?

TP - If my faith and oath of office conflict in a way that cannot be reconciled with integrity through the setting aside of my personal beliefs (in deference to my official responsibilities), I will recuse myself. I would expect staff members to reconcile any such conflicts in a similar manner. Failing that, I would expect/effectuate their recusal, re-assignment, or resignation.

Question 10: Understanding that administrative matters can take up a significant percentage of your work day, what are the most important policies or procedures you've identified as needing improvement?

TP - As a trial judge, I have not had to work with another person to deliberate upon cases and issue rulings. I anticipate it will be rewarding and also take concerted effort to make the transition to an environment where I collaborate with associate justices and am supported by two briefing attorneys. That said, my most important priority is the development of workflow processes—that allow the briefing attorneys to support my efficient review of records/briefs, preparation for and participation in case conferences (with fellow justices) and oral arguments, and efficient authoring of opinions.

Question 11: Do you have ideas to improve access to the courts and court-related services? Yes. If so, what are they?

TP - I am in my second term on the State Bar of Texas Rules Committee where I serve on both the trial and appellate subcommittees. We have been collaborating on changes to the Rules of Procedure that can improve how electronic evidence, sealed documents, and documents submitted in camera are preserved in the trial court and transmitted to the Court of Appeals after an appeal is filed. I believe the changes we are working on and have recommended for approval to the Supreme Court Advisory Council, will lead to litigants having a complete record when they file an appeal. This is critical to parties getting fair review of trial court decisions.

Question 12: Do you believe the composition of juries adequately and fairly reflects society at large? Why or why not? If not, what can we do to change this?

TP - Our juries in Dallas County are typically diverse and reflect the demographics of our county, when we (Dallas County trial judges) notice otherwise, we request the re-setting of the wheel used to generate jury summons. If it is not refreshed periodically, the database will contain stale addresses. Thus, we end up not reaching people who are more likely to be transient, including younger people and people of color. Refreshing the database helps to mitigate lower show rates from those demographics, and increases the likelihood that juries will reflect the community.

Question 13: What is your general judicial philosophy?

TP - Parties are entitled to a 'deliberative process. This is true even when they don't have a jury deciding the outcome, and even if the deliberative process will only occur in a judge's mind. A judge should arrive at decisions, not merely issue them.

Question 14: Is there anything in your past or background that has not been covered by the previous questions that might – without careful explanation - cause our organization to reconsider or withdraw our endorsement of you?

TP - No.

Question 15: How long have you been a current member of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas? If you are not a member, will you pledge to join before the endorsement screenings? If no, why not?

TP - Since 2010

Question 16: How would you showcase your endorsement by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas if received? Would you include the endorsement in your campaign media?

TP - Inclusion on some mailers and social media platforms, as advised by my consultant of 13 years.

This completes the questions and answers for this race.

STONEWALL DEMOCRATS OF DALLAS

2024 Endorsement Screening

Judicial Questionnaires

TX Supreme Court Pl. 6

Candidates:

Judge Bonnie Lee Goldstein - BLG

Note: The answers provided in this document are direct copies of the answers provided by the candidates. They have not been edited or changed in any way by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas.

Question 3: Pronouns

BLG - she, her

Question 4: As an organization affiliated with the Texas Democratic Party, Stonewall Democrats of Dallas will only endorse candidates who affirm an affiliation with the platform and policies of the Texas Democratic Party. Do you make such an affirmation? What is your previous voting history?

BLG - As a judicial candidate, I cannot comment on platforms and policies. My history reflects that I have run for office as a Democrat four times since 2010, twice for the trial bench (2014 and 2018) and twice for the court of appeals (2010 and 2020), and have only voted in the Democratic primaries.

Question 5: Please share any experience that illustrates your understanding of and interest in the needs of the LGBTQ+ community in your District/Role sought.

BLG - As a judicial candidate, I cannot comment on matters or issues that may come before me. My conduct, actions and rulings on the trial bench as well as on the appellate bench are a matter of public record.

Question 6: Please list some of your qualifications and experiences pertinent to the office you are seeking:

BLG - A thirty-three year varied legal practice, that included both civil and criminal litigation, administrative proceedings, and judicial experience including eleven years as a municipal judge, six years as a civil trial judge and three years as a justice on the 5th District Court of Appeals. As a Justice on an intermediate appellate court, serving since January 2021, I participate in appellate panel review over all civil, criminal, probate and family proceedings filed in the court for review.

I am formerly the Presiding Judge of the 44th Civil District Court, Dallas County, elected 2014 and 2018, where I presided over all matters of legal disputes involving personal injury, professional malpractice, contractual rights, trade secrets, property rights, employment, commercial and consumer debt, to identify a few. I also served as a municipal judge for Cockrell Hill, Royse City and Dallas.

Before becoming a judge, I had a diverse practice history including construction litigation, education law, state and local government, contracts and procurement. My law degree is from George Washington University, Washington D.C. and licensed in Texas since November 1990.

Question 7: Once you are elected, what are some of your plans specific to your office's responsibilities?

BLG - I will approach my responsibilities as I have consistently in the past, with hard work, dedication, consistent with my judicial responsibilities and the Canons, to preserve and protect the constitution and rule of law. The judiciary is being challenged and/or denigrated by partisanship affiliations which threaten the perceived integrity of our judicial system as well as independence of the judiciary. One of the most pressing responsibilities for the Texas Supreme Court as well as all members of the judiciary, is to protect the integrity and independence of the judiciary and instill public confidence in our judicial system through transparency in judgment, clarity and consistency of opinions, and ensuring equal access to justice.

Question 8: If elected how will you recruit, retain, and create a supportive environment for LGBTQ+ staff and affirming staff?

BLG - It is likely that I will have an existing, experienced court staff, but I have a non-discriminatory hiring philosophy for any future hires. My court staff is trained to be courteous and fair to all attorneys and litigants who appear in court, with such training and education being an ongoing requirement.

Question 9: How would you handle a situation in which you or a subordinate felt the need to not fulfill all the lawful work duties due to “deeply held religious beliefs”?

BLG - An elected official, or government employee, must set aside religious beliefs and perform duties that are part of their job description and responsibilities. I cannot make a specific example here, as such a matter could come before my court in the future.

Question 10: Understanding that administrative matters can take up a significant percentage of your work day, what are the most important policies or procedures you've identified as needing improvement?

BLG - Not being a current seated member of the Court, it is difficult to opine on internal operations and administrative procedures. Appellate courts have operating procedures consistent with applicable rules that are generally approved by the court as a whole. These may be reviewed regularly to ensure best practices. However, docket efficiency is very important. It is important to me that cases move along, and people get their fair hearing in court without unnecessary delay. I work very hard to continuously monitor and improve docket management with technology but also by making sure my staff are on point.

Question 11: Do you have ideas to improve access to the courts and court-related services? Yes. If so, what are they?

BLG - I remain committed to improving access to the courts by facilitating pro bono, “low bono” representation for those who have financial hardship and cannot afford an attorney without assistance, as well as identifying the underserved. In this regard, while on the trial bench, I participated in the effort to establish an office for Legal Aid of Northwest Texas at the George Allen Courthouse as well as worked with local law schools to provide law school clinics on a regular basis during the school year to facilitate access to information. In my current position, I am working with staff and justices to review the self-help information available in an effort to improve understanding and provide guidance to navigate the appellate process.

Question 12: Do you believe the composition of juries adequately and fairly reflects society at large? Why or why not? If not, what can we do to change this?

BLG - As a judicial candidate, I cannot comment on matters or issues that may come before me, which may include challenges to the jury selection process. While on the trial bench I served a term as the presiding judge of the central jury room where, among other things we, looked at our jury selection process to endeavor to achieve a higher participation rate and that our juries were more representative of the entire Dallas County community. We endeavored to facilitate improved attendance and direct reporting through innovative technology which was ultimately implemented after my term.

Question 13: What is your general judicial philosophy?

BLG - I believe Socrates said it best: "Four things belong to a judge: To hear courteously, to answer wisely, to consider soberly and to decide impartially." The foundation of my judicial philosophy is that the independence of the judiciary is paramount to the preservation and protection of all constitutional rights and the rule of law.

Question 14: Is there anything in your past or background that has not been covered by the previous questions that might – without careful explanation - cause our organization to reconsider or withdraw our endorsement of you?

BLG - No.

Question 15: How long have you been a current member of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas? If you are not a member, will you pledge to join before the endorsement screenings? If no, why not?

BLG - I have been a member since September 17, 2015 and recently renewed my membership.

Question 16: How would you showcase your endorsement by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas if received? Would you include the endorsement in your campaign media?

BLG - As in the past, I will proudly showcase Stonewall Democrats of Dallas endorsement on my website, campaign literature and mailers, social media assets (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) and campaign advertisements.

This completes the questions and answers for this race.

STONEWALL DEMOCRATS OF DALLAS

2024 Endorsement Screening

CD 33 Questionnaires

Candidates:

Congressman Marc Veasey - MV

Carlos Quintanilla - CQ

Note: The answers provided in this document are direct copies of the answers provided by the candidates. They have not been edited or changed in any way by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas.

Question 3: Pronouns

MV - He/Him/His

CQ - None

Question 4: As an organization affiliated with the Texas Democratic Party, Stonewall Democrats of Dallas will only endorse candidates who affirm an affiliation with the platform and policies of the Texas Democratic Party. Do you make such an affirmation? What is your previous voting history?

MV - YES

CQ - Yes. I have voted Democrat all my life.

Question 5: Please share any experience that illustrates your understanding of and interest in the needs of the LGBTQ+ community in your District/Role sought.

MV - I employ members of the LGBTQ community in my Congressional offices and have been a member of the Congressional LGBTQ caucus since 2012. I am also endorsed by the Human Rights Campaign.

