

2022 Dallas County Candidate Questionnaire

Judge Mike Jones Justice of the Peace 4-1

All Dallas County Candidates

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

I ensure the LGBTQ+ community are allowed the rights as others as they join in union and get married. In that, I have married several LGBTQ+ couples and I welcome them in with open arms.

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?

Yes. I have always voted Democratic

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

I am the current Justice of the Peace. Also, I have a degree in Criminal Justice and I have a background in real estate that is important as I preside over Real Estate Evictions.

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

I will continue to expand my Teen Court Program I implemented. I will continue the implementation of a new case management system that will benefit all Justice of the Peace courts

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

media?

I will post via social media proudly

When elected, how will you recruit, retain, and create an inclusive environment for LGBTQ and LGBTQ-friendly staff?

If I have a position open, they are encouraged to apply

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

Yes

Will you have a non-discrimination policy for employment and protection of LGBTQ residents and protection based on sexual orientation or gender identity? If not, why?

Yes

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”?

My religious beliefs does not apply to everyone. I will handle the situation under the law.

Justice of the Peace Candidates

As many people faced evictions during the COVID pandemic, how would you or did you ensure that the process is fair and compassionate for people facing it?

I ensure that everyone has a fair trial. I held an eviction relief seminar to share resources to reduce the increase in evictions. Currently my court, has the highest number of approved applications through Dallas County’s Eviction Diversion program. In addition, I have North Texas Legal Aid on sight to assist tenants.

All Candidates

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?

No

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?

less than a year

2022 Dallas County Candidate Questionnaire

LaSonja Flowers-Ivory Justice of the Peace 4-1

All Dallas County Candidates

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

As a member of a double minority group, I am familiar with the importance of diversity and equity for all. As an educator for the last 25 years, I have worked with and advocated for the needs of students, staff and others who publicly and privately identify as LGBTQ.

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?

Yes, I affirm and I have consistently voting with the democratic party.

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

As a teacher of elementary and high school students, I understand how important it is to build relationships with stakeholders, create a healthy working environment where everyone feels they are a part of team. As an administrator, I have experience with truancy, writing and implementing policies and procedures. I believe the two most important qualifications I consider pertinent to the office is care and critical thinking.

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

I plan to do a listening tour with representatives from each stakeholder group so that I can hear their concerns, needs and

suggestions. According to the 2019 audit, there is a need for training and I will lead this by example and continually add to my knowledge base. With support from the commissioners, I also plan to seek alternative ways to meet the needs of the community. For example, providing night court and extending office hours.

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

i would absolutely showcase my endorsement by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas on my social media.

When elected, how will you recruit, retain, and create an inclusive environment for LGBTQ and LGBTQ-friendly staff?

It is my desire to partner with different organizations, such as Stonewall, to assist with recruiting. As a member of a marginalized group, I will be intentional about creating and modeling a family environment that is LGBTQ friendly. We will collaboratively create our group norms and everyone will be held to the same expectations. I have found and research has proven that when people feel a sense of belonging, retaining them is not a problem.

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

Absolutely and I will also join some meetings and require the liaison to keep me updated. I value relationships and want the LGBTQ community to walk into 4-1 feeling as if it is really the "People's Court".

Will you have a non-discrimination policy for employment and protection of LGBTQ residents and protection based on sexual orientation or gender identity? If not, why?

Absolutely!

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"?

This is a difficult question to answer on paper, but sometimes my method may change depending on the situation. In an effort to

clearly communicate my thoughts, I would like to revisit this in the interview.

Justice of the Peace Candidates

As many people faced evictions during the COVID pandemic, how would you or did you ensure that the process is fair and compassionate for people facing it?

I would ensure that the process is fair and compassionate by making sure I am familiar with each case, the applicable laws and listen carefully. I would also look for opportunities to offer workshop to tenants in order to deepen their understanding of rental agreements. In addition to workshops for tenants, I would seek to offer similar workshops for landlords. My plan is for this to be a collaborative project with other Justices.

All Candidates

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?

No

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?

I am not currently a member. I would want to know the expectations of members and I yes I would be open to joining if I can meet the expectations.

2022 Dallas County Candidate Questionnaire

Edward Wright

Constable precinct 4 Dallas County

All Dallas County Candidates

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

Having a daughter that's a part of the LGBTQ community has given me the opportunity to understand the plight as well as the struggles of the LGBTQ community.

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?

I've always belonged to the Democratic Party, and I agree with the policies that we strive to achieve.

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

I've been in law enforcement for nearly 33 years, having worked in various fields that have allowed me to gain a ton of knowledge. I'm the current Constable serving precinct 4 since being elected in 2018. I've written policies and managed budgets and I over see our department that has over 20 officers and 5 clerical workers.

I'm a graduate of Texas Constable Leadership Command College. This college has given me an additional tool to serving our officers and the community.

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

Along with the other policies I've put in place...(10 hour work

days, evidence room log in/out sheet) I'll continue studying the importance of transitioning our office to paperless and our squad cars to alternate fuel.

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

I'd announce the endorsement on social media along with placing the endorsement on our push cards.

When elected, how will you recruit, retain, and create an inclusive environment for LGBTQ and LGBTQ-friendly staff?

I'll continue to create a workplace that is accessible and inclusive for all employees, especially those that may have traditionally been excluded; thus allowing everyone to feel appreciated.

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

My office has a community advisory board that meets three times a year. We discuss current issues affecting our society and different ways to improve the relationship between the police and all communities. Appointing an LGBTQ community member to our board as well as assigning a member of our department to meet with the LGBTQ community will be a win for our precinct.

Will you have a non-discrimination policy for employment and protection of LGBTQ residents and protection based on sexual orientation or gender identity? If not, why?

Yes, and I believe it shows that my department won't have any bias towards anyone. Equal playing field for our employees as well as our community. Everyone will be treated fairly.

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"?

As a law enforcement officer religious beliefs have to be put into perspective. I can believe a person has the right to burn the American flag, but if burning the flag causes someone to get hurt my religious beliefs have to be put aside and I'll have to do what's right as an officer.

(I used burning the flag just to make a point). I realize that as the head of a department we need to understand that everything isn't black and white, and being open minded and willing to listen is essential to a successful office.

All Candidates

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?

No

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?

Recently joined.

2022 Dallas County Candidate Questionnaire

Edward Wright

Constable precinct 4 Dallas County

All Dallas County Candidates

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

My experience is serving the community for over the last 13 years and treating each person fair and equitable. My interest continues to be the needs of all communities. I've read several articles dating back to 2019. The first Department I read about was in Trenton New Jersey and the Attorney General issued directive "LGBTQ Equality Directive".

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?

Yes, Previous voting history is Democratic Party.

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

I'm an Active Master Peace Officer, with at least 13 years as an Officer. I complete at least 40 hours of TCOLE approved Continued Education yearly. I've been trained in Crisis Intervention Training and De-Escalation training. I've been trained in Basic and Advanced School Resource training.

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

Make sure my staff share the same mission of partnership with the community and including all people. Make sure Civil Papers are processed in a timely manner. I would make there is a good

working relationship with the courts.

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

Yes, on all social media.

When elected, how will you recruit, retain, and create an inclusive environment for LGBTQ and LGBTQ-friendly staff?

If elected I will be transparent and create an environment that is inclusive of all people. Advertise practices of accepting members of the LGBTQ community. Allow LGBTQ community to come in and train all staff on best practices for communicating respectfully.

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

Yes

Will you have a non-discrimination policy for employment and protection of LGBTQ residents and protection based on sexual orientation or gender identity? If not, why?

Yes.

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”?

As a Peace Officer I understand that my sworn duties must be upheld at all times. Morally I understand and respect an individual’s freedom to choose one’s religion, I further understand that my obligation is to follow the law and to protect the communities in which I serve.

All Candidates

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?

No

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?

I'm not a member, yes I would pledge to join

2022 Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

LaNasha Houze

Probate Court no. 2

All Judicial Candidates

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

The LGBTQ+ community experiences discrimination and hardship just as I have as a Black women from the South. I believe my personal experiences of being call the N-word or other expletives or being told that I cannot be in certain spaces because I am Black, helps me to have empathy towards others facing discrimination. I believe that no person should be discriminated against because of many factors including their gender, race, age, and sexual orientation. I have family, friends and colleagues in the LGBTQ+ community, and I have personally experienced having a high school classmate murdered because how she identified as an adult was different than how the doctors identified her gender when she was born. In addition, I served as the Diversity and Inclusion Chair of Junior League of Dallas last year (2020-2021), and next year I will serve as the Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion for the Junior League of Dallas. My efforts in those roles has been to foster an environment of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging in JLD. My goal is to ensure all persons who do not fit into the stereotypical image of a member of JLD see representation of themselves in leadership and feel welcome as a member.

