

2022 Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Sally Montgomery

Dallas County Court at Law no. 3

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.

All of my lead clerks for at least the past 10 years have been LGBTQ and I have made sure that they received good recommendations from me. They have all been promoted to higher levels.

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. Voted Democratic for the last 20 years.

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

Longest serving current incumbent civil trial judge with 24 years experience. My education with includes three science degrees helps me with the technical issues that arise in my court as well as my construction background and title background. My extensive mediation experience helps me to help the parties resolve many of their issues so that the results are better than could necessarily be afforded in trial.

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

I intend to share my years of experience to improve the overall civil judicial system in Dallas County. For example I am just now finishing a paper that consists of my experiences in accessing the

educational needs of minors who receive financial settlements in my court, (I am also a former high school teacher).

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

Yes. It would be featured in my campaign literature.

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

I would continue to mentor LGBTQ, see above.

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 insist that my staff follow the law in order to facilitate equal justice for all regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation or sexual identification.

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

I prepare for each case beforehand in order to move the proceedings along expeditiously. Thereby no one has to wait for a ruling.

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

In my court if someone appears without an attorney, I make sure that they can present their case fully, including referring them to legal services as needed. (Legal representation is not guaranteed in civil courts as it is in civil courts.)

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?

I believe it does reflect society. I insure on the record that juries selected in my court adequately reflect the whole community. I would ask that members of Stonewall always appear if they receive a jury summons.

What is your general judicial philosophy?

My general judicial philosophy is that everyone deserves to have their fair day in court, even handed justice. I have dedicated my judicial career every day to make sure that everyone is treated fairly.

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?

Absolutely not.

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 have been a member on and off since 2002. I am currently a member and will be more consistent in the future.

2022 Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Misti Mosteller

Dallas County Court at Law No. 3

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.

I have personally witnessed the pain caused by the legal system when dealing with custody issues of gay parents. In particular, the failure to recognize the custody rights of non-biological parents. I have also seen the burden placed on transgender individuals and their mistreatment due to bias and ignorance--the insistence to dead name a trans woman and misgender her. I've seen non-binary individuals subjected to the wrong pronouns which is demeaning and discounting. Not only do I have close personal friends who are members of the LBGTQIA+ community but also family, my daughter and nieces. The rights of LBGTQIA+ are very personal to me. Every individual entering our court system deserves to be treated fairly and with dignity. When we refuse to recognize someone's gender identity or respect their sexuality, we strip them of their humanity and deprive them of their right to be heard and seen.

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 do so affirm. I am a life-long Democrat. I have only voted for Democratic candidates since the age of 18.

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

I have been a practicing civil litigation attorney for 22 years.

I have practiced in Federal Court, District Court, and County Court. I am also licensed and have practiced in Texas, Oklahoma, and Michigan. I have extensive experience in the courtroom, negotiating with opposing counsel, and managing trial teams. I understand the importance of a judiciary that is hard working, unbiased, respectful, professional, and fair to all. I am also a certified mediator. My qualifications ensure I will apply the law with an understanding of the effects of a ruling to all parties. My career has been built on finding solutions which serve my clients interests without completely disavowing the other party. As a defense attorney, I believe you would be pleasantly surprised to learn plaintiff attorneys also believe me to be fair.

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

I plan to oversee the docket of Dallas County Court at Law #3 with dedication and efficiency. I will not abdicate my responsibilities to associate judges, delay ruling, or fail to rule. When a matter has been decided I will not delay executing the final orders which can lead to unnecessary fees and expenses to all parties. I will work to ensure parties are not waiting long periods for their day in court and ensure parties representing themselves have an adequate understanding of the proceedings. Too often, pro se clients are expected to withstand the rigors of our court proceedings as practicing attorneys. This makes the proceedings disjointed and seemingly unfair to those person not represented by legal counsel. I would like to build a bridge through my court, which would spread to others, in which more firms provide pro bono work for persons without means. Additionally, as a judge, I will have the responsibility of making appointments for certain cases. I will ensure the LGBTQIA+ community and persons of color, who are often left off of the list for receiving these kinds of appointments, will get a fair listing and consideration. I want to develop economic equity through my court.

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 include the endorsement in my campaign media. I would be honored to be endorsed by Stonewall Democrats and would proudly declare it. I would also let it be known that I have supported the LGBTQIA+ community for years, and the causes of the community are deeply ingrained in my ideas about life and justice.

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

My court will welcome and create a supportive environment for all LGBTQIA+. I will develop nondiscriminatory policies for my court and implement a training program to bring everyone on my staff to a place of cultural competence in serving the LGBTQIA+ community. I will welcome and encourage applications for employment with my court. As part of my campaign I will be reaching out to LGBTQIA+ groups and encourage interested person to apply for positions with my court. As a judge, I have the ability to hire my own staff. This allows me interview and hire people which share my views and understanding that ALL people should be treated with respect, regardless of our personal beliefs. The opportunity to educate is also key to me. Many times people are simply uneducated. I would hope my connection to Stonewall would provide me with tools and resources to also educate others about the discriminatory treatment many in the LGBTQIA+ community face.

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 personal religious beliefs do not nor will they ever conflict with my duty as a judge to respect and treat all parties equally or apply the law fairly. An individual’s religious beliefs do not trump other constitutional rights, such as the right to marry. I would respect the subordinate’s views up to the point they could not carry out their obligations to the Court’s business.

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

Being present on the bench and available to all parties would be a priority. I would also work to ensure non-English speaking parties have adequate access and understanding of proceedings, eliminate delay in executing orders, and bring back respect and humanity to Dallas County Court #3. I feel it is important to ensure people feel their voice/case was considered carefully, and the law was applied based on careful consideration of the facts, the legality and the best interest of Dallas County citizens. To that end, my main priority is to establish a reputation for efficiency on the bench and when attorneys learn of their assignment to my court, they feel confident their client will receive a fair and balanced assessment on the merits of the case.

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

An important part of improving access is making sure court rules, processes, and procedures are clearly and easily understood and published or posted in an accessible manner. Court procedures should allow for flexibility in the handling of cases, while reducing cost, delay, and other unnecessary burdens to litigants in the adjudication of disputes. It is my hope, (understanding it will take a little while to develop) a Dallas County Court-at-Law newsletter will be established. In the newsletter we will educate people about court proceedings and what to expect when they have a case in court. As an attorney I know how daunting it is and I want to alleviate as much angst and trepidation as possible.

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. Based on the way we selects juries in this country, many people are left out of the process. Generally speaking, jury composition often falls short of adequately and fairly reflecting society due to the burden created by jury service. The best path forward is to reduce the hardships associated with jury service and improve the experiences of citizens serving as jurors. Increased juror pay, child care and elder care support, and

efficiency in trial proceedings are a good place to start.

What is your general judicial philosophy?

Fidelity to the law with empathy toward the human condition.

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 current member but would be honored to join.

2022 Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Alison Allen

Dallas County Criminal Court No. 6

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.

In a felony court, equal justice is where the rubber meets the road. Like all communities that have historically been overpoliced and politically prosecuted, LGBTQ+ folks are often forced to count on courts to call out unequal enforcement and safeguard their rights and freedoms in the face of systemic, malicious, or unconscious biases. That can begin with something as small as addressing people by their names and refusing to allow disrespectful conduct in court. But it can also be more radical acts of fairness like enforcing the fourth amendment and the exclusionary rule on officers and prosecutions that are unlawfully biased or unconstitutionally invasive. Equal justice isn't always popular with powerful people, but if we're going to be an inclusive and free country, it is absolutely foundational.

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 make the affirmation absolutely. I have never once voted in the Republican primary, nor have I ever voted for a single Republican, whether unopposed or otherwise. In the event that more proof is necessary than that which is publicly available, I have photos of myself at age five at a Geraldine Ferraro rally, as well as at age eleven, phone banking for Anne Richards. Additionally, my mother is always available to attest that she raised me right.

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

I am Board Certified in criminal law and I have been practicing in Dallas County for 16 years. I am a former Assistant Public Defender, with experience in the mental health department of the office.

I do a lot of civil rights and pro bono work because I'm passionate about structural and systemic fairness. During the pandemic, I joined with the ACLU and other community groups in the litigation to protect inmates in the jail from COVID-19. I am also extremely proud to have fought in the criminal courts against the politicization of the criminal legal system and its use to antagonize organizers, whistleblowers, and to suppress the vote.

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

CDC6 has a specifically out of control docket because the current judge (not running for re-election) has been almost entirely absent since before the pandemic began. I plan to bring all of the relevant prosecutors and defense attorneys to the courtroom in groupings by defense counsel (I'm happy to explain why this is the more efficient model) to do a top down excavation of the court's docket. A lot of people need to be out of jail. A lot of victims need a chance to be heard, and the court needs to work to provide access to justice immediately.

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 a Stonewall endorsement, just as I have the two previous times I have been fortunate enough to be endorsed by Stonewall. I have block walked with Stonewall and handed out the Stonewall slate at polls, and I will continue to do so. Stonewall shows up!!

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

A lot of the staff of a court don't work directly for the judge, but rather for different departments, like probation, district

clerk, public defenders, sheriff's office, or the district attorney. The judge and coordinator, however, set the tone for the court's management culture, and what will and won't be tolerated. I will create an affirming culture inside the courtroom where it is clear that the human dignity of defendants, victims, witnesses, families, attorneys, and court staff is paramount, because what starts with sideways chatter in the bailiff's corner or DA's office can really quickly turn into a hostile, toxic environment for the people who have entrusted us with the monumental responsibility of public justice. The courts belong to EVERYONE, and that will be at the forefront of Criminal District Court 6.

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 depends on what the person feels s/he can't do. If s/he needs time flexibility because of Jewish or Muslim holidays, wears religious clothing or articles or the like, I'm absolutely willing to be flexible. But ultimately, while we all may have different faiths or traditions, we are entrusted with the business of government and government does not have a religion. Anyone whose religious beliefs conflict with their work in government needs to honor their deeply held religious beliefs by leaving government.

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

The COVID backlog in the judicial system is really hard to understate. Best estimates are that it will take up to five years to get back to the status quo ante. A lot of that has to do with the protracted unavailability of juries, but there is a LOT more that has fallen by the wayside just on the margins of the disaster, and we need to do absolutely everything we can to administer the business of the courts and clear the backlog. We really don't have time for half measures or remote working anymore, because while it was necessary at the height of the pandemic, it's not what our courts were designed for, and we have come to a point where we can work safely in person, and we need to roll up our sleeves and get it done. Open courts are essential to the public good.

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

I've talked a bit in earlier questions about the necessity to clear the absolutely unprecedented backlog in our courts (and specifically in CDC6) but I also think that if we don't come through this pandemic with more tools and a greater connectedness, then we will have missed a really important opportunity.

We can really cheaply improve defendants' fidelity on bond as well as justice outcomes if we facilitate communication with the courts and notifications of court dates and hearings. A really substantial portion of defendants miss court dates and end up back in jail because of lack of notice. We have a courts system that is less communicative than a dentist's office, and that's a real shame. Regular emails, texts, and a way to log issues is essential to any business, and can be absolutely game changing for the court.

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?

Not at all. Juries are made disproportionately from retired or salaried people who can afford to take the day out to serve. Working people need to be able to serve on juries (and grand juries) without their families suffering. We may not be able to make that happen quickly, but significantly raising juror pay is a really good start. Mandating that employers allow for jury duty leave, and enforcing that mandate is also essential.

It is also worth noting that community attitudes on jury service can be really transformative. If people understand that jury service is perhaps even more essential than voting to citizenship and good government, then we can hopefully drive response rates to jury summonses (currently about 20% in Dallas County) to rates more comparable to voting turnout. That would be transformative to justice results in Dallas County.

What is your general judicial philosophy?

People will go their whole lives and never meet their Congressperson, Senator, State Reps, Governor, or President. A

lot of us think of those people when we think about the face of government in Texas and the US. But for most folks, (aside from the DMV), police officers and judges make up the bulk of State power as people will actually interact with it. Because of that, we need to understand that people's interaction with a felony Court is one of the most important interactions they will ever have with their country. The respect and dignity with which we handle the people who appear before the Court, whether Defendants, witnesses, victims, or family members; that is the respect and equality of access and treatment that the United States and Texas have to offer. A judge can NEVER fall into the trap of thinking that the position is all about her. It is a sacred trust of the public, given solely for the equity and fair administration of justice to the body politic. One face at a time.

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?

Currently a member and have been so in the past.

2022 Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Nancy Mulder

Dallas County Criminal Court No. 6

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.

During the 7 years I've been on the bench, I've worked with the other judges to make sure that every single person who comes to court is treated with dignity and respect. This means making sure that our court staff understands that members of the LGBTQ+ community are called by their chosen names, even if their birth names have not been legally changed yet, AND by their selected pronouns. It is important to make sure that all individuals are referred to as the gender with which s/he/they identify.

Although it hasn't come up yet in trial, every single defendant, attorney, witness or victim will be referred to by the pronouns with which they identify at all times. In addition, working with the jail to make sure our trans inmates are treated with dignity and respect. Trans persons are held with other trans persons who identify as that same gender.

In addition, I do believe that domestic violence in the LGBTQ+ community is under-reported, and would like to see more awareness in the community through educational out-reach. There are very few resources for abused partners and spouses in the community.

Lastly, the courts need to have more resources available for our LGBTQ+ youth that come through the courts that are homeless. We need to build that bridge so they have access to aid.

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 support the Texas Dem. Party 100%. I've been a Senate District delegate to 2 Democrat State Conventions. I was a precinct chair (#2070) in 2010-2013. I was a VDR and sat outside of Hunky's registering voters. I've phone-banked and block-walked with Stonewall Dems of Dallas. I've also block-walked in every DCDP coordinated campaign since 2010, whether I am on the ballot or not.

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

I've practiced criminal law in Dallas County for 26 years, the last 7 as an elected Judge. I've prosecuted and defended every level of criminal offense up and through capital murder. I've personally tried over 100 jury trials, and handled thousands of criminal cases.

As a Judge, I've presided over almost 90 jury trials, overseen the judicial administration of almost 20,000 cases, reduced the backlog of cases (pre-covid) by almost 20%, and took this court from having the second-most pending cases to having almost the least. I am very proud of how I've successfully operated the court, its almost half a million dollar budget, and court staff during the last seven years.

I also created the county's first "Cite and Release" program to end on-site arrests for low-level possession of marijuana offenders (2017). After one year on the bench, I was elected as the Presiding Judge of the County Criminal Courts and Courts of Appeals. In this position, I led the charge that put an end to the automatic issuance of warrants simply if a person couldn't pay his or her probation fees.

I co-chaired the "Step-Up" MH/PR Bond program that is now in place at the jail, where mentally ill people are immediately identified at book-in and given a PR Bond. These individuals are given a ride to Metrocare where they meet with a social worker and are given resources for housing, treatment, and medication.