CQ - I have Children that are LGBTQ. I have worked closely with Councilman Omar Narvaez who served as President of Stonewall Democrats and I have had a very good relationship talking about issues that affect all of us with Brandon Vance.

Question 6: Please list some of your qualifications and experiences pertinent to the office you are seeking:

MV - I have been representing Congressional District 33 since its inception in 2012. Prior to holding Federal office, I was the State Representative for Texas House District 95 and the Democratic Caucus Chair.

CQ - I have been a very visible and effective activist leading the charge on many issues affecting our communities. I led the Anti Cheese Heroin Campaign and the Recent Fentanyl Awareness. I initiate the litigation against Farmers Branch and the anti-Immigration policies of then mayor Tim O'Hare. I led the campaign that helped hundreds of 635 Toll Road affected homeowners to fight and sue Trinity Infrastructure for the damage caused to their homes resulting in an 11 million-dollar settlement. I created Breakfast in the Classroom that now feeds 250,000 students daily in the Public School system of Dallas, Irving and other districts. I have been a key voice on issues affecting Immigrant Families. I am a businessman and mall developer.

Question 7: Once you are elected, what are some of your plans specific to your office's responsibilities?

MV - Right now, I am continuing my work on legislation to lower the cost of prescription drugs across the country. I will continue to prioritize healthcare legislation as a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, which oversees most Healthcare legislation. In addition, I plan to continue pursuing opportunities to bring jobs to the metroplex and create a long-lasting solution to comprehensive immigration reform.

CQ - My office will be an Activist Advocacy Office that will serve the needs of the residents of the 33rd Congressional District, a radical change from the one we currently have where the priorities of our current Congressman is to serve the interest of lobbyist, interest groups and the military industrial complex that feeds him with contributions and favors. That will end!

Question 8: If elected how will you recruit, retain, and create a supportive environment for LGBTQ+ staff and affirming staff?

MV - I already employ LGBTQ staff and will continue to afford that opportunity to all qualified candidates

CQ - Yes

Question 9: Would you be willing to appoint a liaison to meet with the LGBTQ community on an ongoing basis? If not, why?

MV - Yes, I have one that currently exists.

CQ - Yes

Question 10: What non-discrimination policies will you support for employment and protection of LGBTQ+ constituents based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression?

MV - I unequivocally support passing a National Equality Act.

CQ - I would support any legislation that protects LGBTQ and their constituents.

Question 11: How can congress play a role to get Roe v. Wade codified into law?

MV - I proudly voted to defend women's constitutional right to reproductive health care with H.R. 3755, the Women's Health Protection Act. The Women's Health Protections Act (WHPA) establishes the federal statutory right for health care providers to offer abortion care and the federal right for patients to receive that care, free from state restrictions.

CQ - By voting to codify it.

Question 12: How would you lead or support efforts to provide better funding for health care and better health care options for all Texas residents?

MV - As a member of the House Energy & Commerce Committee, I have the opportunity to work directly on protecting the ACA for two million Texans and Americans nationwide, fight for Medicare for All, advance America's leadership on clean energy and energy security, and ensuring families have access to clean water and air for generations to come. I am also spearheading an effort to bring down the prices of prescription drugs for Americans everywhere.

CQ - Push to reduce the cost of health care plans. Push for stronger negotiations with pharmaceutical companies to lower the costs of prescription drugs. Work with satellite health providers to provide alternative and affordable health services to the community. Create health education programs and wellness awareness programs funded through federal grants. Increase funding for in home medical care to reduce the costs of hospice care and high price medical care. Find education and health care information programs. Finally Push for Universal Health Care for All!

Question 13: How would you lead or support an effort to establish universal or single payer health care for the United States of America? What improvements, if any, should be made to strengthen the Affordable Care Act?

MV - As a member of the House Energy & Commerce Committee, I joined colleagues of the full Committee to advance eight bipartisan pieces of legislation to ensure our nation's health care is both affordable and accessible. The package of bills included legislation to reauthorize public health and Medicare programs, improve drug pricing transparency and protect patients from surprise medical bills. I am proud to reach across the aisle to ensure we pass legislation that will continue our work for the people across America. These bills will strengthen our national health care system and ensure

Saturday January 13, 2024

that both Texans in the district I represent and all Americans across our country have access to comprehensive and affordable health care.

CQ - Reasonable insurance policies. Reasonable and fair prices for prescription medication. Work with smaller health care providers that service non-trauma medical care at far more affordable costs. Work with hospitals like Methodist and Baylor to create Health Care Insurance programs similar to Parkland Plus that provide quality health care through a hospital run insurance programs paid by monthly fees of the insured.

Question 14: How would you lead or support efforts to ensure the John Lewis Voting Rights Act is enacted?

MV - As both a Texan and co-founder of the Congressional Voting Rights Caucus (CVRC), I have long supported efforts to get both the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the Freedom to Vote Act signed into law. In my role as a member of Congress, I have proudly joined my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to pass both of these pieces of voting rights legislation out of our chamber. In my role as a co-chair and co-founder of the CVRC, I have led many letters urging the Administration and the Senate to prioritize these vital pieces of legislation to enforce national standards to protect the right to vote, especially as states like Texas are implementing dangerous voter suppression laws that allow partisan gerrymandering. In the upcoming weeks, I will also continue to push the Senate to change their rules and reform the filibuster to ensure that these voter freedom and pro-democracy reforms are signed into law.

CQ - I would be a strong and vocal advocate to endure the continuation of the John Lewis Voting Rights Act.

Question 15: Did the Build Back Better Act in your opinion do enough to address the nation's needs?

MV - In 2022, Democrats, alongside President Biden, passed the historic Inflation Reduction Act that is helping grow the economy from the middle out and bottom up—reduces costs for Americans, invests in America, makes the tax code fairer, and is the most ambitious climate action in history. Since this legislation was signed into law, it is helping our nation lead, and I believe this was a great step forward. I remain committed to building on this legislation and the other key accomplishments of Democrats to continue to put people over politics—unlike the Republican party. Every day, Democrats are fighting to break the gridlock that the Republican-led House has created, and I look forward to continuing to fight to deliver for the American people.

CQ - No!

Question 16: Do you or do you not support ending the filibuster?

MV - The right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy. The House has done its job to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and Freedom to Vote Act, yet Senate Republicans have continued to thwart these critical voting rights through the filibuster—a racist, a procedure that is a relic of the Jim Crow era. I believe that in instances such as democracy reform and voting rights, Senate rules changes like filibuster reform are needed to get these bills passed.

CQ - Yes.

Question 17: What specific ideas do you have and/or what current legislation would you support to strengthen and grow the US economy?

MV - As I said before, I proudly voted for the Inflation Reduction Act, which is helping our economy and growing the middle class. During this past year in a divided Congress, I have continued to work with the Democratic party to fight against harmful, Republican-led shutdowns and their far-right legislation and general inaction that would put our economy in peril.

CQ - Increase capital loan programs for small businesses. Create a National Bank/ Government partnership to provide low 2% interest loans to small businesses. I'd push to modify the SBA, that has been a failure for minority communities. Create Job Training Programs. Create Vocational Training Programs funded by the Government with direct Block Grants to community-based organizations. I would push and support National Legislation that would Empower America through Jobs, access to capital and investment in the work force. Similar to the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of the 1980' and 90's.

Question 18: What could congress do to improve response and preparation for the next pandemic?

MV - Congress has already passed the sweeping American Rescue Plan that was signed into law in early 2021 by President Biden. I was proud to vote for this sweeping COVID relief package which allocated billions to get COVID-19 relief put shots in arms, workers back in jobs, money in pockets, and children back in school. It also included more than \$3 billion to accelerate the discovery, development and manufacturing of antiviral medicines as part of the Biden Administration's whole-of-government strategy to develop the next generation of COVID-19 treatments. I believe we can build off of these advancements by keeping this funding to study and prevent further COVID outbreaks. I also believe Congress must work with the Administration to allocate appropriate funding to the Center for Disease Control, the National Institutes of Health, and the World Health Organization so that they can properly research and prepare our country and the rest of the world to best deal with future pandemics

CQ - Create a Community Grass Roots Partnership Program.

Question 19: Would you lead or support legislation to require mandatory sexual harassment and Equal Employment Opportunity training similar to the resolution passed in the U.S. Senate that requires Senators, staff, and interns to complete that training each session and submit certification to be published online that their offices' fulfilled the requirements?

MV - Yes. Discrimination of any kind shouldn't be tolerated in the work place. Cultural, racial, ethnic, gender based, sexual orientation and religious rights must be protected, my office policies help to ensure this. At the point in which a circumstance called for special attention, I would personally engage in addressing any such situation brought to my attention.

CQ - Yes, I would support legislation to require mandatory sexual harassment and EEO training and certification.

**Question 20: How will you lead or support efforts for comprehensive immigration reform, especially pertaining to:
A. Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM ACT)**

MV - I proudly fought against Republican efforts to repeal the state DREAM Act, which lets undocumented students that were raised in Texas go to college while paying in-state tuition rates. I have sponsored an issues forum for seniors and a screening of "The Dream is Now," a documentary showing the plight of DREAMers living in the United States. Likewise, I support the passage of a federal DREAM Act, whose path-to-citizenship provision would allow kids seeking further education work in their professions after graduation.

CQ - I do not believe Immigration Reform should only include DACA, a program that benefited a few and was used as an excuse to deny Immigration Reform to their parents and was used as a temporary fix and political maneuver to satisfy Immigration Activist. I support a 10-year Visa program that would grant Work Permits, the right to have a driver's license, travel authorization. Once the 10-year VISA expires the recipient would then be eligible for Permanent Resident Status and after 5 years he or she would be eligible for Citizenship compliant with the laws of the United States and its respective States.

B. Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

MV - In 2021, I was proud to vote for the American Dream and Promise Act, and H.R. 1603, the Farm Workforce Modernization Act, two landmark pieces of legislation to modernize and reform our immigration system and secure

permanent protections and a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. The American Dream and Promise Act provides relief to our nation's Dreamers, as well as to many Temporary Protected Status holders. I am also an original co-sponsor of the Reuniting Families Act which prioritizes the unification and stability of immigrant families, and the Uniting American Families Act, which allows U.S. citizens and permanent residents to sponsor permanent partners for residency.

CQ - TPS has been used in a discretionary manner that does not address Comprehensive Immigration Reform.

Question 21: What are your ideas to respond to evidence of climate change?

MV - There is no denying the impact of man-made climate change. State agencies must work with the EPA rather than fighting the administration's greenhouse gas rules. Delaying only creates backlogs on permit applications and aides the lawyers in getting richer. I previously offered an amendment to H.R.8 that requires the Department of Energy to submit a report to Congress on the potential effects commercial utilization of Carbon Capture and Sequestration could have on the economy, energy infrastructure and greenhouse gas emission goals. Now, as a Member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, I have the opportunity to work directly on protecting the ACA for two million Texans and Americans nationwide, fight for Medicare for All, advance America's leadership on clean energy and energy security, and ensuring families have access to clean water and air for generations to come.

CQ - More stringent laws and regulations to protect our environment. Stronger penalties and criminal sanctions. Empower EPA and accelerate the transition from Gas driven vehicles to electric power vehicles. Decrease dependency on fossil fuels with a long-term plan for total elimination and dependency of contaminants to the environment. My opponent is a Champion for polluters and Anti Environmentalist. He voted against the Clean Water Bill and is a strong defender of Fracking and contamination of our water supply.

Question 22: Is there anything in your past or background that has not been covered by the previous questions that might – without careful explanation - cause our organization to reconsider or withdraw our endorsement of you?

MV - I have been endorsed by Stonewall since I was a State Representative in 2004 and hope to continue having your crucial support.

CQ - I believe this is a worthless question. Tell me who has not had a past and then tell me what have they done to better the future!

Question 23: How would you showcase your endorsement by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas if received? Would you include the endorsement in your campaign media?

MV - I am happy to participate in any manner that would be mutually beneficial. Yes, I'd include links in campaign media.

CQ - Listing it as one of the many individual endorsement that I have receive adding the Stonewall Democrats Endorsement to the lists of endorsements from Political leadership, Religious Leaders, Influencer and Business Leaders that I have received.

Question 24: How long have you been a current member of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas? If you are not a member, will you pledge to join before the endorsement screenings? If no, why not?

MV - YES

CQ - I was a member and I will renew my membership into the Stonewall Democrats.

This completes the questions and answers for this race.

STONEWALL DEMOCRATS OF DALLAS

2024 Endorsement Screening

Judicial Questionnaires

5th Court of Appeals Pl. 9

Candidates:

Theresa Bui Creevy

Judge Tina Clinton

Note: The answers provided in this document are direct copies of the answers provided by the candidates. They have not been edited or changed in any way by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas.

Question 3: Pronouns

Theresa - she/her/hers

Tina - she/her

Question 4: As an organization affiliated with the Texas Democratic Party, Stonewall Democrats of Dallas will only endorse candidates who affirm an affiliation with the platform and policies of the Texas Democratic Party. Do you make such an affirmation? What is your previous voting history?

Theresa - Yes, I affirm. I have voted straight Democratic in the past 4 elections cycles. I have always stood with and supported the LGBTQ+ community. As a former moderate and a witness to the increased intolerance against this community and all disadvantaged/discriminated communities, I will do my best to fight for Democratic ideals and justice for all.

Tina - Yes! DEMOCRAT

Question 5: Please share any experience that illustrates your understanding of and interest in the needs of the LGBTQ+ community in your District/Role sought.

Theresa - I join and support events hosted by LGBTQ+ community members and am always available and open to the community for free legal consultations. I advocate for LGBTQ+ rights and adoption of laws protecting this discriminated community. In the event my opponent wins the Democratic Primary and is elected to the Court of Appeals instead of me, her current judicial position creates a vacancy for Governor Abbott to appoint a Republican to her seat. If I win the Democratic Primary and am elected to the Court of Appeals, the community will have 2 Democratic allies, due to my opponent continuing to sit in her current judicial seat in Dallas County and me taking this position. An endorsement for me is a win/win for the LGBTQ+ community and all communities. We have worked too hard to gain Democratic seats in our courts. We can't afford to give any seats away to Republicans.

Tina - The bench I am seeking is a reviewing court and does not come in contact directly with litigants. Attorneys may seek oral arguments and therefore appear before a panel of justices. Regarding attorneys, I was on the board of the Dallas Bar Association and was honored to second the motion to give our LGBTQ+ sister bar a vote on the board of the DBA. The motion carried on that day and therefore, it gives our sister bar a stronger voice in the Dallas legal community.

I have people with very different needs that come to my current court. I am very conscious of trying to treat those that appear before me with dignity. I do my best to make sure that proper pronouns are utilized. I do not use a dead name to address people. I ask lawyers and staff not to deadname. I am familiar with safety issues and medical issues at the jail. I inquire about individual needs. I have attended multiple trainings on LGBTQ+ needs from non-profits and allied organizations. I pay attention to where one can go for substance treatment that would also take care of health or hormone treatment needs. I am also mindful of the housing needs that may arise in cases.

Question 6: Please list some of your qualifications and experiences pertinent to the office you are seeking:

Theresa - I am a 26-year trial lawyer practicing in multiple areas of law (family, criminal, business, personal injury, probate, child protective services, juvenile, and real estate). I represent plaintiffs, defendants, fathers, mothers, children, and businesses in Dallas County, Collin County, Grayson County, Kaufman County, Rockwall County, Hunt County, Tarrant County, Denton County, and other counties across Texas. I have fought for and have defended clients in various cases and in various areas of law. I understand that these cases or disputes may be the most important thing to that plaintiff, defendant, company, business, father, mother, or child and that a ruling by a judge or justice could have devastating consequences to them. So it's important to elect a lawyer for Justice for the 5th District Court of Appeals

who understands the law, knows the law, will follow the law, but be fair and just. Electing someone who knows more than one area of law is crucial for the Court of Appeals since it hears every area of law.

Tina - I am a four-term elected democrat currently sitting on a state district court. I have (as of 2024) 18 years of judicial experience including municipal, county and district trial courts. I have, as a lawyer and judge, tried over 400 trials. (I have handled criminal and some civil case in my career.) As a district judge, I am required to often write recommendations on writs that go to the Court of Criminal Appeals over issues such as testimony, new evidence, legal issues, discovery and more. For the Court of Appeals, I write finding of facts and conclusions of law as well as making recommendations on issues dealing with the progression of an appeal. These writings are a common part of a district court judge's job. I believe that these experiences establish my foundation to review the trial court and the work done in the trial courts if given the opportunity to serve on the 5th District Court of Appeals, Place 9.

Question 7: Once you are elected, what are some of your plans specific to your office's responsibilities?

Theresa - Specific to my office, I plan on providing just rulings and making informed and educated decisions/opinions based on the law and case law that affect those individuals and/or businesses. I also plan on participating in committees that help make the Court more accessible to our communities. I also would like to meet with various groups and communities and explain the role of the Court of Appeals and how decisions/opinions are made and how these decisions/opinions affect litigants, various communities, and Texas voters.

Tina - Currently, there is a backlog in this particular seat. The first thing I will do is to work hard to clear up the backlog. That will require going over records of cases, meeting with staff, meeting with other Justices, researching, reading, and writing in overdrive.

Question 8: If elected how will you recruit, retain, and create a supportive environment for LGBTQ+ staff and affirming staff?

Theresa - I will actively ensure that members of the LGBTQ+ community have an equal opportunity to apply for staff attorney positions by sending out emails and ensuring outreach to everyone, including LGBTQ+ legal groups to search for the most qualified candidates.

Tina - The 5th District Court of Appeals is now a majority Democratic Court with a large staff. In Jan 2025, it is my sincere hope that I, along with another friend and colleague, will be joining this court. The first thing I would do is to get to know the existing staff and culture of the court. If I believed that any changes needed to be made or could be made, I would speak to my democratic colleagues to make sure that we could be united. It would make the workplace a much more affirming and unified environment.

In my current role as an elected judge that is responsible for a state district court, I believe one must lead by example. However, I have also verbalized from the beginning to staff how important it is to be inclusive, respectful, and kind to all people that come to court for one reason or another. I required a commitment be made by all those that work directly for me. In 2023, the DBA recognized my court staff for their excellence. I believe the recognition was given because of their kindness and supportiveness, in addition to their hard work and efficiency.

Question 9: How would you handle a situation in which you or a subordinate felt the need to not fulfill all the lawful work duties due to "deeply held religious beliefs"?

Theresa - I would remove myself or my subordinate through recusal or through any manner that does not allow lawful work duties to be completed. "Deeply held religious beliefs" do not belong in our courtrooms and should not sway a judge's opinion of the facts and the law before the Court.

Tina - Duties of the court are duties of the court. I will fulfill my lawful work duties. I would ask my court staff to fulfill their lawful work duties. (I believe this first came up with the Day of Decision about marriage license issuances.).

If the deeply held religious beliefs referred to religious holiday observance, I would allow them the day(s) off.

Question 10: Understanding that administrative matters can take up a significant percentage of your work day, what are the most important policies or procedures you've identified as needing improvement?

Theresa - I would like to answer this once I have a much better understanding of the day-to-day roles and duties. I am happy to take suggestions from those more experienced than me, attorneys dealing with the Court of Appeals, and my colleagues.

Tina - For this new position, one of the issues that plague the trial courts is the format the evidence is required to be in for submission of an appeal. The format that is required is set by the Texas Supreme Court but it applies to the Court of Appeals as an appellate court. The trial courts do their best to comply but litigants do not always understand what format the court reporters must utilize to get an appeal sent to the appellate courts.