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?

Yes, I have previously voted Democrat in local and national

elections.

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

I have been a licensed attorney since 2006. I have a significant understanding of the Dallas County Probate Courts and Clerks administrative system due to my previous work as the Director of Operations for the Probate Courts in Dallas County from 2018-2021. As Director, I served as the attorney for the Probate Court Investigators' Office. My legal duties included litigation involving contested temporary guardianship applications, contested successor guardianship applications, removal of guardians the person and estate, restorations of incapacitated persons, modifications of guardianships, creation of trusts for minors, creation of special needs trusts to ensure incapacitated persons qualified for Medicaid benefits, interstate transfers of guardianships, and intrastate transfers of guardianships.

Prior to working with the Dallas County Probate Courts, I served as a solo practitioner handling probate and family law matters from 2012-2018. I also worked as a Financial Restructuring Attorney with the New York and Washington, DC offices of Cadwalader Wickersham & Taft, LLC, the oldest continuously operated law firm in the United State from 2006-2010. I served on the Executive Cabinet for Jarvis Christian College as the Assistant Vice President of Development and eventually Vice President of Development from 2010-212. This role allowed for me to practice and grow my managerial skills.

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

A. Improve Court Docket Efficiency

Creating shorter wait times to finalize cases by doing the following:

1. Creating uncontested will prove-up docket days;
2. Permitting attorneys to schedule hearing slots that become available due to cancellations, even if the hearing was cancelled less than 2 weeks before the previously scheduled hearing date;

3. Following the rules and requirements for pleadings and notice as outlined in the Texas Estates Code (not creating additional requirements not already requested from legislature in the Code); and

4. Clearly indicate to attorneys the local rules and requirements to obtain a hearing and reviewing the pre-hearing documents timely to prevent hearing cancellations.

B. More Transparency with Court Administrative Process:

1. Provide checklists to attorneys so that they know when all requirements are met to set a will prove-up, guardianship and heirship hearing and have such information available on Court website;

2. Comply with Section 37.05 of the Texas Government Code, which states Courts shall annually post the attorney ad litem, guardian ad litem, guardian and mediator list at the Court and on the Court's website;

3. Maintain current local rules and procedures on the Court website;

4. More transparency between the Bar and Court regarding the Court docket process and availability for hearings; and

5. More transparency with Probate Clerk administrative process.

C. Foster an Environment of Mentorship to Increase the number of New Probate Attorneys

1. Create CLE opportunities sponsored by the Court, including CLEs where attorneys can obtain guardian ad litem certification;

2. Create more opportunities for attorneys new to the practice of probate to obtain Court appointments;

3. Transparency with the Ad Litem Lists, as well as dividing the lists by years of practice, should assist with this effort. Permit

newer attorneys more opportunities to obtain appointments for the uncontested and simple guardianship, heirship, and administrative matters to learn the process.

4. Actively recruiting minority and female attorney base to learn probate; and

5. Court to actively participate in CLE opportunities and information sessions offered by Dallas County community.

D. Create a Healthy and Congenial Work Environment for Court Staff

1. Decrease the amount of employee turnover to ensure and promote a well-trained staff who can effectively assist both the Court and the public in the handling of their affairs.

E. Prioritize Relationship between the Court and the Bar

1. Lunch meetings with leadership from Dallas Bar Association, including but not limited to the Probate Trust and Estates Section Council, J.L. Turner Legal Association, Dallas Association of Young Lawyers, Dallas, LGBT Bar Association, Dallas Women Lawyers Association, and Dallas Asian American Bar Association, and Dallas Hispanic Bar Association quarterly

F. Prioritize Relationship with local Law Schools and Non-Profit Organizations Who Assist Indigent Dallas County Citizens

1. Lunch meetings with leadership

2. Create a formal legal intern program for Probate Court No. 2 with set curriculum and agenda. Program will take into consideration current Covid-19 safety protocols and the evolving use of remote technology.

G. Increase the Number of Public Service Campaigns to Inform

Dallas County residents about the Probate Process and the Resources Available to Assist Them When They Need Help.

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

I would include the endorsement on my social media pages and website.

When elected, how will you recruit, retain, and create a friendly environment for LGBTQ and LGBTQ-friendly staff?

First, during interviews, I will not ask individuals whether they belong to the LGBTQ+ community, as that information is not pertinent to whether individuals can complete the job. Secondly, I believe that I can retain and create a friendly environment for the LGBTQ+ community by having an open door policy, not micromanaging, focusing on the work needed for the community as opposed to focusing on a person's age, gender, race, sexual orientation, and/or physical abilities. Concerning recruitment, as a judge I would not recruit for a specific position. But I can make the Court more accessible to the LGBTQ+ community through increasing the partnerships that the Court has with the Dallas LGBTQ+ Bar Association by providing additional CLE training, more Court appointments for new attorneys, and assisting in any outreach efforts.

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"?

Religious beliefs should not affect a person's ability to serve and help the Dallas Community through the Probate Court system. People come to the Probate Courts because they are hurting. They have either lost someone due to death or their loved one is suffering from a mental and/or physical incapacity. Our obligation at the Courts is to help all of those people. Religion should not play a factor into whether we at the Court help the Dallas County Community. If a work duty is lawful and within the parameters of an individual's job description, then that job duty should be completed. Dallas County has guidelines on how to report insubordination (failure to fulfill work duties as outlined by

supervisor), and I would adhere to those guidelines in reporting any possible insubordination to Human Resources.

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

1. Court Docket efficiency 2. Attorney Ad Litem Appointment list 3. Cross-training of staff to ensure coverage during staff illness and absences 4. Clarity to Bar of Court policies and procedures for setting cases on docket and requirements for final hearing 5. Retention of staff 6. Improve efficiency on reviewing attorney fee requests and accounts for approval

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

I believe improving access starts by building a larger base of attorneys able to help with filings and providing community services. Our Probate Bar is small and not diverse. Efforts need to be made to provide opportunities for new attorneys to learn probate and help their communities.

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?

No, absolutely not. The statistics show that the juries do not reflect the Dallas County population. In order to change this, we need to push people to register to vote and to understand the importance of jury duty through community activism. And even if people do understand the importance, many times, people cannot afford to take jury duty due to inadequate pay or lack of childcare. Efforts should be made to inform the public of this issue as well.

What is your general judicial philosophy?

A judge is servant. Do not create new law from the bench. Have empathy towards the people who come before you in a hearing. Be willing and able to teach, to learn, to listen and to acknowledge mistakes.

All Candidates

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?

No

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?

Yes

2022 Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Ingrid Michelle Warren

Probate Court no. 2

All Judicial Candidates

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

As the Presiding Judge of Probate Court No. 2 for two terms, I have adjudicated several cases involving the rights and legal interests of same-sex partners. After the landmark ruling in Obergefell v Hodges, 576 U.S. 644, recognizing the fundamental right to marry is guaranteed to same-sex couples, I participated in a Dallas Bar sponsored continuing legal education involving a judicial panel discussing the impact of Obergefell. My role on the panel was to discuss the impact of Obergefell in probate matters.

On a professional note, I am a member of the Dallas LGBT Bar Association, sister bar to the Dallas Bar Association. In addition, I along with my staff, and law clerks had the honor of witnessing the marriage of the first same-sex couple in Dallas County between Jack Evans and George Harris in Probate Court No. 2's courtroom in June of 2015.

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?

Yes. My previous voting history involves an active support of the Democratic Party.

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

Professional Experience:

Presiding Judge of Probate Court No. 2 for 7 years

More than 10 years of experience in private practice with an emphasis on Probate and Estate Planning

Professional Associations:

Texas College of Probate Judges, Member and Presenter

National College of Probate Judges, Member

Dallas Bar Association, Member

Dallas LGBT Bar Association, Member

Education:

University of Texas School of Law

Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas

Judge Barefoot Sanders Law Magnet High School

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

If re-elected, I plan to continue building the infrastructure of Probate Court No. 2 to handle the large number of probate and guardianship matters in Dallas County. During my tenure, Probate Court No. 2 added a dedicated Associate Judge, a briefing attorney, an auditor's assistant and an administrative assistant. The increased staff allows the Court to efficiently handle more cases than any other Probate Court in Dallas County. I also plan to continue providing useful information for lawyers practicing before me. We are in the process of developing uniform checklists among the three probate courts to standardize the processes and procedures for routine matters.