I'm also a member of the Dallas County Criminal Justice Advisory Board.

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

First, I would make sure that the staff is educated on use of pronouns and treating everyone with dignity and respect.

I would then call the Resource Center, and anyone else they think I need to call, to try and build a bridge between the criminal courts and our LGBTQ+ youth. This means creating a program where our youth, from the minute s/he/they are released from jail, would not only have resources to aid them finding housing, work, but also sponsors for AA/NA.

I would have the Family Violence division come and talk to Stonewall Dems, and also work with them to create a program for LGBTQ+ victims of domestic violence. I don't know if a domestic violence shelter is needed. If it is, I will help get one built!

If Judge Kennedy is elected to to the Court of Appeals, and I would like to take over the STAR court program she currently oversees. It's a program that helps prostitutes get out of the cycle of sex work/drug addiction/arrests. I would include male sex workers in the program. The resources provided in this program would overlap and be similar to the aid for homeless youth that I discussed above.

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

I would tell everyone that you've endorsed me, put it on my website, and on my targeted mailers.

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

If I had an opening, I would advertised this opening online on the Stonewall Dems website and in the Voice.

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 explain to that person that if s/he cannot follow the law, then they won't be working for me. If s/h still refused, their employment will be terminated.

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

Building a program for Dallas' homeless LGBTQ+ youth is the most important improvement we need right now.

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

I think all court proceedings should be streamed online unless there is a particularly sensitive issue where it shouldn't be--like if the defendant is a juvenile, or the victim/witness is underage, or frightened. I also believe that we need to keep our virtual hearings going because they are so convenient. Right now, in my court, anyone can have a virtual hearing even though we are back in the court house in person. If a person needs to be virtual because they live out of state or travel for work, no problem. If a person wants to be heard in the courtroom, I am there every day. I think both need to be standard now.

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?

Our jury pools leaves out poor persons of color. Right now, people receive their jury summons based on the address on their drivers' licenses. A lot of people live in apartments and move every 1-3 years, so their address changes often. People in the lower socio-economic strata are more transient. In Dallas, the majority of people living in apartments in the poorest neighborhoods are predominantly persons of color. As a result, even if their summons are sent to the address on their D.L.s, even if it is forwarded to them, many times it's an apartment the person lived in years ago, so they aren't getting their summons. Our jury pools, although still somewhat diverse, don't truly accurately reflect the community at large. We need to send summons based on people's electric and water bills. Unfortunately this can only be changed by legislative action.

What is your general judicial philosophy?

HUMILITY. Making sure that EVERYONE is treated with dignity and respect no matter what they've done or where they've come from. Making sure everyone is given the opportunity to be HEARD. Listening is a very important part of my job. I know I don't know everything, and listening to the attorneys, victims, witnesses and defendants is crucial so that I understand what happened and what law to apply.

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've been a member since at least 2012, and was a member of the board 5 years ago when I was Chair of the 20th Anniversary Pride Parade Float committee. I've maintained my membership and attend meetings at least 3-4 times a year.

2022 Dallas County Candidate Questionnaire

Clay Jenkins

Dallas County Judge

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.

In the job 11 years, have worked closely with the community throughout.

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. Only and always vote D

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

11 years experience. Have remained calm and led through example and deeds. Listening to science and community interests to insure we are a welcoming and economically strong place for everyone.

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

Finish the fight against COVID. Ramp up mental healthcare capacity. Catch up our students in partnership with DISD. Expand and speed up broadband. Expand HIV prevention ,care and service. Work on a local Medicaid expansion if build back better passes. Invest ARPA and Infrastructure investment working with other leaders to bless a generation not just increase spending for 4 years.

How would you showcase your endorsement by Stonewall Democrats of

Dallas if received? Would you include the endorsement in your campaign media?

Yes

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

Passed non-discrimination policy for county employees to include sexual orientation and gender identity in 2011. Fought for same sex benefits for county employees before Supreme Court mandate. Obtained gender affirmation surgical benefits for county employees through PEBC in 2021.

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

Sure. Lauren Trimble and Sonja Hughes are in regular communication with Ryan White board members and providers.

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. Since 2011

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”?

That's never happened with my executive staff or direct hires. Our faith dictates that we serve, love and treat others as we would like to be treated in their situation. Hate is not a moral value and bigotry is not tolerated on our team. Should a situation arrive, I would listen actively and respectfully to the viewpoints. Then I'd act swiftly and decisively. Ultimately, the buck stops with me and the work must be done.

County Commissioner Candidates

In light of decreased federal and state funding, how would you lead or support funding for HIV prevention in Dallas County including access to PrEP?

Working with local, providers, charities, Parkland and others, we

must continue expanding coverage, messaging and increasing the provision of PrEP. We must continue to expand 340b opportunities for PrEP. There are opportunities with FQHCs and others. I chair the Enroll North Texas Task Force which includes community leaders, insurers, and hospitals. All those are opportunities to increase funding.

I also appoint the board at the Ryan White Planning Council and held weekly meetings with staff replacing several positions after HRSA found deficiency in that program. Better execution leads to better use of funds.

Finally, would lobby the Biden administration who we are working closely with on COVID and healthcare.

What would you do to support and assist the many people with mental illness who must rely on the public system for care in or out of incarceration?

We have expanded funding of right care teams to answer mental health and homeless 911 calls that include mental health, addiction and homeless providers through my 10 New Directions Task Force. We will spend an additional \$110,000,000 over and above 2020 on mental health.

How would you address the issues of non-Dallas County Residents using Parkland?

Same as I have been last 11 years. We help anyone in our emergency room who is in an acute situation and seek reimbursement from other counties and pay sources. We are fortunate to have a world class hospital system here in Dallas County. We are required by a federal law Parkland helped pass (EMTALA) to not turn away anyone in distress from our emergency room. We provide acute care to individuals in need all across North Texas and that is something we are proud of. We know that many counties do not have primary care options for those in need and have done little to remedy this over the years. All of North Texas will be safer and healthier when all counties strive to serve their population.

How would you rate the County's Response to COVID?

We followed the science and local doctors advice and saved lives. Our response led other counties and the state to follow the science sometimes until Republican politics made our Governor and others lose their grit and resolve.

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

Hispanic mainly and minority generally growth made up for 95% of our growth and the state should have recognized that in building districts. They didn't. We build democratic districts in Dallas County.

How can the county play a part in expanding voting rights and access, including voting centers and extended hours?

We spend the money and did the work to implement county wide voting now we must increase registration and stand against Republican voter suppression 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?

12 years. Yes

2022 Dallas County Candidate Questionnaire

Billy Clark

Dallas County Judge

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 believe our County leadership should lead the effort into ensuring that all LGBTQ+ issues remain at the forefront of our efforts. We can only be ONE if everyone is given equal treatment!

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 vote for any initiative that further diversity and inclusion in a positive light.

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

Prior military officer--retired now (22 years). Attorney that practices primarily in Civil Rights law, aviation law, Criminal Defense, and Personal Injury. Master Degree in Public Administration from Univ. of Oklahoma.

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

I plan to increase the role of the diversity and inclusion office to ensure that County business makes an effort to create/promote harmonious outcomes.

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

Absolutely would include it. I plan to speak openly about Stonewall Democrats of Dallas and how I plan to use their guidance as a playbook on creating a better Dallas County.

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

Yes.

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

Yes. I believe that having a liaison would ensure that the issues that are important in our LGBTQ+ community ALWAYS have the ear of the County leadership.

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”?

I believe in our constitutional protections...especially the freedom of religion and expression. I would always uphold any employees constitutional rights under the law.

County Commissioner Candidates

In light of decreased federal and state funding, how would you lead or support funding for HIV prevention in Dallas County including access to PrEP?

I would ensure our County Health Department has the funding and staff to make that a priority.

What would you do to support and assist the many people with mental illness who must rely on the public system for care in or out of incarceration?

Our mental health initiatives would be a priority. We are losing many folks due to mental illness...under my leadership, we would

provide more funding to support those that are suffering.

How would you address the issues of non-Dallas County Residents using Parkland?

I would ensure that we receive compensation for services through their home county system or their public or private medial insurance carrier.

How would you rate the County's Response to COVID?

5 out of 10

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

We need more participation in the census reporting.

How can the county play a part in expanding voting rights and access, including voting centers and extended hours?

Ensure that voting access is more available and least restrictive measures.

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 give individuals hope and knowledge about specific county resources.

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?

Just joined.

2022 Dallas County Candidate Questionnaire

KaTina Whitfield

Justice of the Peace 2-1

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 performed the very first same sex wedding ceremony in precinct 2. It was an absolutely honor. Nobody should be discriminated against because of who they love.

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?

Absolutely. I first registered to vote when I was 18 years old. I'm a lifelong Democrat and I've always understood the importance of voting. My vote is my voice.

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

I am the incumbent. I've served in this position since January 2019. Before I was elected, I was a paralegal for almost 20 years.

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

I will continue to offer the same access to equal and fair justice for everyone who I come in contact with. I have an open door policy, and I welcome any and everyone to come visit me anytime.

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

I will proudly display the Stonewall Democrat logo on all of my campaign literature as well as campaign media.

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

Any open position will be offered to any qualified candidate who applies. I encourage diversity in every element of life.

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?

I already have a policy in place and I will continue to enforce that policy.

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”?

If I have an employee who feels a religious conviction by doing their job, they can find a job that aligns more with their values. I won't force them to do anything they don't want to do to, but I will not allow them to discriminate or disrespect anyone at all.

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?

Yes. I had a charity in the courtroom offering assistance to tenants long before the county deployed navigators.

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?

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2022 Dallas County Candidate Questionnaire

Denise Brennan

Justice of the Peace 2-2

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.

Simply put, I believe that all Americans are entitled to equal treatment under law. The LGBTQ+ community has been discriminated against historically in American Society. In my mind, we must show all Americans compassion and respect. As recently as February 2021, I was at an establishment with friends when I noticed a transgender male being ignored by the wait staff. I went over to her and began talking and invited her to join our group. As soon as she came over, the wait staff took her order. It enraged me that the wait staff had ignored her while she was sitting alone. I had a brief discussion with our waitress and explained my new friend simply wanted service, the same as anyone else. Continuing to reach out and show compassion for all is something I will strive to do if I am elected Justice of the Peace.

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 voted Democratic in all elections. I have never voted in a Republican.

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

Over 30 years work experience in Product Development and Project Manager roles, departmental liaison, 40+ years as a Dallas County resident, with over 30 years of residency in Precinct 2.

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

Precinct 2, Place 2 is not in good shape. The productivity of this Court has been in constant decline over the last two years, per the Texas Office of Court Administration (www.card.txcourts.gov). I plan to get back to basics by showing up, doing the job, and administering justice as quickly and fairly as possible. To the extent residents of Precinct 2, primarily those in Mesquite, have been fleeing this Justice Court to file in Precinct 2, Place 1 (which sits in Garland), I am hoping those residents will return to filing in Precinct 2, Place 2 once Precinct 2 Democrats can elect someone more serious to do the job.

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

I would publish the endorsement on my website and social media as well as include on any literature (not already in publication).

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

I have a work history of hiring and working with a wide variety of people, including the LGBTQ+ community. While working for a previous Dallas County employer, I hired both a gay man and woman to work for me in my department. I would seek and accept all qualified candidates for any position, regardless of their sexual orientation.

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 I will.

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 am serious about applying the law fairly to all. I will conduct gay weddings upon request like I would weddings for others. To the extent I have an employee whose “deeply held religious beliefs” do not allow them to, say, issue a marriage license to gay people, I would simply ask another clerk to complete the task to ensure fairness and equality before the law for the LGBTQ+ community.

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?

It's very simple for me. To the extent the State of Texas or the Texas Supreme Court directs deferment of eviction cases to deal with the pandemic, I will follow the law and reset those cases until they can be properly heard. To the extent Texas or Dallas County funds services to help those pro-se litigants in need, I will do my best to provide notification to those litigants of the services available to them. This helps tenants and landlords. It would be my goal to help prevent as many evictions as possible so long as I am not deviating from my role and responsibility as a neutral judge. I cannot advocate for or against any tenant or landlord.

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. I have no reasons to request for a withdrawal of the organization's endorsement.

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 joined this past December.

2022 Dallas County Candidate Questionnaire

Denise Upchurch

Justice of the Peace 2-2

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.

Family

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'm a avid Democratic voter.

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

Learning the Law and rules for this position is a given but my personal experiences expressed why I can maintain the seat of Justice of the Peace with integrity. I believe that I can connect with the needs of those standing before me. My past experiences as a Freedom Fighter and present experiences as a Conflict Management Specialist will work well in this position.

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

I can say this in a few words :) Proactive and Resolution! Working with the staff that is given to this office to find opportunities that can intervene and resolve.

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

Of Course, as with any endorsement that pertains to my campaign. I am here to represent the community that I will serve.

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

As needed. Just like anyone else represented in my community. As far as hiring, I first need to find out the protocol for hiring anyone.

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

That is an fantastic idea. Thank you! Not just for the LGBTQ+ community but for others also. That will help gain more knowledge and knowledge brings understanding.

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! Why not, if possible. I am a Woman plus a Woman of Color! That says it all in a nut shell as far as discrimination is concerned.

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 am, a Woman of Faith! In taking this postion I will honor what my Position stands for, and that is the Mission of the Justice of the PEACE. Anyones personal feelings should not interfere with the Mission of that office. I believe it is to help and solve situations caused by circumstances. I will honor my slogan, which is on my website.

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?

COVID and other unforeseen problems have devastated our Community. Our job is to be able to help anyway that is in need. Financial Services and Emotional Resources is necessary for

everyone.

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?

Not that I'm aware of.

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 and I am not one who joins any organization because of needing an endorsement. I am asking for your endorsement because I sincerely want the LGBTQ+ community to know, as Justice of the PEACE, I will represent this part of our community with Honesty and Integrity.

2022 Texas Candidate Questionnaire

John Bryant

State Representative, Texas House District 114

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.

I was elected to the Texas House of Representatives at the age of 26 where I served for five terms, representing what was then a majority Anglo blue collar community in the 1970s- 80s, and then served in the U.S. House of Representatives for seven terms, representing an area extending from Oak Lawn out into ten rural counties to the east and south in the 80s and 90s. I voted without exception in the interests of the LGBTQ community, defended the community publicly against the rightwing, and am pretty sure I had a 100% voting record with the Human Rights Campaign and its predecessor organizations. In spite of attacks on my pro-LGBTQ voting record from the right, I won every election for Texas and US House. I worked with, still work with, employed, and still employ, and worship with LGBTQ folks. I see the principle need of the LGBTQ community as being not automatic, full acceptance without a second thought about sexual orientation in all walks of life, including religious institutions. I support legislation needed to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual preference or identity of any kind in any setting.

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 would rather be thrown out of an airplane and land on the concrete than vote in a Republican primary. I've voted in every Democratic primary in my adult life and won 13 elections as a Democrat. I affirm a lifetime affiliation with the platform and

principles of the Texas Democratic Party.