Also, the format established by the Texas Supreme Court is outdated. Therefore, court reporters struggle as the size of digital evidence grows in all types of cases. Physical evidence is no longer sent to the courts. A digital picture is substituted and uploading of data is required. However, the data has size limits so body cams or video footages cannot be sent without a layer of work by court reporters and/or attorneys. What is created for the jury is not always the format in which the appeal can be packaged. This issue is a huge disconnect between the trial court and the appellate courts. It is one of the issues I would tackle out of necessity. I have taught on this issue from the trial court side. I would like to try to eliminate or ease the issue from the appellate side.

Question 11: Do you have ideas to improve access to the courts and court-related services? Yes. If so, what are they?

Theresa - To improve access to justice for all, we should expand access of legal forms to include multiple languages, including Spanish and other languages. These forms should be available online and in our courtrooms. Some forms are available in our courthouse libraries but many people don't know they exist. We should expand online access of our full law library to everyone without any limitations.

Tina - On an appellate court, the improvement to access to me means timely reviews. Please see the above questions regarding the backlog in this current seat.

Access now can also mean visibility of hearings by Zoom or a similar technology. Usually the lawyers are the ones who come to oral hearings but technology can increase access to make court hearings available to the families of parties, the litigants themselves, or lawyers and students for educational purposes.

The other idea would be to make sure that I take interns (college and law students) from a diverse background so that they have knowledge and access to the largest appellate court in Texas. That will improve access overall as these students become lawyers and serve various communities.

I would also request we increase our education of the court by speaking to non-legal groups to broaden the education of what the court of appeals does and what powers it holds. That would open up these Courts to Texans who many never pay attention to these courts otherwise.

Question 12: Do you believe the composition of juries adequately and fairly reflects society at large? Why or why not? If not, what can we do to change this?

Theresa - Yes, I believe the composition of juries adequately and fairly reflects our society at large as long as everyone who is qualified to be a juror does their part and attends jury duty. Without everyone's commitment to having a jury of our peers, we can't have a fair jury system. If and when there is discrimination to any member of society, an individual should raise that issue to the judge. I want to ensure fairness for everyone.

Tina - (I am limiting my response to Dallas County.) I feel that our jury composition is better than it has been in the past. Dallas County uses driver's licenses instead of voter registrations. We also send mail as a form of notification. However, we still have approximately a 20% appearance rate. In other words, we send out 1000 jury duty requests to have 200 people actually show. We now allow people to request a reset of their jury duty date online and give more flexibility than ever before so that we can work around conflicts such as work issues and family issues to increase the response rate.

However, I believe there is still a need to have judges and elected officials speak more about jury duty in under-represented communities so that compositions of juries more fairly reflects our society at large. Every time I speak about jury duty, there are questions that lead me to believe that many still worry about appearing for service. We need to be clear about what actually happens in jury duty and what does not. Educating the public regarding the laws of Texas are an ongoing duty of a judge. We have the responsibility to help create a better legal system every day.

Question 13: What is your general judicial philosophy?

Theresa - My general judicial philosophy is making sure that above all, judges should make time to hear litigants, be fair and just, and follow the rules of law specific to their case. Our courts and judges play an important role in people's lives, including the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, particularly when they are deciding cases involving any constitutional rights, access to health care, employment protections, the freedom to marry, parental rights, and family protections for same-sex couples. It's imperative that judges protect the equal protection laws including individual rights and condemn anti-LGBTQ laws, anti-racial law, and anti-gender laws. Laws must be fair for everyone, regardless of sex, race, gender, age, ethnicity, and sexual-orientation.

Everyone wants a judge that will be fair, impartial, and follow the law. Every person deserves fairness and an opportunity to be fully heard. Everyone wants justice. When judges don't have time to listen and hear out the parties, it's not fair and it's not justice. It is never about the judge; it is always about the people or parties, their issues or disputes, and the rule of law, and what is fair and just.

Tina - Be Fair/Be Just/Work Hard/Make the Hard Decisions/Seek to Serve and Not Be Served.

Question 14: Is there anything in your past or background that has not been covered by the previous questions that might – without careful explanation – cause our organization to reconsider or withdraw our endorsement of you?

Theresa - In 2022, I received a public reprimand from the State Bar of Texas. The matter involved a client that decided to follow my then associate attorney to her newly created law firm in 2021 during the height of Covid-19. My associate attorney left and took the complete file with her without leaving a copy of the client file and without issuing a billing invoice for work performed. The client contacted me and requested a refund of any unused retainer. It took some time for me to finalize the bill invoice with my former associate attorney. I issued and sent the remainder of the retainer but my former client claimed that he did not receive the retainer refund. I contacted his attorney and asked if she would like to come pick it up or have me send it by FedEx. She indicated she would wait for it to come in the mail.

The former client filed a grievance. Then the attorney received the retainer refund at her office. The former client contacted the State Bar to drop the grievance after receiving the refund but the State Bar would not drop the grievance. At the advice of my grievance attorney, I decided to fight the grievance. But after finding out that the judge appointed to

hear my grievance was a Republican judge who had lost her election to Democrats in Dallas County after multiple election cycles, my attorney advised me to accept a public reprimand and move on.

Based on an agreed settlement in 2023, I am currently paying a penalty for late filings with the Texas Ethics Commission for my election campaign in 2020 in Collin County for failing to timely file my campaign finance reports. I now have a better understanding of my duties as to campaign finance reports and will assure timely filings in the future.

Tina - No.

Question 15: How long have you been a current member of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas? If you are not a member, will you pledge to join before the endorsement screenings? If no, why not?

Theresa - I joined Stonewall Democrats in 2023. I have been an ally and supporter of Stonewall Democrats since learning about your organization in 2019. I would like to become a sustaining member.

Tina - I joined Stonewall in 2007/2008 and am a current member. (My husband is a member as well. We were members before we started dating. My husband was on the board as political chair or vice president for at least 8 years. I think the only reason he got off the board was because our son required so much time to get him past hurdles of learning differences.)

Question 16: How would you showcase your endorsement by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas if received? Would you include the endorsement in your campaign media?

Theresa - If I receive an endorsement by the Stonewall Democrats, I would be so honored and grateful for your trust and belief in me to do what is right and just in the pursuit of protecting the LGBTQ+ community. I would love to include your endorsement across my social media campaign for justice and would like to invite any interested members of Stonewall Democrats to join me in a campaign video and join me at my campaign events!

Tina - I would showcase my endorsement via social media, print, and interviews. I would include it on my campaign media. I have been proud to have the Stonewall Endorsement since 2008 when I first sought endorsement. (I was shocked when I learned then that some did not showcase their endorsement for fear of alienating other voting blocks.). Stonewall was my first endorsement and it has shaped me in significant ways.

This completes the questions and answers for this race.

STONEWALL DEMOCRATS OF DALLAS

2024 Endorsement Screening

HD 115 Questionnaires

Candidates:

Cassandra Hernandez - CH

Kate Rumsey - KR

Note: The answers provided in this document are direct copies of the answers provided by the candidates. They have not been edited or changed in any way by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas.

Question 3: Pronouns

CH - She/hers

KR - She/her/hers

Question 4: As an organization affiliated with the Texas Democratic Party, Stonewall Democrats of Dallas will only endorse candidates who affirm an affiliation with the platform and policies of the Texas Democratic Party. Do you make such an affirmation? What is your previous voting history?

CH - Yes, I make that affirmation. I have *only* voted for Democrats and in Democratic Primaries my entire life.

KR - Yes, I affirm an affiliation with the platform and policies of the Texas Democratic Party.

As to my voting history, I have (until recently) stayed out of politics publicly, including primaries and donation history, due to my employment in the federal government and in the military. To become a federal prosecutor and Air Force officer, I went through an intensive screening and security clearance process, which entailed an extensive background check. We are required to be politically neutral in our job, and partisanship is not permitted. In addition to that requirement, there is also a culture of non-partisanship. Many prosecutors, former prosecutors, and military members do not vote in primaries or donate to candidates. Despite that, I have consistently been voting for Democrats up and down the ballot in the general elections. Since I was 18, I lived in Indiana, New York, and then Texas; so my Texas voting history doesn't start until after I came back to Texas in 2010.

After maintaining a public record of non-partisanship, I saw from within the government how Trump affected the DOJ, FBI, law enforcement, and military. I saw the rise of hate speech and the lack of distrust by judges and public defenders in my everyday work. That is why I decided to vote for the first time in a primary to vote against Trump. I knew then, as I do now, that he is a threat to our democracy. I took an oath of office to defend our Constitution, an oath I take seriously. With the federal laws preventing political activities as a federal employee, I did not have many options to combat Trump's election, but I believe, as I do now, that his presidency went beyond partisanship. I then voted proudly for Hillary Clinton and all Democrats in the general election.

After this, I started donating for this first time to Democratic candidates. I moved to Virginia in 2018 with my husband, who was in the military. I maintained my Texas residency and tried to vote by mail in the primaries but my mail in ballots were rejected, as many Texans' mail-in ballots were rejected. Promptly when returning to Texas in 2022, I voted in person in the democratic primaries.