Moreover, in community forums I will continue to highlight the importance of estate planning and inform the public on the probate process.

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

I respectfully request the endorsement of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas. If received, I will proudly display the endorsement on my campaign literature.

When elected, how will you recruit, retain, and create a friendly environment for LGBTQ and LGBTQ-friendly staff?

As an employer, my job is to retain existing staff. In the event of a vacancy, my goal is to identify qualified candidates without bias and to treat all employees fairly and with respect. Thereafter, our team's goal is to create a friendly environment for all Dallas County citizens.

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"?

I would work with the Dallas County Human Resource department to address the concerns.

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

Our biggest concern is handling the increased caseload for routine matters within a two to three week timeframe. For certain types of cases, our workload has increased significantly. In fact, with the complications caused by social distancing as a result of the Pandemic, Probate Court No. 2 was the first Probate Court to embrace virtual hearings. We are currently working with the Office of Court Administrations to streamline virtual hearings and integrate them into our daily practices.

Moreover, we are expanding our staff this month and adding a team member. I anticipate, within 9 months of onboarding and

training her, she will provide an additional resource for moving cases efficiently.

An additional concern is succinctly communicating our expectations to the bar. I plan to continue our Probate Summer School Program focused on the nuts and bolts of practicing before the probate courts. In 2020, Probate Summer School, a program I spearheaded, was the most attended virtual continuing education program co-sponsored with the Dallas Bar.

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

We can improve access to the court by providing written practice tools for practicing attorneys for routine matters. My goal is to continue to build out our website with useful practice tips for non-adversarial matters.

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?

Absolutely yes. It has been my experience that jurors understand the issues presented to them and the right to a jury trial is a necessary tool for a free and fair democracy.

What is your general judicial philosophy?

My general judicial philosophy as a probate judge is to substantively follow the law guided by fairness and compassion for the litigants. I do not believe the civil rules are there to allow parties to obstruct the legal process, but instead to make sure the process is fair.

All Candidates

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?

No.

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?

I am not a member. I am delighted to entertain joining, but my ability to actively engage is limited. Most weeks, Probate Court No. 2 presides over 50 to 75 cases. The demanding workload does not provide extra time for activities beyond the Court's official duties. When I join organizations, I prefer to participate as an active member and not as a financial member only. Moreover, I would respectfully decline an invitation to join during the endorsement process for the perception by the general public that the endorsement was obtained for reasons other than merit.

2022 Federal Candidate Questionnaire

Kathy Fragnoli
Congressional District 24

All Federal Candidates

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

As a workplace mediator for 27 years, I have witnessed discrimination by companies large and small. LGBTQ employees in many industries are unable to live authentically for fear of retribution (which I have seen hundreds of times in the work I do). Even after Bostock there isn't full protection under Title VII because it doesn't protect folks in companies with less than 15 employees.

I did a lot of work as a mediator during Don't Ask Don't Tell with the military. (Of course, once a military member was outed by someone, they were discharged.)

I have seen the pain employees have suffered in the workplace for just being themselves and I will never forget that.

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?

I will affirm the platform of the Democratic Party. I have voted as a Democrat since the first time I pulled the lever. I helped organize the door-to-door campaign for George McGovern in college in New England and have financially supported many candidates since.

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

I was a political science major at Boston College. I have practiced law in Texas since 1979. I have been a mediator for 27 years and was recently voted again by my peers (and listed in D Magazine) as “One of the Best Lawyers in Dallas in the Field of Dispute Resolution.”

I think congress and our party could use some help in the dispute resolution arena and I believe I bring that skill to the table.

My clients have included an out of state NFL owner, The Pentagon (Air Force and Army), the Los Angeles, Houston and Fort Worth police departments, and many other clients who have asked me to help resolve a dispute.

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

I would employ three strategies:

- Seek to understand before being understood.
- Reject with Respect, and
- Bring compassion, empathy and optimism to the job.

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

Absolutely. I would like nothing more than the bragging rights to having your support (and getting through this questionnaire!) in any forum.

When elected, how will you recruit, retain, and create a friendly environment for LGBTQ and LGBTQ-friendly staff?

I have many LGBTQ clients and friends which makes my outreach easy with their help.

I will create a friendly environment for everyone. My secretary, who is 72, has been with me for nearly 40 years.

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

Absolutely. Listening is my thing. I don't want to google your issues. I want to hear about them from you.

Will you have a non-discrimination policy for employment and protection of LGBTQ residents and protection based on sexual orientation or gender identity? If not, why?

Yes, and even the Supreme Court is catching on to this idea.

How can congress play a role to ensure that Rob v. Wade isn't overturned by the Supreme Court?

Pass the Women's Health Protection Act.

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

I am now on Medicare. Before that, as a self-employed person, my insurance had a \$5,000 deductible and cost me \$700 per month. Let's do a Medicare for All option in a test segment of the country and prove to the people in red hats (that cheered to make their insurance more expensive with less coverage) that they were duped.

Those that are one hernia away from bankruptcy rallied around the Republican platform. We need to understand the psychological makeup of these folks to stop false messaging from working again.

How would you lead or support an effort to establish universal or single payer health care for the United States of America? Should there be more improvements made to the Affordable Care Act?

The ACA has become very expensive and that played into the hands of cruel republicans, big pharma and the health industry (see above). To allay fears, give people a choice to keep what they have or try the Medicare for All plan. Word of mouth will sell single payor plans.

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

Listen to the objections. Reject with respect. Rally the average citizen and students by giving them a simplified explanation of the Act and provide real world stories from voters as to how they were impacted by legislative changes which made voting harder.

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

There will never be a bill that covers every need we have but if we don't give Americans hope that Congress has a heart (and soul) by passing this bill soon, the division in our own party will continue to fester and the average citizen's belief that government doesn't work will be validated. If we could pass a comprehensive bill as fast as we can design and build a

\$5 billion sports arena, we would be in much better shape as a democracy.

Do you or do you not support ending the filibuster?

I do. It is by design intended to bring government to a screeching halt. Do we need another tool to do that? It seems to come to a screeching halt all by itself.

What specific ideas do you have and/or what current legislation would you support for recovery efforts for the economy from COVID?

I think that an issue that plagues our economy is a simple yet overlooked one. Wall Street is laughing at us (all the way to the bank!) as credit card companies charge 29% interest on our balances. I would like to see a federal usury law passed that caps the interest rate on credit cards to no more than 6% above the average retail savings rate.

After all, \$10,000 in a Wells Fargo account earns about \$16. The same balance on a credit card costs about \$250.

What could congress do to improve COVID Reponse and to prepare for the next pandemic?

The government's COVID-19 response needs to be drastically improved. Different government agencies proclaim different solutions and people are confused. There should be one health agency that deals with pandemic guidance, and it should rely

primarily on peer reviewed science provided by neutral medical professionals rather than the drug companies who profit from their own evaluations as to the safety and efficacy of a drug.

PPE equipment should be stockpiled and not allowed to expire. Scientifically proven immune system supporting regimens should be shared (healthy diets, supplements, etc.).

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?

Here, Here!! I teach those courses to private and public sector organizations. I am quite familiar with the “What? I didn’t realize that!” response.

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)

My grandparents were peasant farm workers from Italy and came alone to our country in 1903 when they were 16 years old. According to Ellis Island records, my grandfather had \$12 in his pocket. My grandmother came on a separate ship and cut and sold her hair to make the trip. Although they never learned to read or write English, they raised a family of 13 and owned a house. My grandfather worked in the slate quarries in Vermont for \$1 per day. Immigration is very important to me and because of the backbreaking work of immigrants, our country became what it is today. Nearly all immigrants come here to work. We are now short of workers; somehow it hasn’t dawned on many Republicans that the puzzle is pretty easy to solve. We need to simplify our immigrations laws and come to the table with compassion and common sense.

A. I fully support the dreamers and the Dream Act. I support investment in hard-working men and women. Immortalized on the Statue of Liberty: “Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.”

B. Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

B. I fully support Temporary Protected Status of Individuals seeking protection from hostile governments. The United States remains a beacon of hope for many around the world, it is time our immigration laws reflect that.