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

Member, Texas House of Representatives for five terms. Named one of the Ten Best Legislators in Texas by Texas Monthly twice. Headed the House Study Group, which then was the progressive caucus of the House, and in my final term ran for speaker against and almost defeated the conservative speaker of the house. Served on the Committees on Education, Judicial Affairs, and Criminal Justice.

Member, U.S. House of Representatives for seven terms. Authored multiple pieces of legislation, including the East Texas Wilderness Bill establishing Texas' only federally protected wilderness and prosecuted a corrupt federal judge in an impeachment trial before the U.S. Senate. Served on the Committees on Energy and Commerce, Judiciary, and Budget.

Appointed by President Clinton as U.S. Ambassador in charge of U.S. telecommunications treaty negotiations in Geneva.

Returned home to law, business, and civic activity. Past chairman of the World Affairs Council and Lewis Psychiatric Foundation (formerly the Timberlawn Psychiatric Foundation).

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

The most important issue is protecting our democracy from the Trump Republicans and the privileged Republican donor class that now controls all public policy in Texas. This requires fearlessness and the experience to know what to do as circumstances develop. I believe democracy is imperiled at present and we must be prepared to take the initiative to protect it from incremental, as well as from immediate, erosion. This is why I got off the sidelines and ran for this office.

We can start winning again. The most important objective is to win a Democratic majority in the Texas House by forging a cohesive caucus with a strong message and holding the caucus in line behind a progressive agenda. The only way to thwart

regressive legislation is to have a progressive majority that elects a Democratic speaker. Also,

1. I'm not afraid of the NRA gun lobby and have a record to prove it. I voted for the assault weapon ban that was federal law until the Republicans took over. I will speak out for, introduce, and fight for limits on gun ownership that will make our schools, public places, and local law enforcement officers safe again.

2. I'm not afraid of the anti-choice extremists. I will vote for a woman's right to choose, which I voted for without exception during my prior service.

3. I'm not afraid of the electric utility/pipeline barons that Texas Monthly reports made \$11 billion windfall during the freeze. I will introduce legislation to make them absorb this windfall instead of the ratepayers. I will introduce legislation to require Texas to rejoin the national electric grid, instead of foolishly continuing to go it alone, to guarantee that our homes and businesses never again lose power.

4. I will boost spending for public education with a goal of the best public schools in the U.S.

5. I'm not afraid of the real estate barons. I will introduce an amendment to force major commercial properties to be appraised at the same percentage of their market value as residences to reduce the residential property tax burden and make the big boys pay their fair share.

6. I will sponsor and/or cosponsor legislation to protect LGBTQ folks in the workplace and in every other setting.

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

If I am honored with the Stonewall Democrats' endorsement it will go up on my website the same day, be prominently boasted of on my social media immediately, and be added to all my print literature thereafter.

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

I already have LGBTQ staff and will continue to have LGBTQ staff. The people I work with and around aren't conscious of sexual preference or gender identity and I will not employ people who give it a second thought.

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

I'll be the liaison and will meet with the LGBTQ community any time and as often as requested. Here's my cell number: 214.538.4000. If Stonewall Dems want a staff member officially named a liaison, I'll designate one.

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 absolutely, as stated forcefully in previous responses. I will also sponsor or vote for any laws necessary to make this apply in every area of life.

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 will sponsor and vote for this legislation and constitutional amendments.

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

I will sponsor and vote for repeal. I voted for this repeal when in my prior service in the Texas House.

C. Supporting safe schools for LGBTQ students?

I will sponsor for legislation to guarantee a safe school environment for LGBTQ students of every age and grade, as well as colleges and universities.

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

Yes. and legislation providing that gay couples are treated and given the same rights under the law as heterosexual 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 am opposed to any discrimination against transgender student athletes, will vote against legislation that would directly or indirectly discriminate and will sponsor and vote for legislation that will guarantee their protection.

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?

I am 100% pro choice, will introduce and vote for legislation to repeal the new law, and will forcefully oppose private citizen reporting or vigilante lawsuits for this or any purpose.

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?

1. Make the state accept federal Medicaid funding, the lack of which is keeping millions without health insurance.
2. Increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour
3. Move the greater share of the property tax burden off residences of poor and middle class people and on to major commercial properties that are now under-appraised, thanks to a decision by the Republican Texas Supreme Court.
4. Use the state's rainy day fund or new revenues to underwrite the food security of marginalized people.

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?

1. Make the state accept federal Medicaid funding.
2. Pass state legislation guaranteeing coverage of pre-existing illnesses in case the federal mandate is ever weakened or repealed.
3. Use the rainy day fund to underwrite reestablishment of rural

and low-income area hospitals that have closed in great number due to inability of their local under-insured and uninsured population to pay

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

1. Require the state to rejoin the national grid. This cowboy go-it-alone attitude is ridiculous in the 21st century, was disastrous this year, and threatens our future.
2. Require the energy generators and pipeline companies to fully winterize, pay 100% of the cost, and reimburse Texas ratepayers for the costs which the Republicans have shifted to taxpayers and ratepayers.
3. Get rid of the Texas Railroad Commission, the most corrupt institution in state government, and combine it with the Public Utility Commission, and give the combined entity the power to do all the above.

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 advocate, introduce legislation, and vote for legislation to restore and increase previous funding for HIV prevention including access to PrEP.

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

I would make so-called “reparative/conversion therapy” illegal and subject to punishment by firing squad.

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

I support amnesty and a path to citizenship for the 12 million people who have been in the U.S. without legal status for two years or more and, of course, immediate citizenship for the dreamers. I voted for amnesty as a member of Congress, where I served on the Subcommittee on Immigration of the Judiciary Committee, and authored legislation establishing a

commission for the study of the causes of and remedies for illegal immigration. However, I am strongly opposed to permitting illegal immigration and am certain that we must reassure the public that Democrats are doing everything legally and ethically possible to stop it. Illegal immigration has fueled right-wing victories throughout Europe and played a big role in Trump's receiving 75 million votes in 2020. We must address it. How will we do it on the state level? Resolutions, public advocacy, and any other measures that will correctly inform the public about the true nature of the problem.

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

1. Elect a governor who is not a self-serving moron.
2. Use state resources to disseminate vaccines and boosters in every corner of the state. Mandate that the Texas Department of Health's objective must be to accomplish a 100% vaccination and booster rate.
3. Speak out repeatedly so that each of those corners hear the message about vaccines and masks.

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.

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

1. Speak out forcefully about the urgent need to take dramatic steps to reverse climate change and global warming to continually educate the public about their responsibility to
 - vote for environmentally responsible candidates and against climate deniers
 - behave as environmentally responsible consumers
2. Protect and increase subsidies for renewable energy.

3. Require methane-leaking gas wells to immediately be repaired and the leaks stopped or they will be capped.

4. Use state resources to reforest every area of the state.

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

1. Repeal all election laws passed by the legislature this year and last.

2. Require every governmental unit make voting by all eligible voters its primary priority through voting hours, transportation, mail-in ballots or any other means to dramatically improve participation.

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

Districts that represent communities of interest and are of reasonably ordered geographical shape so that most voters can easily know which district they are in. District 114 is should not have a hole in the middle that separates neighbors in Lakewood and East Dallas.

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 joined this month and will stay joined.

2022 Texas Candidate Questionnaire

Kendall Scudder

State Representative, Texas House District 114

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.

My start in politics was because of LGBTQ+ issues - I was raised in east Texas by 2 moms. When I was 11 years old, I saw a legislator on TV who wanted to take children like me, raised in a same-sex household, and put us in foster care. When I asked my mom why the man hated us, she told me “Because he doesn’t know us and it’s hard to hate up close”. The next week, my mom dropped me off at my local Democratic party headquarters where I started knocking on doors and I haven’t stopped for more than 20 years.

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 voted in every Democratic primary I was eligible to vote in.

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

I’m the son of a social worker, paramedic, and corrections officer who taught me values like service to others—their dedication to improving themselves and their community lit a fire inside me, pushing me to work hard every day to leave the world a little better than I found it.

As a teenager, I helped support my family working at my local Dairy Queen, juggling both my job and political activism on behalf of my LGBTQ+ family. I received my degree in Political Science at Sam Houston State University before moving to Dallas to work

as an affordable housing professional, and later became the first millennial to be nominated by a major political party for the Texas State Senate in 2018.

Since my 2018 run, I have served on the City of Dallas' Civil Service Board and on the legislative committee of the Apartment Association of Greater Dallas. I've also dedicated myself to helping elect Democratic candidates across the state, and in my role on the State Democratic Executive Committee, fought to improve financial transparency and strategic planning within the Texas Democratic Party.

In the height of the pandemic, I notably filed a criminal complaint with the Dallas County District Attorney's office against Attorney General Ken Paxton in an effort to protect Dallas County residents' access to the ballot box amid safety concerns of in-person voting activity.

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

1. Fully funding our public schools by closing tax loopholes for corporations and looking for other ways to increase revenue like legalizing marijuana or casino gambling.
2. Roll back voting restrictions to allow fair and equal access to the ballot box.
3. Expand Medicare and protect healthcare for all Texans, including reproductive healthcare.

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

I will include it in various campaign communications, including social media, email, digital, and mail.

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

I believe that diversity makes us stronger and will work to ensure that our office accurately reflects the demographics of our district and encourages the expression of diverse opinions and ideas.

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

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?

We should only be focused on ensuring that Texas children are cared for. I would support legislation making discrimination of potential adoptive and foster parents based on sexual orientation or identity illegal.

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

The Texas sodomy law is an embarrassing stain on Texas history that should be repealed.

C. Supporting safe schools for LGBTQ students?

Our local ISDs should not be prohibited from implementing protections for vulnerable populations within their schools.

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

The Texas Marriage/Civil Union Amendment is an embarrassing historical relic that deserves no place in our 21st century law books.

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 would have stood firmly against HB 25 and will continue efforts in the next legislative session to roll back the negative effects of the bill and combat any additional attempts to harm transgender student athletes and the transgender community.

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?

I support efforts by allied organizations to address these unconstitutional restrictions to healthcare in court. Additionally, I would author or sponsor legislation ensuring that the government plays as little role as possible in the health decisions made between patients and doctors.

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?

We should be working to make sure that every Texan makes a livable wage. We also need to work on true property tax reform, which cannot be achieved without properly funding our public schools.

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?

Texas has consistently been ranked one of the lowest states in the country when it comes to healthcare access. We should be working with healthcare providers, insurance companies, and the federal government to ensure that every Texan has access to quality, affordable healthcare. Every time Texas refuses the Medicaid expansion, we leave billions of dollars on the table that would go a long way towards providing health insurance to the poorest of Texans and bringing all of our state hospitals up to code.

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

We need to hold the Public Utility Commission and ERCOT accountable for the needed upgrades to our power grid system as well as ensuring that costs for any repairs do not get passed down to consumers. We also need to work on campaign finance reform to keep billionaire energy CEOs from contributing millions of dollars to the very people tasked with overseeing the energy industry.

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

The decision to drop Planned Parenthood from HIV prevention funding streams has led to thousands of men and women going untested and untreated. I would support legislation that restores those funding streams and ensures that clinics all across the state receive adequate funding for HIV testing and prevention.

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

I will support and defend any legislation that makes reparative/conversion therapy illegal in Texas and will work to defeat any bill before the House that includes pathways for reparative/conversion therapy.

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

I believe that Texas should work toward comprehensive immigration reform in a manner that respects immigrants and their families, creating a pathway to citizenship to help keep families together as they work to achieve the American dream.

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

The state needs to do a better job of advocating that as many people as possible get vaccinated, including rolling back restrictions on private businesses that want to mandate vaccination status for their employees as well as encouraging people to follow CDC guidelines. There are several ways Texas could prepare for the next pandemic like shoring up existing systems such as emergency response management and reporting requirements, better guidance for the public to “do their part”, coordinating with emergency managers and healthcare professionals, and conduct a review of all existing response procedures.

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. As reports coming out of Austin have shown us the last few years, we need to be taking sexual harassment more seriously. Constituents should be able to trust that their representatives and the employees working in their offices are being held to the highest standards of conduct.

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

Climate change is real and man-made. This is not an issue that is controversial or within my generation and is one of the most important challenges we face. We should work to promote a clean energy economy in Texas while being open to legislation that will allow municipal, county and state government to impose environmental regulations that will protect our planet for future generations.

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

In the height of the pandemic, I notably filed a criminal complaint with the Dallas County District Attorney's office against Attorney General Ken Paxton in an effort to protect Dallas County residents' access to the ballot box amid safety concerns of in-person voting activity.

I will work with allied organizations and other legislators to make sure that every Texan has fair and equal access to the ballot.

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

Democrats should have been working for the last 10 years to obtain non-partisan redistricting committees. I believe it is essential that we elect leaders who are willing to sacrifice their own seats to get non-partisan redistricting and being in the minority, Democrats find themselves in a tough position this cycle. I believe Democrats should have continued their quorum bust, forcing courts to draw the districts instead of legislators. This would have made strides towards fairer maps and allowed Democrats to claim some victory from the quorum bust. It is

also important to mention that the redistricting board consisted of 5 Republicans. All legislative Democrats should have worked to increase turnout in their districts and help elect statewide Democrats who, if successful, could have served on the redistricting board such as Lt. Gov, Land Commissioner, Attorney General, and Governor. When our incumbent Democrats in safe districts fail to assist other Democrats to win elections, we are shooting ourselves in the foot.

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 believe I've been a member of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas since 2017 (feel free to double check me on that!).

2022 Texas Candidate Questionnaire

Alexandra Guio

State Representative, Texas House District 114

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.

I have been a member of the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas since March of 2019. I've also participated in the Legislative Committee and helped Josh Cogan with legislative research during the 86th Legislative Session in 2019 where we tracked bills relevant to the LGBTQ Community. I also researched how other states repealed anti-sodomy laws and how Texas can finally remove this from the criminal penal code since it has been struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court. Further, I have been a member of the LULAC Rainbow Council 4871 since January 2021. I have participated in food drives that helped the Resource Center and Cathedral of Hope. I'm also a member of HRC (Human Rights Campaign) and regularly attend their local events. I've always believed that it is important to be an ally for the LGBTQ community and working alongside these wonderful organizations allows me to be educated on the important issues within this community. As a woman, a Latina, and an immigrant, I've experienced my own moments of discrimination throughout my life. Even though I do not personally know the discrimination that the LGBTQ community goes through, I do know that we are all stronger if we work and fight together.