Question 5: Please list some of your qualifications and experiences pertinent to the office you are seeking

CH - I am an experienced trial lawyer, community volunteer, and committed Democrat. It is because of this strong desire to help people that I became an award-winning lawyer, got involved in extensive community service, and now am seeking to help more people through public service. I am a former Ethics Commissioner for the City of Dallas, unanimously appointed by CMs Medrano, Narvaez, McGough, West, Thomas, Arnold, Resendez, Bazaldua, Atkins, Blackmon, Kleinman, Mendelsohn, Gates and Blewett back in 2019 until resigning to run for office. It was through my community service that I saw firsthand the issues that everyday Texans truly care about – from helping put on an annual pro bono clinic through Mexican American Bar Association – Dallas that would help serve 200+ individuals in the west/south Dallas area, stepping up to help 2020 Evictions direct Spanish speaking tenants to resources during the pandemic to be able to keep themselves and their families in their homes, serving the City of Dallas, Catholic Charities, and other organizations in citizenship workshops and asylum/refuges cases, volunteering/being a member/serving on executive board or board of directors of organizations like: Genesis Women's Shelter; Hope's Door; Dallas Pets Alive;

Stewpot; Attitudes & Attire (Boots to Heels); Dallas Bar Association; Dallas Trial Lawyers Association; Dallas Women Lawyers Association; St. Thomas More Society; We Care; Mexican American Bar Association; DFW Muslim Bar Association; Texas Muslim Women's Foundation; NAACP; LULAC; Texas Bar College; Texas Trial Lawyers Association; JL Turner Legal Association; the Dallas LGBT Bar Association; Carrollton-Farmers Branch Rotary; Dallas Democratic Forum; Annie's List; TOP; Metrocrest Services; Metrocrest Chamber of Commerce; and Coppell Chamber of Commerce, just to name a few. That is what led me to get more involved in helping elect strong Democrats by block walking, holding fundraisers, and supporting Democratic causes. Eventually I found my way to Austin with organizations like SickOfItTexas to fight for Medicaid expansion, lead a statewide women's caucus group to lobby for our rights, joined the fight for common sense gun legislation as an Everytown fellow after losing my father, and stood shoulder to shoulder with public education advocates to say no to vouchers, and demand the funding of our schools and pay for our teachers. I have been intentional about the work I've done and the causes I support because we are in the battle for our lives here in Texas. I have been showing up for our community well before I decided to run for this office. I've always believed that actions speak louder than words - I don't want to hear what you will do, I want to know what you have done. I also know that not all Democrats are the same, something the LGBTQ+ community has seen first-hand especially this last legislative session. That is why it is so important to fully vet which Democrats we are sending to stand up to the attacks that we know are ahead this next session and all the special sessions to follow. I have the heart, passion, experience in Austin, reputation amongst the community as well as my future colleagues, and have done the work to prove I have what it takes to fight for our beautiful diverse community.

KR - I grew up in Carrollton, lived in Irving, and now live and am raising my family in Coppell. Those are 3 of the 6 cities that are in HD 115. I also went to schools in CFBISD, which is one of two main school districts in HD 115. I have seen where this district has been and will continue to invest in its future. For example, I grew up near the H Mart in Carrollton and remember how it was an empty shopping mall. Now, it is an incredible destination in my hometown.

Based on my incredible public-school experience in CFBISD, I went to the University of Notre Dame and then NYU Law. I clerked for a federal judge (Judge Barbara Lynn, a Clinton appointee), and worked at law firms before joining the Air Force as a JAG and the Department of Justice as a criminal prosecutor.

As a prosecutor, I have seen first-hand many issues that affect Texans – fentanyl trafficking, overdoses, gun violence (ghost guns, manufacturing firearms, straw purchasing, personal collection loopholes), public corruption, elder fraud, unsafe working conditions, environmental crimes, cyberstalking, child sex trafficking, cybercrimes, healthcare fraud, police misconduct, and identity theft, among many others.

As a result, I can speak first-hand as to why we are less safe in our state because of our gun laws as well as why so many people are overdosing on pills laced with fentanyl. I have stood up to corrupt politicians who have used their office for personal gain, as well as fought for victims who don't normally have a voice, including immigrants preyed upon by false promises of identities, workers in unsafe working conditions, and children victimized by child pornography and online abuse. I know what laws we need and can speak with authority and experience as to why we need them.

Further, I also have experience in healthcare and want to use that experience to expand Medicaid, lower costs of prescription drugs, and restore reproductive rights. Finally, as a military member, I have trained as a servant leader, putting my country and community before myself. For all these reasons, I believe I am uniquely qualified to be a representative for HD 115.

Question 6: How long have you been a current member of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas? If you are not a member, will you pledge to join before the endorsement screenings? If no, why not?

CH - I have been a formal member officially this year but have been an ally and supporter for much longer.

KR - I proudly joined Stonewall Democrats this past summer. I've long admired and followed Stonewall, given that my brother is gay, but have not been formally active in the group given my recent government employment. I've since convinced my family members to also join.

Question 7: Please share any experience that illustrates your understanding of and interest in the needs of the LGBTQ+ community in your District/Role sought.

CH - I will never know truly the lived experience of the LGBTQ+ community but through my activism in North Texas and the great organizations I have had the privilege to be part of as well as the amazing people I have met along the way, I have learned how to listen, uplift, and show up for those who need it most. I don't pretend to know everything that the community needs but that's why I invest my time and efforts in being a better ally and taking the time to share space with those who will make sure that I am truly addressing the needs and well equipped to fight the attacks that we all know we will encounter in the legislature. It has been an honor to be part of Dallas LGBTQ+ Bar Association, Stonewall, support organizations like Lambda Legal, Equality Texas, LULAC – Dallas Rainbow Council, Carrollton Pride, show up for the community with Moms Demand at the Dallas Pride Parade, Stonewall PPH Drag Show, LGBTQ+ Stonewall Trevor Project meeting just to name a few. I am a loud and proud ally because we have to be – the LGBTQ+ community is the most attacked community in Texas.

KR - I have long been an ally to the LGBTQ+ community. I recall high school friends coming out to me in the 1990s as well as friends in college and law school. Seeing this, my younger brother, Scott, came out to me when he was in his early 20s. He told me I was one of the first people to whom he came out. In the process of responding to this questionnaire, I asked Scott why he came out to me first. (To me, the important thing was that he came out!). He said: "Kate, I knew I was safe in coming out to you." Each coming out story is unique, and I am humbled that I was part of my brother's. This is the ultimate message I want to convey to the community – you are safe with me as a representative in Austin and I will be a protective big sister for all of you. I have not only witnessed his marriage but the marriage of several LGBTQ+ friends, one of whom I was a reader at her wedding. I will fight every day to ensure that theirs and your marriage rights are protected.

Further, I am in the Air Force, but I only joined after "Don't Ask Don't Tell" was eradicated. Since joining, I have had the honor of helping transgender Airmen obtain access to uniforms and facilities after they transitioned. In my law firm, we also participate in the transgender legal name change project.

Finally, I have knocked on doors across my district and as a result have spoken to many LGBTQ+ voters, who are supporting me. One family of a transgender son told me about how their son grew up in the Coppell area but refused to go to college in Texas, given the Republican's recent legislation on gender affirming care and attack on families of transgender children. This is unacceptable. I have seen how recent state legislation is actually affecting our district and intend to use my office to amplify those voices, repeal anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, and prevent further harm.

Question 8: Once you are elected, what are some of your plans specific to your office's responsibilities?

CH - I plan on continuing the work that Rep. Julie Johnson has done in Austin on standing up for the LGBTQ+ Community, fighting for Medicaid Expansion, public education, safety, and working against Republican's hostile agenda. Specifically, I intend on remaining highly accessible to the people of HD115, making sure our offices both in Austin and in district are diverse, inclusive, and welcoming, work to bring state dollars back to the District to fund quality-of-life projects, and pass legislation to provide for more economic mobility and opportunity for the highly diverse population in HD115.

KR - As a member of the minority party (for now), my priority would be in protecting minority groups targeting by the Republican party, i.e. the LGBTQ+, immigrants, black and brown voters, and women.

As far as substantive policies, one of my legislative priorities is in enacting common sense gun safety legislation. I believe the Republican attack on minority groups and gun violence are intertwined – the lack of common-sense gun safety laws allows extremists to target our vulnerable communities.

I also want to be a voice for those less heard. My father, Louis Rumsey (a Stonewall member), went to Austin to advocate for the underserved community on Medicaid. He was a pharmacist in Southeast Dallas whose patient population were children with special needs on Medicaid. When he went to Austin, he discovered that he was not in the most powerful and wealthy lobbying group in Austin and therefore was not heard. Seeing that, I vowed to be a voice for those not often heard.

Government should be accessible to everyone. I appreciate that having a democracy means that we protect minority interests against the tyranny of the majority. Republicans use fear tactics, making boogeymen out of disenfranchised groups to win elections. I see my role as not only advancing Democratic interests but also being available and accessible to everyone in my district.

Instead of those fear tactics, I intend to legislate on: voting rights, LGBTQ+ rights, reproductive rights, gun safety, funding for public schools, and health care.

Question 9: When elected:

A. how will you recruit, retain, and create a supportive environment for LGBTQ+ staff and affirming staff?

CH - I will ensure that any applicants and employees of my office know that our office is a safe place of all gender and sexual orientations and identities, at home and in Austin, and ensuring that this information is available on employment applications. I would love to create a pipeline between ally organizations including Stonewall to bring LGBTQ+ interns & staff into our spaces so we can encourage them to be part of the process and build future leaders.

KR - I will set expectations with each of my staffers early in their employment to create an affirming environment for diversity, including LGBTQ+ staff and colleagues. I would also reach out to the Austin and college LGBTQ+ groups to seek out the applications of staff and interns. I have already received support from many staffers in Austin as well as former and current office holders here in Dallas that identify as LGBTQ+. Creating a team that is representative of the community is a priority for me.

B. Would you be willing to appoint a liaison to meet with the LGBTQ+ community on an ongoing basis? If not, why?

CH - Yes – I will ensure that my District Director will meet with the LGBTQ+ community in HD115 and in North Texas regularly to ensure that everyone's voices are heard in Austin. I also want to be the main face within the community, and I will do this by making sure I show up whenever possible. That is why I am the candidate that has been actively engaging our local community at Carrollton Pride, during their dinners, and various events.