What are your ideas to respond to evidence of climate change?

We must listen to climate scientists. The problem is that they are boring. In addition, their message leaves us feeling so doomed that we put our heads under the covers and feel helpless. We need to employ a PR firm that can simplify the message (think Southwest Airlines) and provide solutions and therefore HOPE.

All Candidates

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?

No.

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?

I would of course become a member.

2022 Federal Candidate Questionnaire

Derrick Gay

Congressional District 24

All Federal Candidates

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

When I began my career in the military, a person could be discharged for being themselves and admitting they were part of the LGBTQ+ community. I've been proud of the shift from DADT to allowing all people to openly serve in our military. I was also thrilled to see Secretary Pete Buttigieg grab the nation's attention and be treated as a presidential candidate with a legitimate shot to win the nomination. While the community has made great strides and I proudly count myself as an ally, there is much more work to do.

We've seen in this last state legislative session the rights of the Trans community under attack and President Trump also targeted the Trans community in the military. In the role I am seeking, I am running against a fear mongering and MAGA Trump Republican who voted to overturn a free and fair election. The very essence of our democracy is under attack. I am running for Congress to defend our democracy and each and every day I will fight for the people of this district.

We cannot turn back the clock on the progress that has been made in the LGBTQ+ community, and we need to continue to fight for progress to ensure all people are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve.

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?

Yes I do. I've been a Democrat my whole life, vote in the primary, and have been active in local campaigns.

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

I was the first in my family to graduate from college and joined the Marines on an ROTC scholarship after our country was attacked on 9/11. I spent 13 years in the Marines, deploying to Iraq, Asia, and across the country. I was in the reserves until 2020 when I was medically discharged. After leaving active duty, I went to Northwestern University's law and business school. I was working as an operations manager in South Dallas and transitioned to tax law a few years ago. I am part of a politically active national security thinktank, the Truman National Security Project, and have been active in local campaigns. I am a board member of my business school's alumni DFW chapter and have a good pulse of the business community. I've seen firsthand working families struggling and believe I can leverage these experiences and my blue-collar upbringing in my fight to create the economy of tomorrow that fights back against rising income inequality.

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

I think we have a real opportunity to build our country back better than it was before the pandemic. I support building the economy of tomorrow that creates good paying jobs, addresses the threats of climate change, and brings more families of North Texas along with the economic boom we've seen in the area. I fully support the bipartisan infrastructure law and for the first time in 20 years, we will invest more in our infrastructure than China, crucial to our ability to compete in a global economy. Universal pre-k and paid family leave need to pass immediately. I will support the John Lewis VRA that helps to protect our democracy and ensure that the people of this district are able to choose their representative.

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

I would proudly showcase the endorsement of Stonewall Democrats and covet that endorsement. I would post it on my website, social media, and include in our media press releases as well.

When elected, how will you recruit, retain, and create a friendly environment for LGBTQ and LGBTQ-friendly staff?

Representation is key and while I am an ally of the LGBTQ+ community, I think it is crucial to have someone who is LGBTQ+ on the staff. I absolutely would have an LGBTQ-friendly staff and wouldn't hire anyone who would discriminate against anyone for their sexual-orientation, identity, or any other attribute that makes people unique. Groups such as this one can be leveraged to identify possible staff candidates that are a part of the LGBTQ+ community and I plan to celebrate and engage with the community throughout my time in Congress.

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

Yes, I would.

Will you have a non-discrimination policy for employment and protection of LGBTQ residents and protection based on sexual orientation or gender identity? If not, why?

Absolutely.

How can congress play a role to ensure that Rob v. Wade isn't overturned by the Supreme Court?

I'm appalled by SB-8 and fully support codifying Roe v. Wade. The courts have already shown that they cannot be counted on to protect reproductive rights. As a member of Congress, I stand firmly for choice and believe that federal legislation is needed.

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

I'm supportive of state candidates who want to expand Medicaid in the State of Texas. As the highest uninsured rate in the country, it is completely unacceptable that so many people do not have medical insurance in the state. At the federal level, I would like to expand Medicare, allow Medicare to negotiate prices, and believe

that we need to overhaul the health care system. In this day and age, it is insane to me that there is not transparency in our health care system. A person shouldn't seek medical treatment and have no idea the amount of money they will have to shell out for care. I also heard recently that in France, there is a medical card that contains your medical records. Wherever you go, your medical records travel with you and if you change dentists, for example, all of your previous dental exams are available without having to request them. We need to revolutionize the health care industry, and I would like to lead on that effort.

How would you lead or support an effort to establish universal or single payer health care for the United States of America? Should there be more improvements made to the Affordable Care Act?

I believe that health care is a universal right and think that improvements should be made to the ACA. We need to do more to provide affordable healthcare to all Americans and the pandemic has made abundantly clear the dangers of having health care tied directly to your employment. With many people let go from their jobs due to the crushing pandemic, it was the worst possible time to lose your healthcare.

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

The reason I am in this race in 2022 is the attack on our democracy. The John Lewis VRA needs to pass to ensure that our democracy is strengthened.

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

No, there are so many people struggling and hurting right now. I don't think any piece of legislation will ever do "enough" to address the nation's needs. Government can be an instrument of good in people's lives. We can do more to better society, and we should.

Do you or do you not support ending the filibuster?

I'm on the fence about this. I certainly support filibuster reform. I think the old days where you had to maintain the floor and speak should be brought back so that there's a public face to

all this obstructionism. It is too easy to filibuster everything and nothing ever gets done. I'm ok with carving out exceptions to the filibuster to get the VRA passed. My main concern is that we have a Republican Party that is not constrained by the rule of law. If Republicans gain back the majority, I like the idea of having a process for Democrats to not allow repressive policies to be passed. I clearly recognize that the Republican Party could decide to end the filibuster and we would have lost our ability to pass legislation desperately needed in our country.

What specific ideas do you have and/or what current legislation would you support for recovery efforts for the economy from COVID?

I supported the American Rescue Plan and the Child Tax Credit. I believe the economy is rebounding and to keep the engines of our economy going, I believe we need to invest in infrastructure, invest in our workers, and create the economy of tomorrow that allows us to be competitive in a global economy. Creating green energy jobs is crucial for the environment, but will also help lead to economic growth in Texas.

What could congress do to improve COVID Reponse and to prepare for the next pandemic?

The federal government refused to step forward and help out states when Trump was president. I think there's a huge need for federal legislation that sets up an apparatus for providing aid and medical supplies to the states. We can't retreat back into an "American First" mentality. I've always believed in global aid and the pandemic clearly showed that actions abroad can have a devastating impact on our shores. We need to regain our footing in the international community, engage the rest of the world, and prepare domestically to fight the next pandemic. It is a shame that Presidents Obama or Biden were not in office when the pandemic began. There needs to be a coordinated and coherent federal response in future pandemics.

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?

Yes

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)

Immigration has always been key to our economy in Texas. Immigration leads to a stronger and more rich country. Particularly when nationally we are looking at labor shortages, we need to invest in immigration and open up more visas to high and low skilled labor. We need to eliminate the red tape from our immigration policy and I certainly support the DREAM Act. We need to show compassion and not villainize immigrants. We need to be a welcoming country and provide a pathway to citizenship for those undocumented students who are thriving in our country.

B. Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

Having a compassionate immigration program that provides a safe haven for immigrants from war-torn countries or places destroyed by natural disasters is key. I support the US returning on the world stage as a beacon of hope to all who seek a better life.

What are your ideas to respond to evidence of climate change?

I think the Department of Defense has done a good job of laying out how climate change is a national security issue. In my own background, I saw firsthand in Iraq how having a fuel-dependent military made us vulnerable on the battlefield. Because of that, not only do I think that climate change is a pressing problem, I also believe that the technology to solve it can also help our military forces by allowing them to be more self reliant.

The federal government has a huge role in investing in green technology and building a resilient infrastructure. The grid failure in Texas cost this state hundreds of lives and the extreme weather events will continue to accelerate and get worse. Creating green jobs will be great for the Texas economy, save lives, and provide for a better tomorrow. This problem won't be solved without cooperation from the business community and I would propose

forming a public-private partnership that aims to help the corporations in North Texas to make the transition into a greener world.

All Candidates

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?

No.

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?