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 wholeheartedly make that affirmation. I became a U.S. Citizen in May of 2013. I have voted in two Republican primaries

and 2 Democratic Primaries. My votes in the Republican primaries were strategic & based on the democratic principles of integrity, honesty, and compassion. I voted for a Republican candidate in the District Attorney race 8 years ago in the 2014 primary. That year, I was working for a DA and I had serious concerns regarding the ethics of the sitting democratic District Attorney and believed that he should not be in office. I voted against Trump in the 2016 primary election and voted for another Republican nominee I knew would not win in Texas. I was genuinely concerned that Trump could win the primary in Texas. So, in part, that vote was a strategic one against the Republican Party. Also, that year was particularly difficult for me as Latina and a former undocumented immigrant. There were so many times I felt hurt, feared for my safety, and saw my community be degraded. I felt that the best use of my voice was through my vote: so that meant voting against Trump in a primary. For me, it was a form of protest against the hatred that Trump and his party represented. My subsequent primary votes reflect my commitment as a democrat and I have only voted in democratic primaries since.

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

The combination of my life experiences, professional skills, and my community advocacy make me the best choice for this new House District 114. I was born in Bogotá, Colombia and I came to the United States when I was 4 years old with my parents and two older sisters. My parents brought me to this country because of the dangerous situation in Colombia, also because my mother needed a surgery that was only available in the United States, and because they believed in the opportunity for us to achieve the American Dream. My parents taught me the value of hard work, the value of an education, and the value of serving my community. I held onto those values, especially as I faced the challenges of being an undocumented immigrant for most of my young adult life. I was fortunate to become a U.S. Citizen in 2013. That same year, I also graduated from the SMU Dedman School of Law, becoming the first attorney in my family. I am the only woman, the only Latina, and the only bilingual candidate in the race for HD 114. This new House District is made up of 54% communities of color and the residents deserve to

have a representative that is reflective of this rich diversity, their values, and their needs. I have also served as an Assistant District Attorney in Dallas County for 8 years where I have developed my skills as an advocate for victims and a defender of my community. I know how to speak up for those who are often silenced or ignored. I also served as a Legislative Liaison for the Dallas County District Attorney's Office for the 2019 Legislative Session and spent 5 months working at all levels of the legislative process including drafting bills, conferring with Legislators, negotiating compromise language, and whipping votes. I have been an advocate for my community here in Dallas for over a decade: organizing, registering voters, protesting, and testifying in Austin. My skills as a bilingual advocate have also brought comfort and unity within all levels of my advocacy skills as a prosecutor, community activist, and candidate. With all these skills, I can confidently gain the trust of my community, thoroughly advocate for the residents of District 114, and hit the ground running in a legislative session if elected.

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

If elected I would focus on issues of education, healthcare, and quality of life issues for our working families. I would help push for a return to 50% funding by the state government for the public schools and ensure that the teachers and staff are paid what they deserve. Further, I would ensure the protection of our trans-children and attempt to repeal any bills that have unnecessarily attacked them and their ability to play sports in school. I would fight for Medicaid expansion to provide more healthcare resources to those in need and also as a means to bring more revenue into the state. I grew up without health insurance so I will do everything I can to ensure no child or parent has to go through what I went through when it comes to health care insecurity. I will be a strong advocate for all measures to ensure reproductive justice for women and their families which includes access to an abortion, access to contraception, and access to sexual education. One of the most fundamental rights I will protect for all residents in HD 114 is the right to vote and I will fight to ensure that registering and voting will be easier and more accessible to all Texans. I will continue to work as I did as

a Legislative Liaison for the DA's office and pass criminal justice reform legislation. Further, I will ensure that the electric grid is reliable and can endure future extreme weather.

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

It would be an honor to receive the Stonewall endorsement and I would showcase it on all my social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok), along with my website, and any literature that we distribute.

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

My goal is to build-on the community advocacy skills that I have developed over the last decade. I have worked with several organizations like Stonewall, LULAC Rainbow Council, HRC, and many others. I believe that my track-record of working alongside numerous organizations has created an open and friendly environment for LGBTQ, people of color, and others with diverse backgrounds to work on my team. I have also worked on diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives while at the District Attorney's Office and believe that DEI is the key to a successful team. I have already asked numerous members of the community (LGBTQ, people of color, veterans, etc...) to volunteer or be resources for my team so that I can stay informed on various issues and be the best leader for my community. Through these coalitions, I have been able to recruit volunteers and will continue to build my staff. Further, I always attempt to use my pronouns (at events I have a pin or online I post them) and, if elected, will allow a place on business cards for pronouns. My goal is to always have an open mind and learn as much as possible to create a positive environment for my team.

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

Yes, I would love to have a liaison for my District as well as having a liaison with Stonewall Democrats of Dallas. It is important to not only know the important issues that are happening in our community but it is also important to have a liaison so that, if

elected, I can discuss any possible legislation that may impact the LGBTQ community.

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, of course

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 will continue to protect LGBTQ couples who are adopting a child. Since Texas now recognizes same-sex couple marriage, there are more protections for the couple in the adoption process. However, under “common-law marriage”, it still remains unclear how this affects same-sex couples and I would ensure that there are protections in place for same-sex couples in these scenarios.

Further, I would attempt to repeal and stop any further legislation permitting faith-based foster care providers to discriminate against LGBTQ foster parents, single parents and families whose faith does not match the providing agency. Further, I would stop the politicizing of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). In August, the Department declared that certain gender-affirming care is child abuse, and it removed a resource page from its website that offered specialized mental health resources for LGBTQ youth. I would support efforts that have attempted to provide a resource guide that helps the LGBTQ youth and caseworkers (even though it has been ignored by the DFPS Commissioner for over a year and half).

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

Yes. Texas is one of 16 States that still has this law in effect even though it has been ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court and it’s repeal has been introduced as a bill every year since 2005. Other states have had success by introducing it as a part of another bill, such as a “penal code clean up” bill. Perhaps if there are other portions of the penal code that will be amended or ruled unconstitutional, then I can write legislation that includes

this sodomy law and create a “penal code clean up” legislation bill to attempt to repeal it. Historically, a repeal of the sodomy law has never made it out of committee (meaning it will never make it to the House Floor/Senate and voted on), so, if elected, I can write criminal justice reform bills and track other related bills and add this sodomy repeal bill as an amendment to those bills.

C. Supporting safe schools for LGBTQ students?

If elected I would write legislation to prohibit discrimination in public schools based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. Currently there is no law in Texas prohibiting discrimination in public schools based on sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

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

Yes, this amendment is still on the books and defines marriage in this state shall consist only of the union of one man and one woman. Although same-sex marriage is now recognized by the Supreme Court, this could change, and given the recent conservative majority’s dominance on the Court, repeal of this amendment in Texas is important to deflate some of the legal ammunition that might be used in the courts in the future to attack this fundamental right to marry.

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 would attempt to repeal H.B. 25 if possible and work alongside the LGBTQ Caucus. Further, I would work with organizations that helped fight this bill like Equality Texas and the ACLU to see if any of the 20 amendments that attempted to mitigate the devastating effects of this bill could be attempted again in the next Legislative Session.

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?

I would do everything I could to repeal SB 8 or at the very least I would attempt to repeal portions of this bill. I fully advocate for reproductive justice which includes access to a safe and legal

abortion, access to evidence based sexual education programs, and access to sexual contraception. I believe that without access to all three, we are doing women and communities a disservice. Unfortunately, communities of low-socioeconomic status tend to be affected the most and those tend to also be communities of color. Without access to all three aspects of reproductive justice, communities and families are led to start a family before they are financially stable or have health problems that they cannot afford to address. Therefore, these communities are forced into poverty without having access to the health resources that they need. Not only is this a women's issue, it is an issue for the entire community. Since House District 114 is majority-minority (54% communities of color), and as the only woman and Latina in the primary, advocating for reproductive justice is one of my top priorities. This District needs a Representative in Austin that advocates for the vital issues discussed in this questionnaire and understands the direct impact it has in our community.

Allowing private citizens to report and receive monetary bounties for reporting anyone's involvement with an abortion is absolutely repulsive. This portion of the bill is something I would attempt to repeal not only because it is offensive but also because it is unnecessary and leads to unsafe abortions.

Further, as a former prosecutor who handled sex assault cases and fought for survivors of sex assault, it is unfathomable that there is no exception in SB 8 for cases of rape or incest. This portion of this bill is something I would absolutely work on repealing.

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?

We need a multi-part response to the growing poverty rate in Texas. The first and most important action needed is to increase the number of diverse representatives at the Legislature so that under-represented and forgotten communities will have a voice. I am that candidate. Communities of color were impacted at higher rates during the pandemic and health care disparities were brought to the forefront. After election, I would advocate

vigorously for Medicaid expansion to improve healthcare access for poor communities; Medicaid expansion can lead to alleviating the State budget and therefore more money can go towards education. This can further lead to lowering the burden of our property taxes funding the education budget which can alleviate an expense for home owners in Dallas.

Further, we need to allow local government agencies to manage their responses as they see fit and support our local leaders, like our county judges. Many of our local leaders are implementing and supporting efforts (like eviction moratoriums) in order to aid low-socioeconomic neighborhoods and those impacted the most by the pandemic.

Additionally, Texas needs to coordinate efforts with Federal legislation and provide subsidies for childcare for families hit hard by COVID and the crisis in child care that resulted.

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?

As a former undocumented immigrant who grew up without health insurance, I know firsthand what it's like to have healthcare insecurity and the devastating effects it has on a child and a family.

Texas has the highest rate of uninsured children in the nation and Dallas County ranks in the top 7 counties of the highest rate of uninsured children in the nation.

Those whose are eligible under the expansion of Medicaid include: nearly 8 in 10 who are in a family with at least one worker; and 3 out of 4 are people of color. I will strongly advocate for the expansion of Medicaid for our working families and for the 54% of HD 114 which is communities of color.

Further, I would partner with the city and county officials in Dallas to ensure that we continue to provide all residents with the resources they need to live healthy lives both physically and mentally. (The city of Dallas passed a \$72 million initiative to provide our neighbors experiencing homelessness wrap-around services and this was done with the help of both city and county

officials.)

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

One of the first steps is mandate weatherization to minimum standards for natural gas pipelines and have meaningful enforcement. As of right now, power plants have up to 3 years to winterize their pipes which means Texans will have to hope that we do not experience another winter storm like the one we had this year. We can also make homes and business more energy efficient to reduce the amount of energy that is being used in a situation like the one experienced in the winter storm.

ERCOT should also have an independent and expert Board of Directors, with experience, and Texas residency requirements.

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

Prevention is always the best strategy and I would support the restoration of funding for HIV prevention and the legalization of preventative at-home medications (PrEP) to prevent HIV.

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

Conversion therapy is not only inappropriate, it a basic violation of personal rights and freedoms. It's Un-American and I would strongly oppose such legislation.

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

If elected, I will continue to urge my federal Texas congresswomen and congressmen to pass the Dream Act legislation and create a pathway to citizenship for all the Dreamers (DACA recipients). It would contribute billions of dollars into our economy through state and federal taxes and improve the quality of life for our community members. Further, ensuring proper funding, proper management of the border, and improvement of our immigration courts can lead to a reduction in State and local dollars being

spent for “border protection.” This year, the Texas Legislature nearly tripled its budget for “border protection” and it was also followed by negative immigrant rhetoric. I would ensure that our state funding is properly allocated to where it is needed the most, like education.

I would continue to support legislation that allows Dreamers to pay in-state tuition for college (instead of international student fees). One of the reasons I am able to advocate for my community today is because of HB 1403, which allowed me to pay in-state tuition, even though I was an undocumented immigrant for most of my college career. If elected, I will always fight for the Texas DREAM Act and for Dreamers in my community.

Also, I would support municipalities that create ID’s for undocumented immigrants that can aid them in their everyday lives (avoid criminal penalties, open bank accounts, sign leases, etc...).

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

Respecting local control by school districts, cities and counties, in pursuing aggressive mask and vaccine mandates would be a part of the solution. The state’s interaction and communication with the federal government should be improved and viewed as a partnership instead of Texas viewing the federal government as the enemy. I would defer to local and national medical experts and follow their recommendations and the recommendations of the CDC and U.S. Health and Human Services.

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 follow the efforts that have already been put into place and also legislation that has been passed by Representative Neave that further protects victims of workplace harassment.

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

I will support legislation that will reduce and regulate flaring

that is known to cause health issues (asthma, difficulties in pregnancies, cancer, lung damage, and skin problems) and that affects communities of color at a higher rate.

I will also aid the efforts of federal legislation that aims to build major infrastructure and clean energy. I will also keep in mind the Railway Labor Act and the federal railway labor and safety laws.

Further, I will encourage DISD and other large businesses to follow the model of the DFW Airport that aims to cut emission to zero by 2030 using a variety of methods (solar panels, specific tinted windows, water fountains, etc...).

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

We should have automatic voter registration, same day registration, and make Election Day a holiday. Further, Texas has one of the most restrictive ID laws in the nation, and due to the pandemic, obtaining or renewing an ID at the DMV is even harder to obtain those required ID's. We should be finding alternatives to the additional ID's listed in our laws which will make it easier for our communities to vote.

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

95% of the growth in the last 10 years was in communities of color. This proportion should have been reflected in the redistricting of state districts and also in the addition of U.S. Congressional seats. This did not happen and is an outrage for my community (Latinos) and all other communities that were adversely affected. Legal challenges and restorative legislation should be pursued.

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 have been a member since 2019.

2022 Texas Candidate Questionnaire

Chris Leal

State Representative, Texas House District 114

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.

One of our campaigns top priorities is to ensure our state's various anti-discrimination laws finally covers ALL Texans, including LGBTQIA+ Texans. It is disgusting that it's almost 2022 and you can still be fired for your sexual orientation or gender identity in our state, or that adoption agencies can use "religious exemptions" to discriminate against both adoptive parents and children who are LGBTQIA+ (meanwhile Texas has more children waiting to be adopted than any other state). It angers me to think some of the most important people in my entire life — from my brother, to my only two professional mentors, to my dearest friends — have had to endure injustice and discrimination based on who they choose to love. Not only will we fight to finally expand discrimination coverage to LGBTQIA+ Texans, we will also close loopholes on employer size, so that businesses of all sizes can no longer discriminate. We will also fight to finally ban tortuous "conversion therapy" and when we finally pass paid family + sick leave for all workers, we will ensure ALL families are covered.

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 am a lifelong Democratic voter and have never voted for any other party. I absolutely make this affirmation.

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

I am a Dallas native, a public school teacher, a union member, a lifelong progressive Democrat, and a proud Tejano whose family has lived in Texas for 300 years. I am the first in my family to graduate college, graduating cum laude with degrees in Finance and Economics. Before teaching a Law & Justice class that I created for middle schoolers at a nationally recognized Blue Ribbon school here in Dallas, I previously had a business career, helping to manage a \$40 billion company directly supporting the CEO and CFO.

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

Our campaign is actually preparing to launch a long list of specific policy proposals. Some of the top priorities are to fix our education finance system (including recapture), expand Medicaid even beyond current proposals, raise the minimum wage and empower Texas workers & unions to increase stagnant wages, invest in rebuilding our infrastructure, create fully inclusive anti-discrimination policies, and dramatically increase our voter participation rate.