KR - Absolutely. Not only would I appoint a liaison, but I personally will be available to meet with the LGBTQ+ community in an ongoing effort to make sure my door is always open to them (figuratively and literally). I hope to provide regular updates to Stonewall as well as provide days where groups like Stonewall are welcome in Austin.

C. What non-discrimination policies will you support for employment and protection of LGBTQ+ constituents based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression?

CH - A comprehensive non-discrimination policy for employment and housing so that no one in the LGBTQ+ community faces discrimination when seeking employment, housing, or any other use of public or private facilities.

KR - I would support legislation that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation as well as gender identity and expression. While federal law already prohibits such discrimination, we should join the 23 other states that explicitly prohibit it as a matter of state law as well.

Question 10: If applicable to your office, how would you lead or support legislation and/or constitutional amendments pertaining to: A. LGBTQ+ Couples adopting and providing foster care to children?

CH - I would firmly support this legislation.

KR - The foster care system is already overwhelmed. If there is a loving home that wants to welcome a child, then it should not matter if they are LGBTQ+ or not. There should not be a distinction for those wanting to adopt or provide foster care.

B. Supporting the repeal of the sodomy law that was ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court?

CH - I would support this legislation that Rep. Jessica Gonzalez has filed in multiple sessions.

KR - After Lawrence v. Texas, sodomy laws are unconstitutional. However, we cannot take for granted what could happen in the future with the Supreme Court, especially after the Dobbs decision overturning Roe v. Wade. Therefore, I would introduce legislation that repeals sodomy laws that still exist.

C. Supporting the repeal of the Texas Marriage/Civil Union Amendment?

CH - I would support this legislation that Rep. Jessica Gonzalez has previously filed.

KR - Similarly, the landmark Obergefell decision requires states, including Texas, to recognize marriages between same sex couples (like my brother's). After Dobbs and the recent appointments of Trump's judges, we cannot expect that Obergefell will be a decision that stands the test of time (despite our efforts to elect Democrats who will appoint better judges). Article 1, Section 32, of the Texas Constitution defines marriage as only between one man and one woman. I would support laws repealing that part of the Texas Constitution and supporting an amendment consistent with Obergefell.

D. Supporting safe schools for LGBTQ+ students, staff, and families?

CH - I would support this legislation.

KR - LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to experience violence, bullying, and negative mental health. Therefore, I would support legislation that creates safer and more inclusive schools for LGBTQ+ youth and staff. For example, we should encourage initiatives that permit teachers and staff to identify publicly as safe allies to LGBTQ+ youth and families, so there is an atmosphere of inclusion. There should be funding for professional development of teachers and staff to use inclusive language and identify risk factors for LGBTQ+ youth. I also believe that book banning, especially of LGBTQ+ books, should not be permitted. Finally, I would vote against bathroom bills that discriminate against transgender youth.

E. If applicable to your office, how would you address recent laws enacted such as laws requiring transgender Student Athletes to participate in sports based on their gender assigned at birth?

CH - I firmly oppose this legislation and any other attempts to attack the transgender community by pretending to care about women in Texas.

KR - I would support the repeal of the Texas law banning transgender athletes from playing on school sports teams that align with their gender identities. This law is discriminatory and does not let children just be children, without fearing discrimination. This law also is based on stereotypes regarding physical abilities, which change rapidly for children through college. Variations between physical characteristics among youth are expected and should not form the basis to prohibit transgender student athletes from playing sports that align with their gender identity.

F. How would you address Texas Abortion bans that interfere between a private individual's right to all healthcare options as medically determined between the pregnant person and their healthcare provider?

CH - I will do everything in my power to repeal the legislation that banned abortion in Texas a year before the Dobbs Decision.

KR - I am against Texas' abortion bans. My mom was a labor and delivery nurse at our Dallas County hospital, Parkland. My family has long been pro choice, and I have learned from my mother, my experience, and the experiences of countless parents, that the government has no business in the hospital room. What happens should be between a woman and her doctor, not a woman and government. It is wrong to legislate as if all pregnant women and pregnant experiences are the same. I support a woman's right to choose.

I would push to have a constitutional amendment in Texas regarding abortion rights. Short of making a full right to abortion here, I would support legislation that further chips away at the blanket ban against abortion, including legislation that exempts rape, incest, and life of the mother, among others. I would clarify that fertility treatments are permitted, especially since my daughter exists due to the miracle that is IVF. Finally, I am against travel bans that would criminalize crossing the state border to obtain abortions.

G. What specific ideas do you have and/or what current legislation would you support to improve our state economy and address the income inequality and growing poverty rate in Texas?

CH - Increasing the minimum wage beyond the pitifully low \$7.25 it is currently, use the massive state surplus to provide housing assistance to low-income Texans – not just housing vouchers, but assistance in down payments, and closing costs. Finally, I would support restoration of the LIRAP (Low Income Repair Assistance Program) to help Texans keep their cars on the roads longer with lower emissions and higher fuel economy, a win-win for drivers and the environment.

KR - Affordable housing is a crisis here. Our state ranks 49th in state spending on housing and community development, just ahead of Nebraska, which has a fraction of the residents. Approximately 98% of spending on housing in the state comes from local government. Increasing the state investment in housing will help lower income inequality by addressing the largest cost for residents, i.e. housing, as well as increase more construction, more project development, and more jobs.

I would also support and/or author legislation that lowers the costs of childcare, lowers the costs of healthcare (see below), and provide tax relief to renters and not just property owners. Further, I would oppose extremist legislation that discourages companies from moving to Texas and providing employment here. For example, Rivian (an EV company) decided not to build a factory here because of voter suppression laws. Our economy suffers with the extremist Republican agenda.

Question 11: If applicable to your office, how would you lead or support efforts to provide better funding for health care and better health care options for all Texas residents?

CH - Three main ideas – restoring reproductive rights, expanding Medicaid, and working to draw down prior authorizations so Texans can access their healthcare much faster.

KR - I am the daughter of a pharmacist and nurse, each of whom had patients on Medicaid. I would expand Medicaid and accept federal funding under the Affordable Care Act. In addition to ensuring health care coverage to all, I would also address the costs of health care by doing several things.

First, we need transparency in health care prices – we have more knowledge in how much our groceries cost than we do our health care. I believe more knowledge in the costs of health care will give patients more agency in choosing where and with whom they will seek health care. Second, I would address the monopolies and hegemonies that are taking over our hospital systems, especially in rural areas where there are few options and increased prevalence of price gauging. I would also lower prescription drug costs, like what our legislature enacted with insulin. Finally, I would raise provider rates for Medicaid so that more providers would take Medicaid. By lowering rates so low, there are fewer providers who take Medicaid and therefore there is less health care available.

I have first-hand experience with this as a military member on TRICARE insurance (the government health care insurance for military members). My family has few options for health care providers, similar to Medicaid. When I gave birth to my daughter, I found out in the hospital that my pediatrician would no longer see my daughter given that they did not want to take any more TRICARE patients. I will use my own experience to advocate for all families who do not have healthcare options.

Question 12: What are your ideas to respond to evidence of climate change?

CH - Building new green energy facilities in Texas, supporting building up instead of building out (this would also combat sprawl), and supporting mass transit, such as increased bus and train services for DART and high-speed rail linking DFW to Houston and Austin/San Antonio.

KR - We have many natural resources in Texas, including wind, coast lines, and sun. Given that, I would support legislation that develops and incentives uses of other energy sources in Texas, which are being over-regulated by Republicans. I am an electric vehicle owner and my brother-in-law used to work for Tesla and now works for Rivian. Our family values the use of electric vehicles to reduce our carbon footprint, and I would support legislation that encourages the production and purchase of such vehicles in Texas. We should also invest in the electric vehicle infrastructure, so that EV drivers can easily drive across our vast state and not worry about where to charge. I would also support programs that prioritize recycling, especially for single use plastic. I had an EPA case and saw first-hand that there is a lack of infrastructure for the buying and selling of recyclable products. We should invest in a market that connects buyers and sellers of recyclable goods. Finally, I would support carbon capture initiatives.

Question 13: If applicable to your office, what specific ideas do you have to strengthen the reliability of electric power supply to all Texans?

CH - Construction of wind energy turbines along the Gulf of Mexico (this will also disrupt and weaken hurricanes), and more solar energy generators. We have seen that green energy is much more reliable than fossil fuels.

KR - First, I would support connecting our grid to the national grid. Republicans are against the national grid in order to avoid federal regulation. Short of connecting to the national grid, I would support reversing the centralization of power on ERCOT's board as well as require a consumer representative on the board to better represent the population's interests. I would also incentivize the diversification of energy sources, i.e. when coal power cannot sustain demand, then solar and wind can bridge the gap, and vice versa. We saw that happen this past summer. But in order to truly utilize off-cycle energy, we should invest in storage. In my district, Coppell has considered energy storage and I would support safe storage of energy here, which can be drawn upon in peak demand. Finally, I would incentive the use of power at off peak times, such as during the evening. This can be done through cost saving measures. For example, EV drivers are encouraged to charge their vehicles over night when demand for energy is low and do so with discounts and lower prices.

Question 14: If applicable to your office, how would you lead or support legislation restoring previous funding for HIV prevention in Texas including access to PrEP?

CH - Rep. Venton Jones has filed multiple bills on this subject matter, and I look forward to enthusiastically supporting them.

KR - I would support legislation for HIV prevention funding, including for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). I understand that in Texas, all HIV funding flows to the Department of State Health Services, which relies on federal and state grants for HIV prevention funding. We should also invest in HIV testing, like with legislation that Rep Venton Jones authored last full session.

Question 15: In light of the Supreme Court decision in December 2023 against reparative/conversion therapy, how would you lead the fight against reparative/conversion therapy in Texas?

CH - We must ban conversion therapy in this state. I will support legislation seeking to outlaw the practice in Texas.