I would join. The only reason I have not is that I live in Denton County and do not have much of an income to pay the dues of this organization and others after launching this campaign and having to step back from my law job. I do plan on being a member.

2022 Federal Candidate Questionnaire

Jan McDowell

Congressional District 24

All Federal Candidates

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

I have always had members of the LGBTQ+ community helping with my campaign, and will continue to do so. In general, I have a strong belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

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?

Yes. I have been supporting the Democratic Party for over a decade.

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

As a retired CPA, I will bring a financial perspective to issues. Working for 12 years as the controller of a mid-size organization, I was responsible for both the financial and human resources areas. I definitely took the employees' "side" in all discussions. Also, as a former District 24 candidate, I have spent several years building name recognition and good will all across the district.

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

To safeguard our democracy, there are many areas that need to have specific legislation keeping states from enacting voter subversion laws. For example, I will champion legislation to diminish the role of money in politics, to ban Members of

Congress from owning specific stocks, and to prevent future gerrymandering.

To preserve our planet, I will be advocate for legislation that will allow us to move from fossil fuels to alternative energy sources as quickly as possible. The health of the planet must absolutely be a higher priority than the profits of the fossil fuel companies.

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

I will feature your endorsement proudly on my website and on my Facebook page.

When elected, how will you recruit, retain, and create a friendly environment for LGBTQ and LGBTQ-friendly staff?

I will continue what I've been doing all along. I appreciate talented staff members regardless of their sexual identity or orientation. And I will not tolerate anyone who might be found to feel otherwise.

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

Absolutely!

Will you have a non-discrimination policy for employment and protection of LGBTQ residents and protection based on sexual orientation or gender identity? If not, why?

Absolutely!

How can congress play a role to ensure that Rob v. Wade isn't overturned by the Supreme Court?

A federal law, such as the Womens' Health Protection Act, would codify the rights in Roe v. Wade and ensure that abortion remains legal nationwide. The problem, as always, lies with the filibuster in the Senate. I would certainly advocate passage of the bill in the House.

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

I would advocate for the ability for Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices. Healthcare generally is a right for all, not a privilege for only those who can afford it.

How would you lead or support an effort to establish universal or single payer health care for the United States of America? Should there be more improvements made to the Affordable Care Act?

I support Medicare For All, with a Plan B of strengthening the Affordable Care Act. Everyone should have affordable health care, including for vision, hearing, prescription drugs, and mental health.

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

Hopefully by the time my term in Congress begins in 2023, that act will have already passed. If it hasn't, our democracy may or may not still be functioning. Voting Rights are the foundation of our democracy.

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

As I recall, the BBB Act has gone from 6 Trillion dollars, to 3 Trillion, to now 1.75 Trillion. It points out the fact that a budget is a statement of values and priorities. In my opinion, we can "afford" to do whatever is necessary to safeguard our planet, and to give all our people the means to support a reasonable life for themselves and their families.

By contrast, Congress seems to think we can "afford" to spend unlimited funds on the military, and on tax cuts. Then they scream that we can't "afford" to spend money on the things that will actually help people.

Do you or do you not support ending the filibuster?

Strongly support

What specific ideas do you have and/or what current legislation would you support for recovery efforts for the economy from COVID?

Mandates for vaccines, and for masks when and where necessary, are no-brainers. If people can go about their lives safely, our

economy will recover. It is unconscionable that people continue to die from a disease that is now preventable. To help repair the economic damage that has been done, I would favor cancelling all or part of student loan debts, and passing a \$15/hour federal minimum wage law.

What could congress do to improve COVID Reponse and to prepare for the next pandemic?

Our federal agencies that specialize in public health and infectious disease are in shambles. That was exacerbated by the Trump administration. But it seems that the problems started well before that. The book *The Premonition: A Pandemic Story*, by Michael Lewis, is a real eye-opener. We have people screaming from the rooftops, telling our government what we need to do, and they are being ignored. I would champion legislation to establish a structure that would make health planning a strong federal activity.

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?

Yes.

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)

DREAMers have been in our country for years or decades, with repeated screenings for renewals. They should not be on a “path to citizenship.” They should be made citizens yesterday!

B. Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

The general concept of immigration reform must begin from the acknowledgement that we need immigrants in the U.S. There must be a robust legal system to allow immigrants to enter each year in sufficient numbers. With a reasonable legal system in place, fewer people would choose to come illegally. People with TPS, from nations affected by armed conflicts or natural disasters, must be allowed to apply for asylum per international law.

Anything the U.S. can do to keep from inflaming corruption and poverty in other nations would help to stem the tide. People would generally prefer to stay in their home countries if they can make a safe and stable life there.

What are your ideas to respond to evidence of climate change?

Renewable energy sources such as wind and solar must be subsidized, and subsidies on fossil fuels must be stopped. Storage and transmission research and development must be on the top of budgeting priority lists. Following only the preservation of our democracy, dealing with climate change must be at the forefront of our national efforts.

All Candidates

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?

No.

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?

I am not currently a member. In the past, that has meant that I can't vote in the endorsement process, which I think is fair. It has not meant, though, that I can't apply for your endorsement. If that is now a requirement, I will join. To be honest, though, I think that somewhat taints the endorsement process, making it seem to be bought rather than earned. Other organizations also require candidates and attendees to join in order to vote on endorsements, and it really does seem like a mad dash push to "buy" an endorsement. I'd be interested to hear about the discussion, with pros and cons, of how this decision was made.

2022 Texas Candidate Questionnaire

Rochelle Mercedes Garza Texas Attorney General

All Texas Candidates

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

While we have made progress in the fight for equality in Texas, a lot remains to be done. In the recent Texas legislative session, we saw Republicans introduce more anti-LGBTQIA+ bills than any other state this year.

As Texas Attorney General, I will prioritize civil rights and that includes protecting equality through a fully-funded civil rights division. The attacks on reproductive rights are a signal of what's to come for the rest of our civil rights, including marriage equality, and I will ensure that all of the rights that many have fought so hard to defend do not disappear. This means using the full powers of the office to investigate, issue opinions, advocate and litigate, if necessary, attacks on civil rights and liberties for the LGBTQIA+ community.

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?

I come from a family of lifelong Democrats and have always voted Democratic. I will never shy away from my roots and what our party stands for - working families and ensuring everyone has a fair shot to get ahead.

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

I am running for Texas Attorney General to support Texas families.

I have been fighting for civil rights for all of my career - as an immigration attorney for children seeking asylum, as a partner in a small firm as a family and criminal defense attorney, and as a civil rights attorney working on class actions at the ACLU. I know what it's like to fight for individuals in Texas courts and also how to build a case that reinforces civil rights across the country. My work has had broad impacts, like the "Garza Notice," a requirement that teens in immigration detention have a right to access abortion care free of federal obstruction or retaliation, and also meaningful individual impacts, like helping Trans clients acquire name and gender marker changes on their documentation to not only affirm who they are but to live a life of safety. I understand that a threat to civil rights anywhere is a threat to civil rights everywhere.

As an expecting mother, I want to ensure that my daughter grows up with the freedom to determine her own course in life, to marry who she loves, to decide if, when or how to become a parent, and to grow up in a clean, safe environment. And I know that if I don't step up at this moment to run for an office that has such deep impacts on the lives of Texans, we won't have another opportunity to roll back the harm Ken Paxton has done with the power of his office.

We need someone in the AG's office that understands Texas families and what they need, that reflects the lived experiences of Texans and knows what's at stake. As a woman and a Latina from the border, I recognize we continue to get laws that are harmful to women, people of color, LGBTQIA+ and impoverished communities because we don't have representation that reflects our communities. That's what I want to change as the next Attorney General of Texas.

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

1 - Health Care

Health care is a human right. Period. Going to the doctor or picking up a prescription should never break the bank. We need to expand access to quality health care in rural areas, lower drug prices, ensure that vision and dental benefits are included in

health plans, and expand Medicaid to the nearly 1.5 million people in our state who need it.

As Attorney General, I will put an end to lawsuits from the AG's office against municipalities and counties that are trying to keep our children safe during COVID-19 — and I'll use this office to support our communities through any future health care emergency.

The fact is, if we're going to bring an end to this pandemic, we need to trust the science and follow the advice of qualified experts to keep our people safe.

2 - Civil Rights - Voting & Reproductive Rights

Voting Rights

Texas Republicans are trying to hold onto power by choosing which voters are heard and which have their voices silenced.