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

Earning the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas endorsements would be an incredible honor and game-changer for our campaign. We would shout it from the mountaintops and include it all over our campaign media.

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

Having a fully inclusive staff with LGBTQIA+ representation will be our top priority after getting elected. Our campaign values and endorsements will help with recruitment, and retention & friendly environment will be the easy part, because we'll have a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination of any kind.

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

I am a very hands on candidate and will be a very hands on

representative, so I would prefer to just meet directly with the LGBTQIA+ community on an on-going basis. But I would also be willing to have a liaison to help with communication when in session or when other legislative duties prevent me from being personally available.

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. As previously mentioned, a top priority will be to introduce/support a LGBTQIA+ non-discrimination bill to finally add sexual orientation and gender identity to existing prohibitions for employment, housing, insurance and contractors. Also to protect against discrimination of all types in public accommodations, business and services open to the general public (including adoption agencies). We will also expand the definition of an employer/business to 1 or more employees, so that no employer of any size can discriminate.

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?

In a place like Texas where we have more children waiting to be adopted than any other state, it is especially hateful that we let discrimination in adoption procedures to continue. We will ensure our anti-discrimination rules do not allow adoption/foster agencies to use “religious exemptions” to discriminate against LGBTQIA+ adoptive parents or children.

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

Absolutely. These laws have no place in our society. Stay out of people’s bedrooms and let people love who they want.

C. Supporting safe schools for LGBTQ students?

As a public school teacher, I’ve seen first hand how we need to make sure we support our LGBTQIA+ students. Being a young student is hard enough, and having to deal with sexuality and gender issues on top of it makes it even harder. I’ve personally had to shut down wannabe bullies yelling about “the bible does

not permit homosexuality” (gee, where do they hear that from?) and after this particular incident, I had a group of LGBTQIA+ students visit my classroom to say “thank you for sticking up for us Mr. Leal.” I immediately cried when they left my room, and it makes me tear up now just writing this. I’ve had students (on their own initiative) create artwork for my wall that indicate my classroom is a safe space. One of my policy priorities is to expand funding and resources for counseling and mental health in our schools, because we cannot expect students to learn if they are battling with social and emotional issues.

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

I absolutely support repealing this hateful amendment.

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 think this law should be repealed. I don’t believe lawmakers should be picking on LGBTQIA+ kids. These grown lawmakers have actual issues they should be focusing on, and what trans students are doing shouldn’t be anywhere on their list of concerns.

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?

SB8 needs to be repealed immediately. But we need to go beyond just repealing SB8 to actually strengthen the patient-provider relationship with a Patient Trust Act that empowers providers and patients to make healthcare decisions based on medical needs/standards, not on dictates from politicians. We also need to go back to allowing Planned Parenthood to participate in Medicaid and other state health programs as well.

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?

I believe we need to empower Texas workers by allowing all workers the right to collectively bargain, we need to eliminate

“right to work” laws and strengthen the “right to strike,” we need to raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour and tie it to inflation, we need to double the current overtime threshold to \$70,000 or higher, we need to reform the franchise tax to help small businesses and make sure large corporations are paying their fair share. I also believe key priorities like expanding Medicaid as far as possible (until we achieve universal health care at the federal level) and our forthcoming proposal for Childcare for All also help to tackle inequality and stagnant wages by focusing on the largest structural expenses in peoples lives (healthcare expense is the #1 cause of bankruptcy in our country and childcare can easily cost more than the median income).

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?

Texas needs to absolutely take up the current proposals to expand Medicaid for adults up to the maximum allowed 138% of the federal poverty level (FPL). This is something that would be paid for nearly entirely by the federal government, which means our tax dollars are already being spent on this, we just aren't receiving the benefit. But we need to go further and increase state income eligibility thresholds to at least 250% or more of the FPL for all additional Medicaid programs that cover children, CHIP and pregnant women in our state. We also need to increase income eligibility thresholds to at least 250% or more of the FPL for the Ryan White HIV/AIDS program. I believe healthcare is a human right and ultimately we need Medicare for All at the federal level. But until that becomes a reality, we can keep expanding our state programs as much as possible.

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

We still have much work to do to Fix our Grid. I believe last sessions SB2 bill was inadequate in fixing these issues, and further reforms are needed to ensure winterization and efficiency standards are increased and satisfied. We also need to go beyond regulations and provide actual investment in this infrastructure, not only on the generation side but also on the residential side.

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 would absolutely support legislating restoring/increasing HIV prevention funding, in addition to previously mentioned proposals to increase eligibility thresholds for Ryan White HIV/AIDS programs, expanding Medicaid coverage of HIV/AIDS services wherever possible, and also allowing Planned Parenthood to once again participate in Medicaid and other state health programs.

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

As previously mentioned, I believe it is long overdue to finally ban tortuous “conversion therapies” in our state. I would introduce and/or support this legislation by any means necessary.

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

While immigration is ultimately a federal issue, there is still much to be done at the state level. I believe all Texas residence should have access to ID's and would support/introduce legislation to ensure that happens. I also believe we must repeal the SB4 (2017) “show me your papers” law. We also must immediately end Gov. Abbott's Operation Lone Star program which is accelerating detentions and family separations at the border. And we must ban Abbott from using state funds to build federal infrastructure like a border wall. I would instead redirect these funds to go toward reuniting families separated at the border and to compensate victims. We must have a humane and dignified immigration policy.

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

We could start by making sure our public health responses are determined by public health professionals and scientists and not politicians more concerned with their own primary elections. The effective procedures (such as mask mandates, distancing requirements, vaccine rollouts and lockdowns if necessary) are already known, we just need to make sure we have protocols in place to implement these without political interference. I think

we could also use more PR campaigns and incentives to support vaccine uptake as well as strengthen unemployment systems and paid sick leave policies to allow people to stay home if necessary.

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 support this legislation. Our elected “leaders” need to be just that, leaders! They need to set standards for behavior and civic responsibility.

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

I believe we should set a target to boost renewable energy production in Texas to 50% or more by the end of this decade (2030). We can do this by increasing state renewable portfolio standards (RPS) and make them mandatory (instead of currently voluntary). Texas is already near 35% renewable energy sources, so I believe this is an ambitious and realist goal. I think Texas should also create a state residential solar rebate program and offer incentives for solar panel and electric vehicle manufacturers to build in Texas. I would also like to see us dramatically expand and boost conservation efforts through the Texas Parks & Wildlife. Lastly, and significantly, I believe our crumbling infrastructure provides an opportunity to do 3 things at once: rebuild our state for future generations, create opportunities to well-paying union jobs, and also ensure that this new infrastructure helps conserve our environment and carbon footprint.

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

We must start making it easier for Texans to participate in our democracy, not harder. Texas is usually dead last in voter turnout in the US, which is why our campaign will soon publicly announce a “Top 10 in 10” plan for our state — a new proposal and challenge to take Texas into the top 10 of voting states in the next 10 years. This plan would include well-known policies like automatic voter registration through any NVRA agency, online and same-day registration, universal vote by mail availability, removing barriers

to vote for persons with disabilities, and a PR campaign to publicize the “Top 10 in 10” push.

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

Over the last decade, 95% of population growth came from Texans of color, yet somehow legislatures in Austin created fewer minority-majority districts and instead created 6 new white-majority districts. At the very least, the recent redistricting/gerrymandering cycle should have allowed for this population growth to result in more minority opportunity districts. I believe we need independent redistricting commissions — politicians should not be drawing their own districts.

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 have been a member since this summer (2021).

2022 Texas Candidate Questionnaire

Charlie Gearing State Representative, Texas House District 114

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.

My wife Rachael and I have had a front-row seat to the trauma suffered in 2021 by our transgender and LGBTQ+ neighbors, including children and their families, as the Texas legislature worked to pass bill after bill attacking their community. Our neighbors one street over in Casa Linda Forest have an 11 year old transgender daughter and they testified repeatedly in Austin in 2021 in opposition to the 75 anti-transgender bills extremists tried to pass last summer. We have watched our neighbors struggle with the trauma of these bills coming up for committee votes and floor votes, even if some of the bills never became law. These attacks are wrong and must stop.

I have also worked extensively with the Dallas LGBT Bar Association to improve the standing of LGBTQ+ attorneys here in DFW. In late 2018, shortly before I became President of the Dallas Association of Young Lawyers (“DAYL”) in 2019, a DAYL board member approached me and asked why we did not work more with the LGBT Bar Association or recognize them in the same way we recognized the Dallas Women Lawyers Association, the Dallas Hispanic Bar Association, and other bar associations: with recognition as an equal “sister bar” with a voting seat on our board of directors. After that conversation, I decided I would make it my mission as President to get the Dallas LGBT Bar Association (DLGBTBA) the recognition and voice it deserved. Among several other compelling reasons, one reason why I felt this progress was important was that about 30% of the DLGBTBA’s membership, at the time, asked not to

be publicly identified as members. Regardless of their reasons, I felt it was incumbent upon us as allies to work to recognize and include these attorneys affirmatively in an effort to raise their standing and security in the profession. It took over a year of hard work, including convincing several conservative members of our board to join in the effort, but we passed an amendment in November 2019 with a nearly unanimous vote gaining the DLGBTBA a sister bar voting seat on our board. The DLGBTBA's press release on this achievement can be found here: <https://dlgbtba.org/2019/11/06/dallas-association-of-young-lawyers-%E2%80%8Eofficially-recognizes-dallas-lgbt-bar-association/>

It is my understanding, from what the DLGBTBA reported, that this was the first time any bar association in the state of Texas had provided this recognition to an LGBT bar association. In 2020, the Dallas Bar Association followed DAYL's lead with a provisional non-voting seat on their board for the LGBT Bar Association. The DLGBTBA has since flourished with increased membership and programming.

During my term as President of the DAYL, I also led the DAYL to reiterate our commitment to inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community in a resolution that read as follows:

“WHEREAS, the Dallas Association of Young Lawyers supports the rule of law and its equitable and just application to all citizens regardless of sex, race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or religion;

WHEREAS, the Dallas Association of Young Lawyers maintains a policy of openness and inclusion in its membership, inviting all young lawyers to be members and make meaningful contributions in support of DAYL's dual mission to serve young lawyers and the Dallas Community;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Dallas Association of Young Lawyers continually commits itself to fostering, creating, recruiting, and implementing a diverse and vibrant membership and leadership without regard to sex, race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or religion.”

My wife and I have also volunteered with several organizations to serve the LGBTQ+ community. I have volunteered with Promise House, an organization that serves at-risk youth, including runaway LGBTQ+ youth and youth that have been kicked out of their homes. We also volunteered in 2019 with Cathedral of Hope to serve breakfast to our LGBTQ+ neighbors experiencing homelessness, in the midst of the crisis involving several murders of black transgender women in Dallas (some as close as a mile from our home at White Rock Lake). Rachael and I have also toured the Resource Center and educated ourselves about the importance of that facility, and the vital services it provides, for the LGBTQ+ community here in Dallas. My wife Rachael is also on the Leadership Council for Lambda Legal Dallas and we are both proud to support them in their mission to achieve full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and everyone living with HIV.

Lastly, growing up, my family taught me the importance of equality and inclusion. They also taught me that every Texan must stand up and fight for these values and for their neighbors. My grandfather was a Southern Baptist minister who was run out of one town after another in the 1950s and '60s because he stood up against segregation, preaching and fighting for integration. We must also fight to stop the senseless bullying of transgender children and of our LGBTQ+ neighbors coming from out-of-touch Austin Republican politicians. In the Legislature, I will always stand up for equality, our LGBTQ+ neighbors, and their right to live as their authentic selves with respect, dignity, and peace.

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'm a proud lifelong Texas Democrat and have voted as such since I was old enough to cast my ballot. I have been an active volunteer on past Democratic campaigns for most of my adult life. I volunteered on Ron Kirk's 2002 Senate campaign and I was a proud member of the Vanderbilt Law Democrats. As a law student in Tennessee, I traveled to North Carolina in November 2008 to canvass and poll watch for President Obama's election. I

served as a Spring Fellow for Wendy Davis' campaign in 2014, and volunteered with President Biden's campaign throughout 2020 last year.

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

I have been a practicing attorney in Texas since 2010. I am a litigation partner at an East Dallas law firm, Weaver Johnston & Nelson, PLLC, and have been named one of D Magazine's Best Lawyers Under 40 four times.

I met my wife, Rachael, while volunteering at an event to help homeless veterans. Driven by our faith, we have put service at the center of our family life. During Hurricane Harvey, we worked at the Dallas Convention Center helping displaced Texans with legal issues. We volunteer regularly at local area food banks, and have helped keep Texans who lost their jobs due to COVID-19 in their homes by providing free legal advice to those facing eviction. I have been an active volunteer on past Democratic campaigns including serving as a Spring Fellow for Wendy Davis' campaign in 2014, and volunteering with President Biden's campaign throughout 2020.

I served as a board member, executive board member for the Dallas Association of Young Lawyers, and eventually served as its President in 2019. This organization has approximately 3,000 members across DFW. I planned and executed numerous community service projects, legal education presentations, and other events throughout my nine years as a member, mostly with the Aid to the Homeless, Lawyers Against Domestic Violence, Animal Welfare, and Attorney Wellness subcommittees. Notably, I led the DART Community Court for several years, a project with the Stewpot and DFW Justices of the Peace to help our neighbors experiencing homelessness to adjudicate their DART tickets so they could gain access to identification cards, benefits, housing, and a path out of poverty. I also founded the Pro Bono Partners program in 2015, which facilitates the provision of free legal services to the community by young lawyers. In 2020, lawyers in the program provided over 4,300 hours of free legal services to our neighbors.

As a board member and executive board member, I managed a sizable budget and over 30 subcommittees and dealt with various corporate governance issues for the DAYL. In 2017, I chaired the DAYL Foundation, leading that organization to award the highest amount of grants in its history to DFW legal non-profits to provide various legal services to our neighbors in need.

I am also proud to have been endorsed by Wendy Davis and Ambassador Ron Kirk in this race.

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

In Austin, I will always focus on the issues that matter to our community, including the restoration and protection of reproductive rights, ensuring equality for women, protecting the LGBTQ+ community and children from attacks by their elected officials, creating good paying jobs, ensuring our power grid works, fighting for paid leave and affordable child care, expanding Medicaid to address a number of public health problems, including our high maternal mortality rate,, and restoring and strengthening voting rights.

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

It would be an honor to receive the support and endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas and we would advertise it throughout the district. I would proudly display the endorsement on our website, social media, and other campaign materials such as direct mail, and paid digital media. We would also create signs specific to the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas endorsement which we would display at polling locations and other high traffic areas.

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

As I have done with our HD114 campaign, we will recruit diverse support and create an open environment for everyone. In office I will work to recruit and retain LGBTQ+ and LGBTQ-friendly staff

by prioritizing diversity in staff, implementing policies like a non-discrimination policy, and ensuring all of my staff takes implicit bias training so that we can make our best collective effort to welcome everyone into our office.