KR - I would support efforts, as we saw in previous sessions, to ban conversion therapy. For example, HB 496 (Rep. Meza) sought to eliminate health plan coverage of conversion therapy, and HB 5026 (Rep. Bryant) tried to add conversion therapy to the definition of child abuse. The law at issue in the SCOTUS case was in Washington and it made practicing conversion therapy a reason to take away a therapist's license. I would support similar laws in Texas since conversion therapy is more likely to lead to severe physical and mental pain and suffering and suicide. This is a human rights issue and must be stopped.

Question 16: What are your ideas for immigration reform at the state level? How would you support the right of immigrants to seek asylum, hold employment, and have a clear path to citizenship?

CH - Operation Lone Star has been an expensive boondoggle of state resources. As an immigration lawyer, I know that immigration is in fact a national issue. We should be investing our time and efforts in working with DHS and the Biden administration to not only humanely process those which have valid asylum /refugee claims but coordinating on placement to minimize the burden on the state. I know of many great nonprofits who are able to help but we need sufficient coordination between all parties to make sure they are processed efficiently and able to go through the legal process of determining their eligibility. In the meantime, providing them work authorization not only allows them to contribute to society but also to provide for themselves until a decision has been made. USCIS already provides work authorization for certain immigrants and a pathway to a greencard and ultimately citizenship when they meet certain requirements.

KR - The federal government has jurisdiction over immigration matters. However, I would support expansion of asylum categories and work visas. We need more officials to process asylum application. We should also shorten the time for asylum applications and provide pro bono legal assistance to asylum seekers, since they often do not know what their rights are. (For example, my aunt Mary Meg McCarthy is the Executive Director of the National Immigration Justice Center, and I have worked with her and her organization to provide pro bono asylum assistance). Further, we should have more asylum centers to process applications within the United States and not in Mexico. Finally, we should find paths to citizenship for those already in the United States, a policy even Reagan supported in the 1980s.

At the state level, we can mobilize the national guard to actually help those on the border seek safety, instead of watching them drown or become tangled in barbaric and medieval buoys. We should also repeal the latest SB4, for many reasons. First, we already have illegal entry and reentry laws in the federal system (8 USC 1325 and 1326 – I don't agree that these should be criminalized even on the federal level, but they exist). A defense to those federal criminal laws is the legal right to be in the United States, including for asylum assistance. Federal immigration officials are trained (not always well) to ask about whether an individual has credible fear for asylum purposes, and they also have access to

individuals' immigration files, which show if that individual had been removed (previously known as "deported") or not. I don't agree with the current asylum system and will encourage federal officials to change the asylum process, as stated above. But in the meantime, state officials do not have the same access to those immigration files and therefore can't determine someone's immigration or asylum status, nor whether an individual COULD apply for asylum. SB4 does not have a defense for asylum seeking, only if someone has asylum already. As a result, these laws are just not enforceable in the state system. Instead, Republicans are using this to fearmonger, win elections on that fear, and racially profile. This will seriously disrupt our Hispanic communities in our state, decrease trust of law enforcement, as well as prevent legitimate pending asylum applications.

Further, the human smuggling statute with a 10-year mandatory minimum shows how extreme Republicans have become. An equivalent 10-year mandatory minimum on the federal level is for drug trafficking based on weight of narcotics (e.g. kilos and kilos of methamphetamine or cocaine. See 21 USC 841). "Smuggling" a minor should not be punishable at the same level as El Chapo's conduct (who was considered the most powerful and violent drug trafficker in the world and was convicted under that 10 year mandatory minimum).

Question 17: Would you lead or support legislation to require mandatory sexual harassment and Equal Employment Opportunity training similar to the resolution passed in the U.S. Senate that requires Senators, staff, and interns to complete training each session and submit certification to be published online that their office staff fulfilled the requirements?

CH - Yes. The Texas House already has mandatory in-person sexual harassment training.

KR - Absolutely.

Question 18: If applicable to your office, how would you address voter suppression in Texas and work to expand access to voting by all eligible voters?

CH - Repeal the anti-voter legislation passed in 2021, and work to automatically register Texans with a driver's license to vote when they turn 18. Additionally, convicts should be automatically registered to vote upon release of their sentence. I would also like to see the state adopt what Harris County did in making voting more accessible by creating drive thru voting booths.

KR - I would support the following: same day voter registration, automatic online registration, and universal mail in ballots. We should allow for flexibility in voting. Further we should repeal ID laws that disproportionately affect black and brown voters who most often do not have identification. We should also protect poll workers from false accusations of voter fraud. Finally, we should combat gerrymandering that disenfranchise minority voters.

Question 19: How would you showcase your endorsement by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas if received? Would you include the endorsement in your campaign media?

CH - On our social media, literature if able to receive in time, and digital presence. Yes, of course – it would be an honor to be endorsed by this prestigious organization.

KR - Absolutely. I will showcase the endorsement proudly on social media, mailers (like slate cards), and texts.

Question 20: Is there anything in your past or background that has not been covered by the previous questions that might – without careful explanation - cause our organization to reconsider or withdraw our endorsement of you?

CH - No

KR - None.

This completes the questions and answers for this race.

STONEWALL DEMOCRATS OF DALLAS

2024 Endorsement Screening

Judicial Questionnaires

5th Court of Appeals Pl. 11

Candidates:

Justice Cory Carlyle - CC

Judge Kim Cooks - KC

Note: The answers provided in this document are direct copies of the answers provided by the candidates. They have not been edited or changed in any way by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas.

Question 3: Pronouns

CC - he/him

KC - She/her

Question 4: As an organization affiliated with the Texas Democratic Party, Stonewall Democrats of Dallas will only endorse candidates who affirm an affiliation with the platform and policies of the Texas Democratic Party. Do you make such an affirmation? What is your previous voting history?

CC - Yes; Democratic Party

KC - I affirm, I am a consistent democrat voter.

Question 5: Please share any experience that illustrates your understanding of and interest in the needs of the LGBTQ+ community in your District/Role sought.

CC - Two touchstone moments for me have been the intersection between the LGBTQ+ community and law that came with the Lawrence and Obergefell decisions from the Supreme Court. Both issued on my birthday in their respective years and both were public reminders to us all how far behind our law has been in following social norms. They also highlight just how powerful the appellate courts are in enforcing the progressive norms I believe in and continue to be guideposts for me in my decision-making process.

KC - I have a stepdaughter who is a member of the LGBTQ+ community. I have presided over same sex divorces and custody cases. I am involved in the fashion/ modeling/ pageant/ bodybuilding industry, where I have quite a few friends who are members. I have attended a number of LGBTQ+ events and understand the interests and needs.

Question 6: Please list some of your qualifications and experiences pertinent to the office you are seeking:

CC - I am a career appellate lawyer, starting out working in the appellate section of the Dallas DA's office, where I handled appeals and worked on the post-conviction DNA testing team. We were far ahead of our time in looking back at these sensitive cases for the potential DNA had to confirm the truth, and I treasure that experience to this day. I then drafted appellate opinions for a veterans law judge in Washington, DC, and followed that up with a year as a prosecutor for the District of Columbia. At that point, I knew I wanted to help people instead of prosecute them, and I started my own law firm primarily representing indigent criminal defendants at trial and on appeal. Once my family and I returned to North Texas, I continued my indigent defense practice and also began to litigate civil appeals. I am well-versed in the compromise required for the work on a large, urban appellate court requires, and find the work getting into the minutiae of cases we handle endlessly fascinating.

KC - I have been a licensed attorney since 2002, where I have extensive trial experience in the areas of family, criminal, juvenile, and civil. I have been a State District Court Judge for the past 9 years.

Question 7: Once you are elected, what are some of your plans specific to your office's responsibilities?

CC - Success at being a professional writer and researcher that the modern appellate justice is comes from several sources. First, I will continue my daily research in the law that underpins our work. Second, I find reading non-legal writing to be very helpful in becoming a better writer, and I very much enjoy reading modern fiction. Third, and finally, I spend a great amount of time thinking through the issues we face in our cases, and how they will affect the people we serve. I have found this recipe of preparation and study to be most productive in keeping my skills sharp.

KC - I want to assure that the Court of Appeals is transparent and accessible to everyone.

Question 8: If elected how will you recruit, retain, and create a supportive environment for LGBTQ+ staff and affirming staff?

CC - Whenever I hire new employees, which is hopefully not very often, I ensure my job posting reaches the broadest population of attorneys possible. I could never favor any population over another, but when we hire employees, I nurture each person's personality so they can perform to their highest potential. To me, that includes fostering and supporting each person's individuality in their quest to best perform the important legal work we do in the courts.

KC - Staff is considered as family, so we would be mutually supportive of one another's lives.

Question 9: How would you handle a situation in which you or a subordinate felt the need to not fulfill all the lawful work duties due to "deeply held religious beliefs"?

CC - This question, at least in my interpretation, places me in the unfortunate position of predicting the answer to a legal question that could come before the court. I therefore must avoid giving that answer. To the extent I can say anything, however, I believe in my oath to uphold and follow the law, and would ensure a lawful act that could be performed was in fact performed.

KC - The lawful duties will be fulfilled.

Question 10: Understanding that administrative matters can take up a significant percentage of your work day, what are the most important policies or procedures you've identified as needing improvement?

CC - At the court of appeals, we do not handle much on the administrative side given that there is an ample staff tasked with doing that work. Both because I do not delve into it and because—to all appearances I have ever gotten—our court works like a well-oiled machine on the administrative side, I have nothing to highlight as "needing improvement."

KC - Making sure all staff has the support and training needed.

Question 11: Do you have ideas to improve access to the courts and court-related services? Yes. If so, what are they?