On day one as Attorney General, I will dismantle Ken Paxton's "election integrity unit" — which is really about enforcing the GOP's cruel voter suppression measures, instead of protecting voting rights — and replace it with a voter protection unit.

I will use the power of this office to ensure that voting rights are protected in the courts if there are further attempts to make it harder for any Texan, especially people of color, to cast a ballot.

It's also past time to bring an end to Texas' long history of gerrymandering that keeps the majority of Texans from exercising power in our state and federal elections. As Attorney General, I will be an advocate to replace the partisan redistricting process with an independent commission that respects the communities of our state.

Reproductive Rights

Abortion care is health care, and health care is a human right.

Reproductive choice is a moral imperative and an issue of racial, economic, and gender justice. I'm committed to restoring abortion access in Texas and defending the rights of women and pregnant people whenever they're threatened.

Our state's cruel six-week abortion ban is not only devastating for all Texans, but it has the potential to negatively impact the rest of the country and opens the door to challenging other constitutional rights like marriage equality, free speech, and second amendment rights. Other states have already followed suit and have enacted laws that challenge Roe v. Wade. As Attorney General, I will refuse to defend laws that infringe on Texans' reproductive rights and constitutional right to access abortion care.

This isn't a fight that's new to me. In the only abortion case he ever heard before sitting on the U.S. Supreme Court, Brett Kavanaugh tried to keep my client, an immigrant teen, from accessing an abortion. We won that case for my client and protected the rights of countless others like her. I've defended reproductive rights before and am ready to defend them for all Texans as Attorney General.

3 - Consumer protection

Our power grid should not fail in the middle of a deadly winter storm.

No one has been held accountable for the failure of the Texas power grid in early 2021. The Office of Attorney General has the power to investigate and hold those responsible accountable, but our current AG Ken Paxton has failed to take action. He has chosen money and power over the lives of Texans.

As Texas Attorney General, I will make consumer protection a top priority during my administration and investigate what went wrong with our power grid and ensure it never happens again.

But I will not stop there. I will also stand up for rural communities to make sure they have access to the infrastructure they need, like clean water. As a native from the Rio Grande Valley, I know that

rural communities often get overlooked and left behind and that will not happen under my administration.

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

Our campaign will proudly promote the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas endorsement in earned & paid media, social media, our website, campaign literature and with our supporters.

When elected, how will you recruit, retain, and create a friendly environment for LGBTQ and LGBTQ-friendly staff?

There is a need for change in the office of the Attorney General to bring back ethics and end the corruption culture set by Ken Paxton. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion begins at the top and I will set the tone for everyone else to follow.

I will make sure that the Office of Attorney General has a welcoming environment to members of the LGBTQIA+ community and set a culture of inclusiveness where people are celebrated for their diversity.

I will make an active effort to recruit and retain talent from the LGBTQIA+ community in the AG office and will have open and transparent hiring processes easily accessible to the public.

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

As Texas Attorney General, I will have a civil rights division that will have an LGBTQIA+ unit and a liaison to engage with leaders and organizations from the LGBTQIA+ community on an ongoing basis to receive input on needs and issues.

Will you have a non-discrimination policy for employment and protection of LGBTQ residents and protection based on sexual orientation or gender identity? If not, why?

Yes, I will have a non-discrimination policy for employment and protection of LGBTQIA+ employees, including protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

If applicable to your office, how would you lead or support state legislation

and/or constitutional amendments pertaining to: A. LGBTQ Couples adopting and providing foster care?

I support LGBTQIA+ foster and adoptive parents having the same rights and protections under the law as their heterosexual peers and will be an advocate and defender in court for equality as Texas Attorney General.

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

As Texas AG I will not be able to take legislative action on this, however I fully support removing the criminalization of “homosexual conduct” from Texas law, and I will not take any position contrary to what has been decided as constitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in Lawrence v. Texas.

C. Supporting safe schools for LGBTQ students?

Yes, I support making schools safe for LGBTQIA+ students, including teachers and staff. We need schools to consider the needs of LGBTQIA+ youth, and that includes having counselors with appropriate training to help students navigate the challenges they face at home and at school.

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

I support same-sex marriages and the repeal of any law that undermines that right and/or the same protections afforded to opposite-sex couples.

If applicable to your office, how would you address the recent passage of H.B. 25 regarding Transgender Student Athletes ability to participate based on their gender assigned at birth.

I will litigate against any law that attempts to undermine the rights of transgender people in Texas.

Student athletes should be able to participate in sports based on their gender identity and not necessarily with the sex listed on their birth certificate. We need to create a safe and welcoming environment for transgender students that are already at greater risk of depression, harm, bullying, and homelessness.

In general, transgender individuals deserve dignity and respect

just like anyone else in our society. Transgender people experience higher rates of suicide than the general population and stigmatizing them in this way will only isolate them more. It's critical to protect the rights of the most vulnerable in our society in order to protect everyone's rights.

If applicable to your office, how would you address S.B. 8, the state's Abortion Bill, including private citizen's ability to report anyone involved in supporting report?

As Attorney General, I will refuse to defend laws that infringe on Texans' reproductive rights and constitutional right to access abortion care — this includes, but is not limited to, using the power of the office to decline to defend the 6 week ban in court and/or challenging any private citizen suits brought under the law.

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, especially as respects recovery from COVID19?

One thing that this pandemic has made clearer than ever before is that our economy just isn't working for working families. We need jobs with benefits — jobs that let parents take care of their kids and pay workers a living wage. As it is, single parents working multiple jobs can hardly pay the rent. It's time to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for every worker in every job.

As Texas Attorney General, I will stand with workers and will use the powers of the office to protect them from wage theft and discrimination at the work place.

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?

Health care is a human right and I support universal government-administered healthcare for every American. As a starting point in Texas, I support the immediate expansion of Medicaid. We need to expand access to quality health care in rural areas, lower drug prices, ensure that vision and dental benefits are included in health plans, and expand Medicaid to the nearly 1.5 million people in our state who need it.

As Attorney General, I will put an end to lawsuits from the AG's office against municipalities and counties that are just trying to keep our children safe during COVID-19 pandemic. I'll go further and use this office to support our communities through any future health care emergency.

If applicable to your office, what specific ideas do you have to overhaul the Texas Power Grid?

Our power grid should not fail in the middle of a deadly winter storm.

As Texas Attorney General, I will make consumer protection a top priority during my administration and investigate what went wrong with our power grid and ensure it never happens again.

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

I understand health care disparities on a very personal level. I grew up with a sibling with disabilities and I saw how hard my family fought to get the health care my brother Robby needed. No one should have to fight so hard to get something so basic as a wheelchair lift, yet so many people go through similar struggles everyday.

Health disparities faced by the LGBTQIA+ community are serious and should be addressed through legislation at the state and federal level. As Texas Attorney General, I will advocate to make HIV treatment and preventative care, like access to PrEP, mental health services, gender affirming surgeries more affordable and accessible. I will also engage in more proactive measures to target practices that lead to health disparities such as discriminatory employment practices, wage theft and challenge harmful legislation by the state or federal government.

If applicable to your office, how would you lead or support legislation addressing reparative/conversion therapy in Texas?

I will advocate against "conversion therapy" and support efforts to prohibit and/or limit it.

If applicable to your office, what are your ideas for immigration reform in

the state level?

Immigration enforcement falls under federal jurisdiction.

As an immigration attorney and border native, I understand the complexities of our immigration system. I have litigated against bad policies, like Remain in Mexico, that have created a humanitarian crisis at the border.

Texas' enforcement efforts at the border are unconstitutional, wasteful and are actively worsening the issue. As Texas Attorney General, I will put a stop to Governor Abbott's wall and his highly unconstitutional "Operation LoneStar."

What could the state do to improve COVID19 reponse and to prepare for the next pandemic?

As Attorney General, I will put an end to lawsuits from the AG's office against municipalities and counties that are just trying to keep our children and communities safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. If we're going to bring an end to this pandemic, we need to trust the science and follow the advice of qualified experts to keep our people safe. I'll make sure to use the full power of the office to address any future pandemics.

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 office' fulfilled the requirements?

Yes, I will require sexual harassment and Equal Employment Opportunity trainings at the Office of the Texas Attorney General.

What are your ideas to respond to evidence of climate change?

Climate change is an existential threat — especially for frontline communities. Texans already suffer through droughts, heatwaves, and superstorms, and if we don't take action to reverse the damage now, it will be too late.