I'm also aware that outgoing HD 100 representative Jasmine Crockett made a concerted effort to make her Capitol office a place of refuge for LGBTQ+ citizens, specifically the transgender community, and I plan on working to create and provide the same safe space.

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

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 will support legislation or a constitutional amendment allowing LGBTQ+ couples to adopt and provide foster care. Every couple who wants to should be given the opportunity to grow their family, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

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

I will support legislation repealing this unconstitutional law. It is embarrassing to the State of Texas that this law is still on the books.

C. Supporting safe schools for LGBTQ students?

We must fight to stop the senseless bullying of transgender children and of our LGBTQ+ neighbors coming from out-of-touch and extremist Republicans in Austin. I will fight to repeal HB25 and I will support additional legislation to ensure a safe school environment for our LGBTQ+ students. I'll also work to block any

future bills that attack LGBTQ+ students or their families.

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

I will support legislation that repeals the Texas Marriage/Civil Union amendment.

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.

In Austin I will fight to repeal HB 25. This bill directly attacks a friend and neighbor of mine in Casa Linda Forest, and I have witnessed the pain it has caused for her and her family. It's not Texan, and it's wrong. I will always fight against attacks against our LGBTQ+ friends and neighbors. I will always stand up for equality, our LGBTQ+ neighbors, and their right to live as their authentic selves with respect, dignity, and peace.

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?

Right-wing extremists in Austin went too far when they passed the most egregious and restrictive abortion ban in the country, putting essential health care services out of reach for over seven million Texans. The bill even pits neighbor against neighbor, exposing health care providers and anyone helping a person seeking reproductive health care to nuisance lawsuits. This bill is just plain wrong, it's terrible public policy, and it's not Texan.

In Austin, I will fight to repeal these extreme attacks on women and trans and nonbinary individuals, restore the ability of every Texan to make their own health care decisions, and stand up to protect reproductive health and rights for all Texans. Notably, if Democrats remain in the minority in the legislature, one of my top initial goals would be to work with Republicans and Democrats to establish an exception for SB 8 for abortions provided for pregnancies resulting from rape or incest, or for abortions provided to protect the health of the mother. This is an exception common in nearly every other jurisdiction's abortion restrictions.

I also believe we must do more to support health care

organizations like Planned Parenthood so they can continue to provide quality, low-cost health care and reproductive health services to every Texan.

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?

In Austin, I will fight to build a Texas that works for everyone and invests in its workers - through increasing the minimum wage, increased access to training programs, and support for our community's small businesses and entrepreneurs, especially those from communities of color or other minority communities. Too many families are at risk, and our leaders must take every step possible to provide opportunity and to protect Texans from joblessness, insecurity, and poverty. I would also fight to fully fund our public schools which would help reduce the local property tax burden on our working families. Finally, residents of East Dallas are struggling with rising property taxes and many are at risk of losing their homes. We need to provide property tax relief to help families stay in East Dallas, including longtime homeowners and families that have paid off their homes, but cannot afford rising property taxes.

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?

Our healthcare system is broken, and we will have to work hard and fast to fix it. The first step is to expand Medicaid and bring our federal tax dollars back home to work for us. From addressing rising prescription drug costs to keeping hospitals open, we must take action to ensure that everyone has access to affordable healthcare and the ability to see a doctor when they need to.

In Austin, I will address the maternal mortality crisis in Texas. Our state has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, with 18.5 deaths per 100,000 live births, according to the CDC. Even worse, 31% of maternal deaths in Texas are black women. This is unacceptable, and we must do all we can to provide greater access to prenatal and postnatal care to protect Texas

women. Medicaid expansion will help address this problem, but additional programs to specifically address this issue may be needed, such as those included in the US House's Black Maternal Health Omnibus Act of 2021. For example, extending eligibility for the WIC program, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children would help improve health outcomes for mothers in Texas.

We must work together to find solutions that ensure that millions of Texans can afford to see a doctor and that every child has access to health insurance and can receive the care they need.

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

The power grid failure in February 2021 was unacceptable, and the legislature's failure to address ongoing risks and deficiencies in the grid is unconscionable. After over 700 Texans lost their lives, we must do more to ensure no other Texan loses their life due to a power outage. Extremist Republicans in Austin have continuously failed to institute the necessary reforms needed to prevent another grid failure. I believe we must immediately fix our state's power grid by doing more than requiring weatherization of natural gas lines. We must also improve requirements for energy providers to disclose measures they have taken to weatherize and to prevent failures from the February 2021 freeze.

Long term, we must also diversify our power resource in Texas by investing in more renewable energy, including solar, wind, and hydro energy. I know we must take urgent and substantive action to address the climate crisis by investing in these alternative sources and sustainable infrastructure to meet our state's energy demands while also creating green jobs that can help transition Texans into emerging energy industries and provide good-paying jobs for hard-working Texans.

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

In Austin I will support and cosponsor legislation restoring previous funding for HIV prevention in Texas including access to PrEP. Many new treatments and preventative drugs are available,

and with sufficient funding, we can help eliminate HIV altogether.

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

I will support legislation to ban the horrible practice of reparative/conversion therapy. I come from a family of mental health providers and understand the trauma and damage that these programs inflict on LGBTQ+ Texans.

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

Immigrants make our communities stronger and we should welcome them with open arms. In the legislature, I will work to make things like driver licenses and in state tuition available to undocumented students. I also will support state programs to provide humane housing and living conditions to immigrants seeking asylum, to the extent the federal government does not provide such housing.

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

We must make substantial investments into public health and ensure that our citizens have access to the healthcare resources they need, especially during a pandemic. In the legislature I would support increased funding to our critical healthcare services, as well as funding for things like the distribution of free at home rapid tests to Texans in the future.

I will also support a return of local control so local government leaders, such as Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins, can address public health crises as needed for this community. Governor Abbott's efforts to deprive local leaders of tools to help protect Texans and stop the spread of dangerous public health threats like COVID, such as masking requirements that allow businesses to stay open safely, are wrong, and again, they are not Texan.

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 support and cosponsor legislation to require mandatory sexual harassment and Equal Employment Opportunity training.

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

Climate Change is an urgent concern we must immediately take action to address. We must make investments into wind, solar, and hydro energy that will not only provide our grid with more sustainable power, but these investments will create thousands of new green jobs in the short and long term.

I also support greater investments in public transit systems that will reduce the need for independent vehicles that burn fossil fuels. I also support incentives for Texans to purchase electric and hybrid vehicles. I have been a proud owner and driver of a hybrid vehicle since 2014.

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

Republicans in Austin senselessly injured our democracy with the passage of SB1 in 2021, making it harder than ever for everyone, including disabled, minority, and elderly Texans, to vote. And it was all based on Donald Trump's Big Lie about the 2020 election. I will fight to repeal the recent attacks on our voting rights and work to expand access to the ballot box with increased vote by mail and early voting options, including 24 hour voting locations and mega-centers (like the American Airlines Center in Dallas) with more voting machines, so that all our neighbors can have their voices heard. I will also support repeal of the onerous obligations for Texans assisting other Texans, notably disabled and elderly Texans, to vote.

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

First and foremost, the legislature needed to abstain from diluting the voting power of various minority populations. These maps are prejudicial and unconstitutional. The legislature also needed to abstain from partisan gerrymandering to engineer their desired political results. Congressman Marc Veasey's 33rd Congressional District, and State Senator Nathan Johnson's 16th State Senate District are examples of map manipulation and unconstitutional

partisan gerrymandering.

I believe we must establish a bipartisan redistricting commission to stop partisan gerrymandering in the future.

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 now a member, as of January 3rd 2022.

2022 Dallas County Candidate Questionnaire

Philip Kingston

Dallas County Commissioner D2

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 have tried to be a true ally. I have supported Stonewall and HRC for many years. During my time on city council, I appointed many LGBTQ+ people to important roles in our city government. I fought for equality at both pension funds (and it was a fight). As part of a coalition with Omar Narvaez, I helped bring equal health benefits to trans employees. I have campaigned hard for LGBTQ+ candidates for public office. I support LGBTQ+ businesses. Melissa and I have made wonderful friends in the community. I am proud to have the endorsements of many LGBTQ+ elected officials and leaders, and I was proud to be the first 2-time recipient of the Dallas City Council's LGBT Task Force Ally of the Year award.

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?

Affirmed. Democrat.

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

20+ years of trial law in Dallas, 6 years on city council, and dozens of cooperative projects with Dallas County. I have a pretty solid list of progressive policy accomplishments.

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

There is an immediate opportunity and an immediate threat. The opportunity is to properly allocate COVID recovery funds to create an inclusive recovery for Dallas County residents. The threat is to our voting rights. The Elections Department must be transformed into a bulwark against Republican attacks on the right to vote.

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

I am proud to have been endorsed by Dallas Stonewall 3 times, and all three times I have highlighted that endorsement in mail, web ads, and other media.

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

By actively offering hired and appointed positions to LGBTQ+ people (whom I probably already know). I also will strictly require the county to comply with nondiscrimination policies.

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?

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”?

I worked in DC on free exercise and establishment clause issues. “Deeply held religious belief” exceptions to job duties and insurance coverage are recent inventions of far-right hate groups and have no connection to legitimate religious belief, in my opinion. I support workers and believe in progressive discipline over at-will termination, but failure to perform legal duties is a solid ground for termination.

County Commissioner Candidates

In light of decreased federal and state funding, how would you lead or support funding for HIV prevention in Dallas County including access to PrEP?

The county government is primarily responsible for public health and must support both prevention and treatment regardless of federal or state funding.

What would you do to support and assist the many people with mental illness who must rely on the public system for care in or out of incarceration?

Incarceration is a cause of, not an answer to, mental illness. The county must increase its commitment to preventive health care in clinics distributed throughout the county and its investment in permanent supportive housing.

How would you address the issues of non-Dallas County Residents using Parkland?

They should use it! But Dallas County deserves full reimbursement from their home counties or otherwise (such as through M4A).

How would you rate the County's Response to COVID?

Very good. My major complaint is that we were slow to litigate to put Greg Abbott in his place. Ask to see Clay Jenkins's texts from me.

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

The commissioners adopted a defensible map, but I was personally advocating for Map C that could have improved Latino representation. One of the county's legal consultants claimed it violated the VRA, and that is one of the most specious legal claims I have recently heard.

How can the county play a part in expanding voting rights and access, including voting centers and extended hours?

Basically, I want to copy everything my friend Chris Hollins did in Harris County. A real failure of the county government

for a long time has been weak efforts to register high school and community college students. I have recently defended a Stonewall-endorsed elected official against a frivolous election contest. The DA's office has the authority and the funding to fight these fraudulent cases that are being instigated and funded by Republicans to cast doubt on elections..

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?

We froze rent in 2020 in our units.

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?

8 years.

2022 Dallas County Candidate Questionnaire

Andrew Sommerman

Dallas County Commissioner D2

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 ex-wife, Nancy Sommerman, is the mother of my adult children. She is now married to Lynn Johnson. Nancy and Lynn have helped found and run Stonewall Democrats of Tarrant County. I lived the full experience of family coming out and seen the prejudices they faced. I have fought for their right to be safe, included and treated with equality and fairness.

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. I have been voting Democrat for over 40 years.

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

I am a voter protection lawyer. I represent Clay Jenkins in his litigation against Governor Abbott and J.J. Koch to keep us safe from COVID. I have had numerous cases defending our democratic values. I have represented the Democratic Party and its members on issues that include redistricting, voter ID, mail-in ballots, election recounts, and African American women who the Republicans targeted and tried to kick off the ballot. I have been an assistant to the city manager for the Town of Pantego, an economy and efficiency auditor for the Federal Government, and a small business owner in numerous successful ventures.

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

- Voter protection
- Inclusion and equality for LGBTQ Community, Latinos, African Americans, Asians and
- Native Americans
- Infrastructure management
- Homelessness initiative
- Mental health initiatives
- Task force on domestic violence
- Create a safe environment for all so that the County can flourish

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

It would be included in all of my campaign materials.

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

A safe work environment for all LGBTQ employees. Inclusion of the LGBTQ community in my staff.

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

Yes, but I don't think a liaison is necessary. I will be directly involved. You will never have a problem with communication with me and my staff. Put my number in your phone: 214-720-0720.

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 would have a non-discrimination and inclusion policy.

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 has obviously become a “dog whistle” for discrimination. That will not be tolerated. There is no valid deeply held religious belief that humans should discriminate against humans. I also will respect valid, deeply held beliefs of a religion (i.e., not working on the Sabbath and religious holidays), but this will never be grounds for discrimination.

County Commissioner Candidates

In light of decreased federal and state funding, how would you lead or support funding for HIV prevention in Dallas County including access to PrEP?

I would insist on and support PrEP and would seek to use COVID relief funds to support this endeavor.

What would you do to support and assist the many people with mental illness who must rely on the public system for care in or out of incarceration?

We must increase spending and support for those suffering from mental illness, homelessness, and domestic violence. This is one of the cornerstones of my campaign.

How would you address the issues of non-Dallas County Residents using Parkland?

We can not turn those in need away, but we can demand payment from other counties.

How would you rate the County’s Response to COVID?

Very good given the obstacles placed by Republicans in power. My firm has lead the fight against the Republicans’ unconscionable plan to increase the transmission of COVID.

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

The law needed to be followed. My firm has lead the charge against the illegal redistricting plan passed by the Republican legislature. Please ask anything you wish about these details but there are too many details to even outline here.

How can the county play a part in expanding voting rights and access, including voting centers and extended hours?

The Republican Legislature has done much to handcuff the County's efforts. However, we can make mail in ballots available in multiple locations, and we can make polling places more accessible. Voting centers are an essential part of this plan. It will cost a lot of money, but we must defend this most precious right.

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 recently joined.

2022 Dallas County Candidate Questionnaire

Tom Ervin

Dallas County Commissioner D2

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 am honored to have the opportunity to represent the LGBTQ+ community in the district, and will step into my role with a full understanding of the immense privilege I have been granted to be able to take on such a visible role.

To that end, I have attended various events, meetings, informational sessions, rallies and protests to expand my understanding of the needs and interests of the LGBTQ+ community. We have a diverse staff and volunteers that include members of the LGBTQ+ community, and we encourage conversations to share their experiences and struggles with our team. I am dedicated to learn how best to support the issues that matter most, and will support the newly formed Texas House LGBTQ+ Caucus.

I have attended rallies that include the Black Trans Lives Matter March where I was the only candidate or elected official present. I will always stand with and advocate for the most vulnerable in our communities. I will hire a staff that will represent the diversity of our district.

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 am a strong democrat. I endorse the platform and policies of the Texas Democratic Party, and will vote accordingly. My

primary voting record is as follows:

2020 - D, 2018 - D, 2016 - D.