CC - I view access to our courts as a basic tenet of our society. We live in a world where we could have a camera trained on every court hearing, and I have advocated for just that at the court of appeals. For a time during the pandemic, we posted our oral arguments to the internet, but stopped doing that once we returned to in-person arguments. I have found myself in the minority when the question of broadcasting arguments has arisen and they remain available only via audio recording on the court's website.

KC - Improving access to the Courts is done by making sure the public is educated about the Courts and getting to personally know who are the public servants.

Question 12: Do you believe the composition of juries adequately and fairly reflects society at large? Why or why not? If not, what can we do to change this?

CC - The question regarding juries also requires me to delve into a legal question that may arise at the court, and thus, I must also decline to answer it. What I can say is that we the judiciary expect those summoned to jury duty to show up.

KC - The composition of jurors does not fairly reflect society. This is due to the inability of some people to take off work to serve on the jury. If the compensation to the jurors was increased then the pool would be more diverse and fair.

Question 13: What is your general judicial philosophy?

CC - My general judicial philosophy is to take the law and apply it to facts of the case. It removes much of the stress of searching for a certain outcome in a case, freeing me to simply follow the law. That said, there are unsettled areas of the law, and it is in these important chasms that judges bring their personal experience to bear on what the law should be.

KC - The Court should be accessible to everyone and everyone should receive justice. Justice misunderstood is justice denied.

Question 14: Is there anything in your past or background that has not been covered by the previous questions that might – without careful explanation - cause our organization to reconsider or withdraw our endorsement of you?

CC - No.

KC - Nothing in my past or background. I would like to clarify the lies or misinformation that has been told regarding a case I presided over involving a gender fluid 6-year-old. The case was tried to a jury. The jury decided that mom should determine the primary residence of both children. Judges do not have the authority to allow or deny a child to have gender affirming therapy. This decision is up to the parents as are many decisions per the constitution and the laws in Texas.

Question 15: How long have you been a current member of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas? If you are not a member, will you pledge to join before the endorsement screenings? If no, why not?

CC - I'm unsure how long I've been a member, though I know I am now. I know I reupped at some point earlier this year after some chunk of time since I was last paid up.

KC - I have been a member a few years

Question 16: How would you showcase your endorsement by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas if received? Would you include the endorsement in your campaign media?

CC - I would post it on all social media, which is the primary place I publicize my campaign. I'm not sure how much more media I'll be printing after the endorsement process is concluded, but if there is time, I would include it on print media as well.

KC - I absolutely would share it on social media

This completes the questions and answers for this race.

STONEWALL DEMOCRATS OF DALLAS

2024 Endorsement Screening

Judicial Questionnaires

TX Supreme Court Pl. 2

Candidates:

Randy Sarosdy - RS

Judge DaSean Jones - DJ

Note: The answers provided in this document are direct copies of the answers provided by the candidates. They have not been edited or changed in any way by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas.

Question 3: Pronouns

RS - he/him/his

DJ - He/Him

Question 4: As an organization affiliated with the Texas Democratic Party, Stonewall Democrats of Dallas will only endorse candidates who affirm an affiliation with the platform and policies of the Texas Democratic Party. Do you make such an affirmation? What is your previous voting history?

RS - Yes, I affirm an affiliation with the platform and policies of the Texas Democratic Party. I have voted only in the Democratic primary and for Democratic candidates my entire life.

DJ - Yes. Democratic

Question 5: Please share any experience that illustrates your understanding of and interest in the needs of the LGBTQ+ community in your District/Role sought.

RS - Some members of my family (like virtually every American family) are LGBTQ+. I am concerned that a Justice on the U.S. Supreme Court stated in his concurring opinion in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* that he believes the *Obergefell* decision should be reconsidered. Given that statement I believe it is imperative that judges elected in Texas ensure that all persons are treated equally under the law and that fundamental rights guaranteed by the Texas and U.S. Constitutions are fully safeguarded and protected.

DJ - Prior to taking the bench in 2019, the balance of my practice was focused on civil rights matters. During this time, I stood in support of Houston's equal rights ordinance better known as HERO. Supported by the Houston GLBT Caucus, after completing rigorous endorsement process, during my state district judge election.

Question 6: Please list some of your qualifications and experiences pertinent to the office you are seeking:

RS - I have 30 years of civil trial and appellate experience in courts throughout the nation and 15 years of experience in judicial education of judges in Texas. For further information please see www.randyforjudge.org.

DJ - Decorated U.S. Army Veteran with two tours of duty in Iraq, showcasing a proven track record in making life-or-death decisions. Successfully managed a diverse working group both in the U.S. and abroad during wartime, demonstrating composure under heightened pressure.

Legal experience spanning civil, employment, family, DTPA, Texas Medicaid Fraud, USERRA, criminal, military, and other cases. Proficient in interpreting case law across various legal domains, adept at determining relevant sources to address diverse legal questions.

Serving as a State District Judge since 2019, consistently exhibiting fairness and impartiality despite political pressures. U.S. Army Reserve Military Judge with demonstrated potential for selection as an Article I Judge. Completed the rigorous military judge course hosted by the U.S. Army for various military branches, showcasing a commitment to excellence.

Question 7: Once you are elected, what are some of your plans specific to your office's responsibilities?

RS - The Court should better reflect the values of all Texans. It should continue to improve access to justice for everyone, including self-represented litigants.

DJ - Currently, there is a perceived sense of "secrecy" surrounding the Texas Supreme Court. I intend to improve access for underrepresented communities by organizing visits and tours. Additionally, I propose initiating quarterly discussions with the community to address the court's most significant activities, within the limitations of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct.

Question 8: If elected how will you recruit, retain, and create a supportive environment for LGBTQ+ staff and affirming staff?

RS - I will seek to hire staff that reflects the diversity and talent of all Texans and to retain them by treating them with respect and dignity.

DJ - I would make sure to draw from a broader range of applicants, aligning with the diversity present in Texas.

Question 9: How would you handle a situation in which you or a subordinate felt the need to not fulfill all the lawful work duties due to "deeply held religious beliefs"?

RS - A public official or employee of a public office may not refuse to perform lawful work duties due to their religious beliefs. For example, a justice of the peace may not refuse to marry same sex couples while performing marriages for opposite sex couples due to their alleged religious beliefs. But in some situations -- such as working on Saturdays or Sundays -- if a person's sincere religious beliefs require them not to work on a given day, normally a reasonable accommodation may be made.

DJ - I would recommend forwarding the issue to the general counsel for a legal opinion. As a judge, it is crucial to apply checks and balances to employment practices, especially those that could lead to adverse employment actions. Furthermore, prior to hiring personnel, it is essential to establish a comprehensive list of anticipated job duties and conduct meaningful, situation-specific interviews that explore each duty and its potential impact on interactions with other employees.

Question 10: Understanding that administrative matters can take up a significant percentage of your work day, what are the most important policies or procedures you've identified as needing improvement?

RS - Have clear policies and keep staff informed of priorities so they can work as a team.

DJ - To date, I have not identified any policies or procedures that need improvement.

Question 11: Do you have ideas to improve access to the courts and court-related services? Yes. If so, what are they?

RS - Yes. At the Justice Court Training Center we created Self-Represented Litigant packets that explain in very clear simple terms what a person has to do to file or defend a case in Justice Court. We also provided very useful forms to assist parties in those cases. We need to continue such efforts and expand the resources available to self-represented litigants. We also need to continue to support Legal Services, and the excellent work of the Texas Bar, the Texas Bar Foundation and the Indigent Defense Commission to assist parties who need representation.

DJ - Indeed, transparency and accessibility are paramount. Judges should ensure an open channel between their courts and the community. Availability can be demonstrated through activities such as school visits to the courtroom, encouraging citizens to observe proceedings, and providing explanations on how to navigate court procedures. Moreover, it is crucial to be receptive to suggestions from representative groups and organizations within the community.

Question 12: Do you believe the composition of juries adequately and fairly reflects society at large? Why or why not? If not, what can we do to change this?

RS - This depends on the jury pool and the manner of selection of the jury. Does Batson extend beyond race and gender? The Ninth Circuit held that it does extend to sexual orientation in *SmithKline Beecham Corp. v. Abbott Laboratories*, 740 F.3d 471 (9th Cir. 2014).

DJ - Throughout my career, I've overseen over 60 jury trials and handled approximately 25 cases before assuming the bench. From my personal observations, I've noted that in many instances, juries don't consistently align with litigants, particularly when the litigant doesn't belong to a protected class or minority grouping. In order for this to change, a more meaningful quota system might be added to jury selection to assist in mitigating historic and systemic discrimination in the U.S. justice system.

Question 13: What is your general judicial philosophy?

RS - I believe in the rule of law, that the law applies equally to all regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin, and that no one is above the law regardless of status or prior office. If elected, I will apply the law fairly and impartially, without political influence or partisan consideration, and do my best to ensure that all persons are treated equally under the law and that fundamental rights guaranteed by the Texas U.S. Constitutions are fully safeguarded and protected.

DJ - My overarching principle is to advocate for and uphold fairness and impartiality within the justice system. In alignment with this, it is crucial to sustain a dedication to serving all individuals. This necessitates showing respect and attentiveness to every party that engages with the court.

Question 14: Is there anything in your past or background that has not been covered by the previous questions that might – without careful explanation - cause our organization to reconsider or withdraw our endorsement of you?

RS - No

DJ - No

Question 15: How long have you been a current member of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas? If you are not a member, will you pledge to join before the endorsement screenings? If no, why not?

RS - I am not a member but will certainly consider joining if invited to do so.

DJ - Yes. I have now paid to join online.

Question 16: How would you showcase your endorsement by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas if received? Would you include the endorsement in your campaign media?

RS - I would include the endorsement on my website and campaign material.

DJ - I would create a distinct announcement and incorporate it into my campaign materials once the endorsement has been officially confirmed. I would have it placed upon all my physical and digital media platforms.

This completes the questions and answers for this race.