We must achieve carbon neutrality in the near term if we're going to secure our children's futures. That means transitioning to a green-energy economy while protecting working families'

livelihoods who currently depend on oil and gas by providing training, investing in clean energy jobs, and gradually diversifying the energy industry.

The effects of climate change are going to increasingly become more political in nature as time goes on if left unchecked. In Texas, the failure of our power grid – which was a result of climate change – had very real consequences in people’s lives and the aftermath is currently playing out in Texas politics. We have also seen climate change impact migration and fuel anti-immigrant sentiment in the U.S., like the hurricanes that hit Central America and Haiti in the last year and a half and forced migration to the United States.

With the principles of environmental justice in mind, we must ensure that all our communities are protected from the worst outcomes of a changing climate and secure their economic future.

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

On day one as Attorney General, I will dismantle Ken Paxton’s “election integrity unit” – which is really about enforcing the GOP’s cruel voter suppression measures, instead of protecting voting rights – and replace it with a voter protection unit.

I will use the power of this office to ensure that voting rights are protected in the courts if there are further attempts to make it harder for any Texan, especially people of color, to cast a ballot.

My campaign has already been helping on this issue by bringing to light the fact that voters are being threatened across the state of Texas with cancellation of their voter registration based on old data regarding their citizenship – as of November 2021 over 2,000 voters were purged this way. We, as Texans, need to coalesce on the issue of voter suppression and combat it.

In your opinion and applicable to your office, what needed to happen in the past redistricting cycle?

It’s past time to bring an end to Texas’ long history of gerrymandering that keeps the majority of Texans from exercising power in our state and federal elections. As Attorney General, I

will be an advocate to replace the partisan redistricting process with an independent commission that respects the communities of our state.

All Candidates

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?

NO

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?

I live in Brownsville, Texas, so I have not had the pleasure of joining your organization. While I am not a member, I will always be an ally of the LGBTQIA+ community.

2022 Texas Candidate Questionnaire

Rochelle Mercedes Garza Texas Attorney General

All Texas Candidates

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

When I earned the Democratic Party's nomination for Texas Senate Dist. 11 in 2008, I earned a statewide LGBTQIA+ Organization's endorsement. When I was Mayor of Galveston, Texas (2010-2012), I regularly won Outsmart Magazine's "Gayest and Greatest" Awards in the category of local politics. When I was running for re-election as Mayor in 2012, I was bravely running in a very difficult reelection bid due to my robust support for rebuilding Galveston's Storm-damaged public housing. Recall that the 2012 cycle was the birth of the Texas Tea Party. I needed support from all my allies. Houston Mayor Annise Parker endorsed me and spent a weekend with me in Galveston appearing with me at several events. Also, I have been a trial lawyer for 30 years. I have significant experience in filing and resolving Title VII civil rights matters. As Texas Attorney General, I will staff a Civil Right's Division in the Texas OAG, the first since the late 1990s. Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification are protected classes under the law, and Texans in those protected classes experiencing discrimination will have a zealous advocate in me.

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?

I so affirm. See above.

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

I'm running to restore integrity to the consequential office of Texas Attorney General. The Attorney General represents the intersection of law and politics in Texas, and the office holder must be above reproach. I'm running to remove corrupt Ken Paxton from the office because the Texas GOP will not clean house; Paxton, Trump's new consigliere, will certainly win the GOP nomination this spring. Accordingly, Paxton's removal from office can only happen when a democrat defeats him in the general election.

I'm the best choice of the five democratic candidates to defeat Paxton because I am a third generation Texas trial lawyer with over 30 years of experience litigating several hundred matters in state and federal trial and appellate courts. I respect Mr. Merritt (who is not licensed nor is he permitted to practice in Texas State Court) and Ms. Garza, but objectively their combined years of courtroom experience equal half of mine. This actually matters because my and my family's connections in the Texas Bar are profound, and this is going to aid me in recruiting a talented, diverse leadership council. Also, courtroom and litigation experience in Texas matters when opposing lawyers size up their competition, and the Texas Attorney General fights some of the most powerful law firms and well-funded interests every day, so the quality of an AG candidate's political maturity and trial skills matter greatly when choosing whom to support. Additionally, as an international mediator, I've mediated and resolved thousands of matters in state and federal courts. My mediation skills of deep listening and innovative problem solving are desperately needed in today's politics. Finally, I'm the only candidate who has served in local government: I have served as a councilmember, mayor pro tem and mayor of Galveston, Texas for eight years.

Importantly, I was harshly tested during my term as mayor when I advocated for rebuilding Galveston's storm-damaged public housing as mixed-income communities - an innovation that was initially met with opposition by Galvestonians motivated by racism and greed (the Apartment Association leadership didn't want

the competition - any new units built would dilute their section 8 market share). I fought these critics intensely. They tried to recall me, but I defeated the recall movement. They offered me a sweet deal: If I drop the plan, they'd withdraw their challenge to my re-election. I firmly declined that unacceptable deal. While I was finally defeated in a run off by a tea party candidate whose slogan was "HUD out of Galveston!", I was ultimately vindicated after three years of federal litigation when my plan was sustained in the federal courts. Even though I no longer was mayor, I proudly attended the ground breaking and ribbon cutting, and now the mixed income communities are fully occupied and Galveston has chosen to build and has eagerly welcomed a third community which is presently under construction. I truly lived Sam Houston's maxim: "Do right and risk the consequences." That kind of experience is the best test for - and best proof of - my readiness to serve on Day One.

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

On day one in office I will dismiss any ongoing litigation hostile to the Affordable Care Act. In the Spring I will robustly testify in favor of cannabis legalization during and throughout the 2023 Legislative Session. Upon taking office, I will instruct my Attorney General Opinion division to adopt a local authority friendly approach to our legal opinions, showing concrete support for constitutional exercises of local governments (but if one locality should, for example, discriminate against protected classes then I will be a severe opponent). I will take Ken Paxton's fake voter fraud division and turn it into General Jaworski's Voter Access Division. I will staff a Texas Attorney General's Civil Rights Division, the first such division in operation in Texas since the late 1990s.

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

Yes! Upon receiving your endorsement I will proudly display it on my campaign website www.JaworskiForTexas.com; I will proudly advertise it with your logo and a handsome graphic created by my campaign team with your team's collaboration and advertise it

on all our social media platforms; and I will list your endorsement proudly on my responses to all Editorial Board endorsement questionnaires - notably Dallas Morning News, Houston Chronicle, San Antonio Express Journal, Austin American Statesman and the others. My DMN interview is Feb. 3. San Antonio Express Journal is even earlier - Jan 26.

When elected, how will you recruit, retain, and create a friendly environment for LGBTQ and LGBTQ-friendly staff?

I turn 60 on the day of the March 1 primary; I'm neither young nor old, but I am mature, and I have worked all over this state as a lawyer for over three decades. I know a lot of lawyers and individuals in Texas. I will be one fabulous recruiter. Also, I enjoy traveling the state, and unlike embattled, corrupt Ken Paxton who has to stay hidden lest he be protested by angry mobs, I will make frequent appearances every month and quarter. This will aid in recruiting a diverse workforce. We will have a diverse employee pool in the Texas AG's office. The morale is so low now; but it will be restored when I take office. My HR department will robustly protect our diverse employee population, and we will all encourage our staff to be good citizens and to be great ambassadors to Texas's multiple diverse communities.

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

I absolutely will.

Will you have a non-discrimination policy for employment and protection of LGBTQ residents and protection based on sexual orientation or gender identity? If not, why?

Yes I will. The Texas Attorney General's Office will be a leader in Texas on equality - in the courts and as an employer of over 4,500 Texans. It's a huge office, and who it's leader is matters greatly. Under Ken Paxton, the morale is at an all-time low. I have been receiving phone calls of support from embattled employees at the Texas OAG for over a year now, encouraging me in my campaign to defeat Ken Paxton. It's very supportive, and I empathize with these hard working Texans. Change is coming.

If applicable to your office, how would you lead or support state legislation

and/or constitutional amendments pertaining to: A. LGBTQ Couples adopting and providing foster care?

While I cannot directly legislate, I most certainly can lead and advocate. As Texas Attorney General, I will support such legislation and/or amendments by writing Texas Attorney General opinions, advocating in courts and by offering testimony as a witness in the Texas Legislature. It's appropriate for the Texas AG to act as a forceful agent of change and as legal counselor to the State. I see myself being a frequent legislative witness on several matters - this being one - during the session. In fact, early in my career I advised a same sex couple on adoption. I have always been a lawyer in support of equality.