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

County government is about County business, and that business is big. My education (BS in Geology and MBA from SMU) along with my experience with mergers, acquisitions, divestitures, operations, and management (a federal court appointed me as an Independent Manager to oversee the operations and management of a company during the six+ month bankruptcy proceeding) make me best qualified to be County Commissioner - District 2.

I have spent the past five years out in our community supporting Democratic candidates and issues, as a Precinct Chair, as a State House candidate, and working with groups to register voters and get out the vote. I will do my best to represent the all of the people in our community.

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

I will use my education and professional experience to be a good steward of the County's resources, but my priorities will be to expand, improve, and develop public healthcare services, real affordable housing, and quality public childcare. We can't wait for legislation from Austin or Washington DC to provide solutions to build a more inclusive and equitable public infrastructure.

I will also advocate to make our county facilities 'net zero energy' through reduced energy use and renewable energy programs.

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

I will proudly include the endorsement on our social media platforms, website, and campaign literature.

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

I will recruit and retain LGBTQ+ and LGBTQ+-friendly staff by creating a space that is inclusive to all identities and orientations. I am honored to be an ally to the LGBTQ+ community, and our strict anti-discrimination policy on our campaign makes sure that people of all sexual identities and orientations can feel safe, included, and welcome on our staff and in our office. We strive to create a space that opens doors and removes the barriers to entry for young people of color and young LGBTQ+ persons who are interested in politics but would otherwise not have the opportunity to have a seat at the table. Additionally, I will use my position to create LGBTQ+ friendly policies and advocate for our LGBTQ+ neighbors.

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

I am dedicated to hiring a diverse staff that reflects the diversity of our district and communities. I am willing to appoint a liaison to meet with the LGBTQ community on an ongoing basis, especially since the LGBTQ+ community is such a prominent part of our district. In addition, I will continue to communicate with and support the LGBTQ+ community.

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?

The policies I have in place on my campaign will be the policies of my office when I am elected. This means a strict non-discrimination policy and mandatory bias training for all employees. This also means maintaining an inclusive space for all residents of the County - one which, as I said earlier, opens doors and removes the barriers to entry for young people of color and young LGBTQ+ persons who are interested in politics but would otherwise not have the opportunity to have a seat at the table.

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 believe that the law is not governed by religion. I have a deeply held belief that “deeply held religious beliefs” are private and should not be an excuse to discriminate in public places of

business, education, or any other public venues. We need to recognize that grace and dignity are an essential part of our community and democracy. My job will be to represent the people.

County Commissioner Candidates

In light of decreased federal and state funding, how would you lead or support funding for HIV prevention in Dallas County including access to PrEP?

I will advocate for a program to assist in providing information regarding eligibility for Ready, Set, PrEP and assistance preparing the application for enrollment in the program.

In addition, I will work to build a partnership with public and/or private entities to provide the funds to cover costs for clinic tests and lab tests necessary to obtain or renew a prescription.

What would you do to support and assist the many people with mental illness who must rely on the public system for care in or out of incarceration?

We can begin by starting to acknowledge that mental healthcare is healthcare, and to ensure that our County's public health is maintained will require that we care for our residents' mental health, whether incarcerated or not. This discussion is more important than ever, since mental health issues are on the rise in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

One policy I would like to implement is the expansion of Parkland infrastructure to include satellite clinics throughout the County and focused in places with acute need. These clinics should provide healthcare services of all types, including mental health services.

Overall, it is clear that the material conditions in which an individual lives is a key metric for understanding their mental health. Oppression and poverty are bad for the brain, and County issues like food insecurity and housing insecurity are drivers of mental health crises. By improving these positions through expanded public housing programs and food pantry,

both of which the County Commissioner's Court could achieve through more active public-private partnerships, we can help alleviate these mental health issues.

Incarcerated people have their own unique challenges with mental health, and as wards of the state during their detainment, the County has a responsibility to maintain their health. We should ensure that our incarcerated population has easy access to qualified, professional mental healthcare from which they can continue to benefit upon their release.

How would you address the issues of non-Dallas County Residents using Parkland?

First, we cannot have a policy that allows Parkland to refuse care to non-residents. An extreme example would be when JFK was shot, the Secret Service rushed him to Parkland, where they attempted to save his life. This was the best, most accessible hospital for him, so that's where he went. I believe that all people are entitled to healthcare, and I want those who need the care Parkland provides to have access. However, we must solve the problem of huge amounts of uncompensated care being given to residents of other counties. Overall, Parkland provides \$1.1 billion in uncompensated care every year, causing significant financial strain on the Dallas County healthcare system.

We need to establish communication with potential regional partners - hospitals, general healthcare providers, health insurance companies, public and private employers, universities and colleges, community leaders, patient advocates, and all parties involved to come up with a regional solution to provide basic and emergency healthcare. We cannot wait on legislation from Austin or Washington D.C, to solve an urgent problem that results in some zip codes in Dallas County having an approximate 20 year shorter life expectancy.

How would you rate the County's Response to COVID?

I admire how the county mobilized resources from different community groups, government agencies and health care companies to distribute the COVID-19 vaccine. Judge Jenkins

and his supporters on the Commissioner's Court deserves commendation for his efforts to protect our residents in these difficult times.

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

The redistricting process at the County level is actually less partisan - read: more fair - than at the State level. The Commissioner's Court engaged an independent redistricting consultant to draw the maps based on maintaining neighborhood integrity and keeping full municipalities in single districts as much as possible, all of which made it impossible to maintain a red district in Dallas County, which voted for Biden by a 30-point margin. Now, we as Democrats have an opportunity to choose the best Democrat for the job, and I believe that my experience and qualifications positions me as that candidate.

How can the county play a part in expanding voting rights and access, including voting centers and extended hours?

Unfortunately, the Texas GOP has worked hard to limit the options Counties have to make the vote easier to access. While I would absolutely support drive-through and overnight voting, as well as universal mail ballots, these options have been taken away by legislators bent on disenfranchising our residents. We need to be creative in combating these policies. I believe this is another excellent opportunity to develop regional partnerships with other counties. Here in Dallas, voters are able to vote at any polling location in the County, not just the one designated for their precinct. Why not expand this option to include regional voting centers covering all of DFW? Commuters between counties would then have a much easier time submitting their vote even during a busy workday. I also believe the county should automatically send voter registration paperwork to all eligible unregistered residents to make it as easy as possible for them to get registered.

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?

New member.

2022 Dallas County Candidate Questionnaire

Michelle Ocker

Dallas County Commissioner D2

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 have become more active with Carrollton Pride. Carrollton is located in both Dallas and Denton Counties, and residents often feel left out of both counties. I was ecstatic to be the first (and only) Democrat to have a booth at the First Carrollton Pride Day! I learned how our local leaders “suggested” that Pride events not be held on public property, and other ways of trying to discourage gatherings. I was happy to openly stand with Carrollton Pride and show support!

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. Also, I have exclusively voted in the Democratic Primary, and I have run for office as a Democrat.

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

As a former attorney in Obama’s Justice Department, I learned how to fight for civil rights. I’ve also served as a Special Commissioner in Dallas County for the last two years, so I’m ready to hit the ground running on Day One.

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

I would like to ensure that the county uses CARES Act money

efficiently and fairly.

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

I would put it on my website and my literature.

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

I would advertise openings in groups and media that targets LGBTQ audiences.

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?

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”?

I would make sure that everyone is treated fairly and respectfully.

County Commissioner Candidates

In light of decreased federal and state funding, how would you lead or support funding for HIV prevention in Dallas County including access to PrEP?

I would make sure that the County found a way to meet the needs of the community for HIV prevention, including increased funding from the county.

What would you do to support and assist the many people with mental illness who must rely on the public system for care in or out of incarceration?

The first step would be to treat mental illness as illness, and I

would approach the issue without any stigma or shame. I would also try to ensure continuity of care, including access to therapy and medication.

How would you address the issues of non-Dallas County Residents using Parkland?

I do not have a plan yet for how to get the other counties to pay for their residents using Parkland, but it is an issue that I care about deeply, and I would like to put all options on the table so that everyone can get quality care.

How would you rate the County's Response to COVID?

Dallas County did a great job with COVID. JJ Koch, however, did not. As someone who was in JJ's district even before redistricting, I was entirely upset with his representation. He actively worked to keep District 2 residents from being able to access vaccines, and he was openly hostile towards wearing a mask. One of the reasons that I am running is to ensure that District 2 gets help dealing with COVID and our safety is paramount.

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

I'm very pleased with the pay redistricting cycle for the County Commissioners Districts. District 2 includes the "Jewish Heart" of Dallas County, which is the major synagogues and most Jewish neighborhoods. As a Jewish woman, I am running to ensure that we also have representation on the Commissioners Court. Additionally, District 2 includes most of the major mosques of Dallas County. I have visited every mosque in District 2, and I have made strong ties with the leaders. (My grandfather was Lebanese, and his last name was Habeeb.) The new District 2 will allow these two communities to have a leader who they trust and who understands their issues.

How can the county play a part in expanding voting rights and access, including voting centers and extended hours?

The Republicans have tried to shut down the ability to expand voting rights, but we can still work to ensure that people know how to vote, have the ability to access the polls, and aren't

intimidated outside the polls.

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 have joined Stonewall Democrats recently, but I was more involved in 2015-2018. For health reasons, I stepped back after 2018.

2022 Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Angel Mata

County Criminal Court 4

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.

I have recognized and been engaged with the LGBTQ+ community from a very young age. I have incredible number of relatives that identify as LGBTQ+. Being a part of a family with many LGBTQ+ members has opened my eyes to the many struggles they encounter daily. I have also endured the heartbreak and hurt as my brother struggled with his gender identity and took his life 4 years ago. But this is not enough, just having friends and relatives that are LGBTQ+ is not sufficient support and I realized this many years ago. It is important for me to speak out and defend them at every turn. The criminal justice system can be an awful place for those that identify as LGBTQ+ and it is my responsibility as a defense attorney to root out and address any discrimination I may see with my clients and this was no different when I was a prosecutor. The types of discrimination varies widely and is often overlooked. It can range from housing at the jail, profiling by the police and increased risk of involvement in the school to prison pipeline. Because the issues vary widely, particular examples also vary. One most recent example would be me emailing the head of a probation program and letting them know that my Client was being discriminated against when attending his evaluation. The program director has since reached back out to me to ask how they can improve their services to be more inclusive.

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 that I am a Democrat and have always voted as such.

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

I have been a practicing attorney for the preceding 12 years. My career trajectory has always led me on the path to run for a criminal bench. I began my career as a prosecutor. I prosecuted for 4 years in both Dallas and McLennan Counties. I left the Dallas County District Attorney's office in December 2013. Since that time, I have maintained a successful criminal practice. I have been a criminal defense attorney now for 8 years. I have tried nearly 100 criminal jury trials (97 to be exact) during my career. I have defended and prosecuted everything from minor traffic violations up to murder offenses. Additionally, I was appointed as an Associate Municipal Judge in February 2015. I have been a municipal judge in the City of Hutchins for 6 years now. Being a county criminal judge has always been a career goal and all my experience and knowledge has prepared me for this role.

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

I believe in every office there is always room for improvement. I am an overly ambitious individual and when I see some of the courts in Dallas County I also see how I could improve upon them. Some initiatives I would like to see, is a more streamlined process to get cases resolved. Often in Dallas County it can take 2-3 years to get a misdemeanor cases resolved. In the meanwhile, you have people accused of crimes that have their jobs and lives put on hold. Additionally, when it takes 2 years to resolve cases this is also time where an accused isn't getting proper rehabilitation or treatment that may be necessary (putting the community at risk). I would like to incentivize defendants for starting classes prior to final disposition, so for example, if they have a drinking problem or anger problem we get those issues addressed now rather than later. I also would like to clean up any outstanding warrants people have so that they can take care of their cases and move on with their lives.

How would you showcase your endorsement by Stonewall Democrats of

Dallas if received? Would you include the endorsement in your campaign media?

Yes, I would definitely include the endorsement in my campaign media. The Stonewall Democrats of Dallas is a very reputable organization and an endorsement is an honor and one that I would showcase so that the community knows I am a proud supporter of the LGBTQ+ community.

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

Throughout my career I have seen people mistreated by the criminal justice system. The LGBTQ+ community like other minority groups are often disproportionately discriminated against and mistreated. I have lay witness to this multiple times and I do not tolerate it. I have a zero-tolerance policy against discrimination and mistreating anyone no rather their gender identity, socio-economic status or color of their skin. Education, understanding, and compassion is key. I would like to see my court staff educated on different issues facing the LGBTQ+ community within the criminal justice system as well as implicit bias training. There are many issues facing the LGBTQ+ community within the criminal justice process and I would like my staff to be educated enough to be able to recognize and address discrimination when they see it. Lastly, while it may not seem important to others, just being friendly and helpful to everyone can really go a long way. This is a very scary process for defendants and complainants alike and sometimes a friendly face at the courthouse can help ease the process especially if you are a member of the LGBTQ+ community.

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 judge I understand that I have the opportunity to fulfill 2 employment positions, that of coordinator and court reporter. I already have two people in mind that I have worked with for many years and while they are both very religious this has never prevented them from performing their work in a fair and ethical manner. For those I do not employ I would like to see that a

productive conversation is had to see if we can come up with a healthy balance so that no one's rights are violated. Additionally, sometimes it may be a lack of knowledge and education so depending on the situation, perhaps diversity and implicit bias training is necessary. If we were unable to resolve the issue then perhaps a lateral move to another position may be necessary as I have the dual role of ensuring justice is fairly served while at that same time ensuring I do not violate someone's religious beliefs.

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

I am an incredibly organized individual and I would like to bring that work ethic to the bench. One of the most critical issues facing the Dallas County courts is delay and disarray. I would like to see a more streamlined process to get cases prosecuted so that people aren't left waiting years for resolution. Additionally, there are many cases that are falling through the cracks with people not getting notices of court dates from the courts and this is resulting in unnecessary warrants. I want to ensure everyone is noticed and if people have warrants that they are able to safely come to the court and get them resolved so they can move along in the process. A structured court policy with a published set of rules I think would greatly help the community in knowing what to expect when they come to my court.

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

The community has a constitutional right to access courts and court proceedings. Many people do not know this, so I think educating our community is key. This can be accomplished through social media presence and community engagement. Additionally, in terms of court related services I would like to visit with the all the court service providers to see how they are conducting business and ensure their programs are up to par with what the court requires. I would also like to ensure that court related services, such as probation and probation classes are easy to find and accessible to all.

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. I have handled nearly 100 jury trials in multiple counties across North Texas and the makeup of the jury never mirrors that of the community. Well qualified jurors often intentionally disqualify themselves. Educating our jurors on the necessity of their civic engagement is key. This can be done through social media campaigns and community awareness projects. Additionally, in Dallas County, a more streamlined process I believe would help prevent this from happening. It is unacceptable that jurors are left sitting in the jury room or in the halls for hour and hours on end. People are jaded with the process and only hear negative reviews of the jury process and this needs to change.