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

Same as (A). This anachronistic law must be repealed.

C. Supporting safe schools for LGBTQ students?

Absolutely. Same.

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

Same. This 2005 Amendment is directly in opposition to - and superseded by - the landmark 2015 SCOTUS decision in Obergefell v. Hodges.

If applicable to your office, how would you address the recent passage of H.B. 25 regarding Transgender Student Athletes ability to participate based on their gender assigned at birth.

The General Jaworski Civil Rights Division at the OAG and my attorney general opinion section will closely review the letter and intent of this law and take a principled stand on it. I will advocate for its repeal; it's clearly an unnecessary and hurtful law. It is likely unconstitutional and my advocacy for fairness will be a counterweight to it. I could see myself supporting a lawsuit against the law as a "friend of the court."

If applicable to your office, how would you address S.B. 8, the state's Abortion Bill, including private citizen's ability to report anyone involved in supporting report?

This law is unconstitutional on its face. As Attorney General I am not the Governor's attorney; I am not the Legislature's attorney; I am the People's attorney. In that capacity I have an interest independent of the fact that the Legislature passed, and the Governor signed, this atrociously-entitled law. Specifically, upon taking the oath of office next January, I will take every legal action in my power to disable this law: I will immediately update all live pleadings in every court in which the Texas AG has appeared on this matter to unequivocally announce my opposition to the law and express my intention to remove it from the books. In fact, as a Texas Lawyer first and foremost, I have a duty of candor to the courts to express my judgment clearly when I believe a position my client is asking me to advance is frivolous. SB8 is clearly unconstitutional, and a Texas licensed lawyer has a duty to say so. Ken Paxton is less a lawyer here; he's a culture warrior first, intent on advancing an authoritarian, Uber-Christian agenda. It's un-Texan and un-American to its core.

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, especially as respects recovery from COVID19?

Legalize cannabis; legalize gaming; accept federal Medicaid match; raise minimum wage from the pathetic, unsustainable \$7.25 an hour; fully fund public education and incorporate two years of community college in that equation.

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?

On day one of my administration I will dismiss any lingering lawsuits brought by Paxton (or Abbott before him) against the Affordable Care Act, and any such ongoing litigation from the State of Texas will be dismissed by lunch. That means I will also be a robust supporter of a critical component of the ACA: The Medicaid match. That's worth \$5.6 Billion annually to Texas, and those resources will support health care in rural and urban areas. These are our federal dollars trying to come back home after we dutifully pay our generous taxes every April. It will be a refreshing change to have a statewide constitutional executive officer taking

this position.

If applicable to your office, what specific ideas do you have to overhaul the Texas Power Grid?

This is a question more appropriately addressed to legislative and gubernatorial candidates, but it does have applicability to the AG's race too. Corrupt Ken Paxton has taken the position in the Texas Supreme Court that ERCOT is immune from suit under the sovereign immunity doctrine. I disagree and would not support that position. Also, as AG, I would robustly investigate the unconscionable price gouging that occurred last February, and I would investigate and refer for prosecution all governmental corruption that led to the enrichment of so many at the taxpayer's expense.

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

I will support in any way I can. I will not oppose any efforts to restore funding (unlike our current AG).

If applicable to your office, how would you lead or support legislation addressing reparative/conversion therapy in Texas?

This is a legislative concern, but I will support that legislation any way I can.

If applicable to your office, what are your ideas for immigration reform in the state level?

I condemn corrupt Ken Paxton for his showy serial litigation against the Biden administration that accomplishes nothing but headlines. Paxton has filed a dozen suits over immigration policy, but he does nothing to address the root of the problem: the cartels. These criminal organizations in Mexico are ferrying desperate immigrants, taking their life savings and then abandoning them at the border. Yes, it's a humanitarian crisis. My affirmative solution is to take some of my \$1.1 billion biennial budget and hire eight (8) SAUSAs (Special Asst. U.S. Attorneys) to investigate and prosecute cartel crimes. These SAUSAs would work in the Southern and Western Districts of Texas (the two federal districts in our judicial system that cover the entire Texas

border) and in this way I would take affirmative steps to fight the real villain (the cartel) and I would partner with, rather than antagonize, our federal government whose job it is to address immigration. Also, unlike Paxton, I would recognize the economic benefit to the state of undocumented labor here. Every respected economist in Texas says the same thing: undocumented workers create an economic benefit for Texas - they generate more in economic benefit than they require in services.

What could the state do to improve COVID19 reponse and to prepare for the next pandemic?

I will always side with the local decision making authority of cities, counties and school districts. As a former mayor of Galveston, I have deep personal experience in this matter, and I know that local government is the best form of government because it is the most responsive form of government. As Texas AG I will issue attorney general opinions that support local authorities, and I will express my firmly held position that the Governor is abusing his power under the Texas Disaster act when he prohibits local leaders from issuing mask mandates. If the Governor doesn't want to use his power to issue statewide mandates to protect people's health, well, that's his political call. But he cannot use his power to prevent other leaders from meeting the moment within their jurisdiction.

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 office' fulfilled the requirements?

Yes, I would. In fact, the AG's office employs over 4,500 Texans. I will direct my HR to staff to conduct training for all employees.

What are your ideas to respond to evidence of climate change?

Elect leaders who believe in the science. I am such a leader. I and my spouse own our homestead on Galveston Island, and I served as Mayor immediately following Hurricane Ike which flooded our house and over 75% of buildings on the Island. The rebuild of Galveston cost several billion dollars, including one billion in community development block grant moneys which my council

was responsible for appropriately administering. It's clear that ignoring climate change is no longer an option. I will support as AG legislation that incentivizes energy companies' shift to a more sustainable production of clean power. Also, as AG, I will support oil and gas producers who take care to explore for energy in a safe way, and I will sue and support local authorities who sue when such producers fail to practice safely.

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

Multiple crises abound (adolescent mental health, the State leadership's disrespect for local decision-making authority, rampant gun violence, poor public education outcomes, government corruption, electric grid instability and so many more), and all of these require a firm and sure governmental response. That means our elections are more consequential than ever. So, I identify voter access as the Number One issue confronting Texas because everything else flows from who our leaders are and how we elect them. Ken Paxton's voter fraud unit has done great damage to the public's confidence in our elections. His support for Trump and the Big Lie is a national threat. Upon taking the oath of office, I will take Ken Paxton's voter fraud unit and turn it into General Jaworski's voter access unit because voters ought to be able to rely on the government when their voting rights are negatively affected. Unlike Paxton (who seeks to suppress the vote), I will enforce access to voting. For example, every August I will send a letter to every Texas principal reminding her of Texas Election Code section 13.046(d) which requires each principal to offer registration twice a year to the senior class, specifically to every student who turns 18 that year. It will be a pleasant, but firm correspondence requiring a prompt acknowledgment and identification of both dates registration will be offered. I would send representatives from my office to make sure the schools follow through with their promises. I will attend registration days at select campuses to stoke civic engagement. Imagine if every 18 year old were registered, and imagine if the habit of voting were embraced with the same zeal as the teenagers exhibit only two years earlier when the time comes to get a driver's license. That's one example of my future intentional, transformative action in office.

In your opinion and applicable to your office, what needed to happen in the past redistricting cycle?

Partisan redistricting is a practice that must end. By any reasonable, objective measure the 2021 redistricting exercise - especially given two new Congressional seats - should've resulted in an increase in minority representation, not a decrease. This is because 95% of the past decade's population growth in Texas has been thanks to communities of color. A non-partisan, appointed redistricting board would've done this more fairly. Therefore, had I been AG during this redistricting I would've been a stern general counsel to the process and insisted on a fair outcome. Upon taking the oath in January, I will enforce in court constitutional standards to the redistricting litigation which will certainly still be ongoing. In the absence of of a non-partisan redistricting board (which, of course, will only come to fruition when democrats control Texas), it will be up to progressive groups like LULAC, NAACP and the like, along with a progressive AG, to enforce constitutional redistricting standards in court. To me the real game changer is to remove Paxton (who will defend Dan Patrick's dream of conservative domination in any way he can) and replace him with Jaworski who will be on the side of the rule of law. This will yield fair maps.

All Candidates

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?

No.

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?

Yes I will join! Send me the link!