What is your general judicial philosophy?

My judicial philosophy will be that of fairness, compassion and understanding. As a former prosecutor, defense attorney and municipal judge I have a healthy balance of seeing all aspects of the criminal justice system. I am also a Dallas native of Pleasant Grove and have the additional background of real world experience in terms of handling people involved in the criminal justice system. As a teenager, I saw my older brother prosecuted in the courts of Dallas County, I also sat in court as the offender who brutally assaulted my young brother was taken to trial. This world view helps my understanding not only from a professional standpoint but a real-world view of how the criminal justice process works and impacts our community. I will bring this all to the bench.

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?

If people were to describe me by one word, they would say I am true to my name, "angel". I am a self-made individual. I am a first-generation college student. I grew up in one of the most dangerous parts of town. I came from very humble beginnings and by the time I was 19 I had seen the inside of the courtroom for nothing but hurt and heartache. I began my legal career with one

singular goal and that is to help people. I have fulfilled that goal each and every day for the last 12 years. When I am not working, I am volunteering. I love being a criminal attorney and could not see myself doing anything else. I have been asked for years to run for judge and the time has finally arrived and I know I will do a great job.

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 a current member of Stonewall Democrats and pledge my continued support and membership moving forward. While I only recently joined as a member I have been to some meetings in the past.

Dominique Torres Williams

Dallas County Criminal Court No. 4

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.

If elected to be the Judge of Dallas County Criminal Court # 4, I believe it's my job to be fair, impartial and equitable. These are traits that I already embody. As an ally, I believe that everyone in the LGBTQ+ community deserves the same rights and protections afforded under the Constitution and laws of this State. Because I am not a member of the community I believe the experiences that have served me best have been meeting with community members to discuss pressing issues in the LGBTQ+ community such as the time I meet with Cece Cox regarding transgender rights at DART. These conversations allow me to be better educated and informed.

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 entire voting history is democratic and I have been a delegate to the State Convention since 2016.

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

Legal experience serving on criminal and civil cases. Governance experience from serving on DART board of directors.

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

I'd like to create a specialty court aimed at dismissing certain types of cases upon the completion of rehabilitative programs.

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

Everywhere I could! Social media, printer and mailed items.

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

I believe that a courtroom and its staff should embody fairness and equality for everyone who enters the court. This can be accomplished by training and by ensuring that I set the tone that everyone is to be treated fairly. Good leadership starts at the top so I will make sure to avail myself and staff to proper training and asking and respecting how a person wants to be addressed.

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"?

If elected Judge, my job and the job of my staff is to fulfill our lawful work duties. If elected Judge, I'd be able to perform marriage ceremonies and will gladly welcome all people to my Court, if I have staff who do not want to fulfill work duties I will seek their assignment. .

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

I believe it's working on bail settings to ensure that the Court is not placing a prohibitive bail amount that restricts the release of a person pretrial.

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

I would like to see virtual court extended and to see better and easier system for the prosecutors to communicate with defense counsel.

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. I believe in educating people about jury duty and also making jury duty not as dreadful such as providing adequate recesses and snacks.

What is your general judicial philosophy?

To be fair, that Justice served does not always mean jail time, but can and likely does mean that some type of rehabilitation is needed.

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?

Not that I believe. I was endorsed by Stonewall Democrats in my 2017 run for Dallas City Council.

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?

Not that I believe. I was endorsed by Stonewall Democrats in my 2017 run for Dallas City Council.

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?

Since Dec. 2021

2022 Dallas County Candidate Questionnaire

Amye Thompson Hollins

District Clerk

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 Human Resources background and Christian upbringing leads me to believe that we should treat others like we want to be treated regardless of differences seen or unseen. I have had diversity and inclusion training several times in the past 10-15 years in various industries including the government sector. It is also necessary for customer service to be rendered to all, equally and excellently.

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 that I have supported the Texas Democratic Party. My voting record will show that I vote Democratic 100% of the time. My record is online and it captures data back to 2000.

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

I am educated with a BS in Kinesiology from TAMU in College Station and an MBA in HR from the University of Dallas in Irving. I have supervised, managed and led small and large teams, departments, memberships and cohorts of individuals to success of various sizes from 2 to 3 through 300. The District Clerk's Office is a records keeping roll, responsible for leading a team of approximately 270 deputies to create, maintain, facilitate and make available, the records of the proceedings of the District

Courts of Dallas County. I am a well-rounded Human Resources expert and labor relations manager who understands the needs of the employees in the clerk's office as well as the needs of the community. I have over 15 years experience working under and with collective bargaining agreements that has given me experience in negotiating benefits that serve both sides of employment even when there is no union presence. I have led and seen fair and equitable management that produces the results of excellent customer service and high productivity. I am skilled in writing and public speaking. I am also a product of Dallas County, and as such I have a unique edge of relatability to the constituents, having experienced my entire life, with the exception of time in college, here in the metroplex. Lastly, I am connected, I have honed relationships with various civic and service organizations that align closely with the Texas Democratic Party, my election to this office will be an asset to helping turn the state of Texas blue.

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

I plan to survey the employees, constituents and users of the clerk's office, including attorneys and pro ses, community leaders and colleagues and counterparts in other similar counties. I plan to attend required trainings about the role of the District Clerk in the state of Texas. I plan to review and submit for consideration, budget revisions for consideration of the Commissioners. I plan to meet with Tyler Communications and other vendors regarding available products that make records availability more accessible outside of the hours off 8am-430pm. I plan to allow scheduling flexibility to meet the needs of the e-file desk. I plan to hold a job fair to fill vacancies in an unbiased consistent manner, filling positions with people who work regardless of who is watching. I plan to facilitate training for leaders and staff on various relevant topics including diversity and inclusion and excellent customer service. I plan to hold everyone accountable equally and celebrate everyone equally in each department. I plan to revise the current District Clerk's handbook to remove out-of-date language and language that is discriminatory on it's face. I plan to ensure the handbook language is consistent with the county code and where possible shows the compassion of a servant leader. I plan

to ensure reviews are done annually regardless of the plans for raises and merit increases. I plan to make the office a place where people are proud to work and that the community is happy to interact with.

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

The endorsement will be showcased in a large way individually, initially. The endorsement quite frankly is considered a crown-jewel, and as such it will be included on website and social media platforms as well as in various advertisements that the campaign will secure as we near early voting and Election Day.

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

Absolutely, I will lead an inclusive atmosphere where relationships are built on getting to know and appreciate each individual, this will create an environment where everyone can thrive and grow. This will be promoted by facilitating regularly scheduled team builds that allow for coworkers to get to know one another and find value in each other. I will recruit members of the LGBTQ+ community by setting an HR standard that does not inadvertently categorize or stereotype individuals.

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

An appointment would be good, however I would rather form a departmental committee that represents the LGBTQ+ community that can provide a broad view of the needs of the community and not an individual's point of view.

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, there are labor relations management and human resource strategies that I will employ that are similar to those enacted to prevent racial discrimination. Examples are, not using video or phone pre-screenings that can unfairly scratch a candidate; and consistent use of the application and resume as

the only tools to vet an applicant.

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”?

If the action is protected by DOL, FLSA, EEOC or other state or federal laws, then the action is protected. I will strive to set standards that are so inclusive that you can not tell who is exercising a religious belief or who has an eclectic style of dress. Particular prohibitions in the handbook, and those decisions within the authority of the elected official, like not allowing fashionable head wraps or head covers will be removed.

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, I strive to lead a transparent life, not one that is free from flaw, but it is absolutely transparent. My social media and interactions across every aspect of my life will support this fact.

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 joined in September of 2021.

2022 Dallas County Candidate Questionnaire

Felicia Pitre

Dallas County Clerk

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 constituent service representative for State Representative Terri Hodge, I worked to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ persons in the district and to advocate on their behalf with state and local government. I also represented Ms. Hodge at events in the LGBTQ community and participated in the annual Pride March and rally. I also served on the La Sima Foundation which provides services to persons impacted by the HIV epidemic. In that capacity, I conducted trainings for economically impacted and socially marginalized communities on HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness. I was an active participant in the South Dallas AIDS Walk and provided one-on-one education for at risk persons on risk reduction strategies. In the course of my community service activities, I met and worked closely with LGBTQ+ persons in our joint efforts to create a more healthy and safe 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 am a proud, lifelong Democrat and have voted in every Democratic primary since moving to Dallas in the 1980s.

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

I have served as the Dallas County District Clerk since January

1, 2015. Prior to that, I served as the manager of the clerk's criminal courts section. I am recognized as a statewide expert resource on expunctions and non-disclosures.

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

My office is actively engaged in completing a ten year project in converting the criminal courts from a forty year old mainframe computer system to a modern cutting edge case management resource. This project will dramatically improve court efficiency and ensure defendants will not languish in jail waiting for trial, and victims of crimes will get the justice they deserve. I am also piloting a "pen packet" project to transfer court information electronically from the county to TDCJ which will move inmates more quickly out of the jail and save Dallas County taxpayers money. I am also piloting a paper-free process for sending civil process from the court to the constable offices, saving money on paper, staff time, constable service time, and improving the overall efficiency of citation services. The public has a right to access information concerning warrants but the current does not provide a functional way for the public to access it. I am piloting a new project to make warrants and other material in the public interest conveniently available.

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

I received the endorsement of Stonewall Democrats in my first race for District Clerk in 2014 and included that endorsement on my website and all of my campaign communication.

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

I have LGBTQ+ in top leadership positions in my office. My office was the first to include protections for transgendered persons and I recently met with a representative of the transgendered community to discuss accessing court services.

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, we have a policy in place included in our employee handbook.

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”?

The District Clerk’s office provides services as required by statute. No deputy may refuse to perform those services and would be separated from the office should they refuse.

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?

April 2017

2022 Texas Candidate Questionnaire

Uduak Nkanga
State Representative, Texas House District 113

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.

I don't have personal experience working with specific LGBTQ+ organizations, however I have experience collaborating with black organizations that intersect with the LGBTQ+ community that includes but is not limited to community organizing, protests, fighting for social equity, etc. I believe that this will help me gain a better understanding of the LGBTQ+ community and give me the experience that everyone needs.

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 history voting Democratic

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

Former presidential communications associate, 8+ years community organizing, 8+ years grass rooting, former state paralegal/case manager, first annual Keith Davis you turn award recipient, etc.

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

My specific plans include but are not limited to being easily accessible for the 113th district. I believe the job does not end at the capitol. I am someone who plans to get involved in local organizations, leaders, and community organizers to ensure

district 113th is represented to the best of its abilities. Being a louder voice and advocate for the district and the state at the capitol as well.

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

I will personally make sure it is included not only public website but posted on campaign social media accounts

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

By creating a safe space for my staff members that are LBGT+ to report any discrimination they may experience to me.

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!!

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 am in full support in allowing LBGT+ couples to adopt and provide foster homes.

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

[blank]

C. Supporting safe schools for LGBTQ students?

By speaking out and partnering with schools to provide proper counseling for LBGTQ+ students.

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

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 genuinely still to this day confused why that was even made a bill. I think that bill had a motive to marginalize the LGBT+ community.

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?

[blank]

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?

[blank]

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?

[blank]

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

[blank]

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

[blank]

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

[blank]

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

[blank]

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

the next pandemic?

By providing more resources and more locations to do rapid testing. Having more locations and resources can help with the extensive lines and wait time. Also providing home testing kits can have a real benefit. A key thing as well is actually making the vaccination free. There are still locations charging the people to get the vaccination AND the test. A lot of private clinics have complained that they were charged for the vaccination test, so that is the reason why upcharge clients.

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!

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

Although a lot of the States' power is restrained in what we can do without the support on the Federal level. It is still important we have the fight for our climate in our priorities. That includes advocating for the Green New Deal and investing in our climate. From what has happened in Colorado to what goes on in California, it is without question our climate is in danger and we need to stand behind that fight.

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

By advocating and voting in favor for bills that make voting easily accessible. That includes longer voting hours, fighting for those incarcerated to vote, those with a felony record to vote, etc.

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

It would've helped if the GOP didn't just flat out intentionally pick who they want their voters to be instead the voters should pick who represent them. It was a clear case of abusing power and redistricting to benefit the GOP in the long run.

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?

This answer will depend on what commitment is needed to be a member of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas (i.e daily membership fee, committed weekly hours, committed weekly meeting attendance, etc.)

2022 Texas Candidate Questionnaire

Rhetta Andrews Bowers State Representative, Texas House District 113

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.

Upon my return from the 87th Regular Legislative Session in June, in my home town of Rowlett, members of the LGBTQ+ community in our city were fighting to just be observed and accepted in the community by merely observing PRIDE month by lighting the city's water tower with PRIDE in rainbow colors. I submitted my statement to the city council and joined many supporters and advocates for LGBTQ+ rights at the city council meeting and spoke in support of observing PRIDE in this way. With an enormous amount of support and organized advocates working together in our community, media attention and an overwhelming response and advocacy across multiple social media platforms we eventually we won.

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 am strong Democratic voter that votes for Democrats in every election.

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

I am a strong, effective, and well respected leader in the Texas House that supports all efforts to stand up for what's right and what works for my constituents and all Texans. I am currently the Dallas County Delegation Democratic Chair and serve as Vice Chair of the House Committee on Homeland Security and Public

Safety. I believe the work I've done like the Law Enforcement listening series in the interim of 2019 and my effective ability to work across the aisle and well with others afforded me the opportunity to serve in leadership with a vice chair appointment to a leadership role during my second term.

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

Once I am re-elected, I will continue to serve HD 113 by nurturing and building on the relationships started in my newly drawn more democratic district. Bring more access to testing and the vaccine to the district and keep my constituents informed as we journey through and combat this virus. I will support and help more Democrats get elected and begin to prepare and shape my legislative agenda by gathering information specifically information based on my constituent needs.

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 display the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas endorsement on campaign literature, on my website and share on all social media platforms used by my campaign, as I have in the past.

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

I will continue to have an open door policy for my office and hire LGBTQ+ staff and LGBTQ+-friendly staff in my state offices and on my campaign teams.

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

Of course, I would be willing to appoint a liaison to meet with the LGBTQ community on an ongoing basis. I believe it is important to have a staff and team with representation for all. I believe everyone deserves a seat at the table and because of it every voice and all perspectives will be spoken for, heard and represented.

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?

We do and we will.

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 vote for, recruit the support of my colleagues and serve as an advocate in the community. I am also a current and active member of the LGBT Caucus.

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

I would support the repeal of the sodomy law that was ruled unconstitutional by the US Supreme Court.

C. Supporting safe schools for LGBTQ students?

I would support and have supported safe schools for LGBTQ students when transgender students were under attack during the 87th Legislative Session and in the additional special sessions.

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

I will continue to support the repeal of the Texas Marriage/Civil Union Amendment and serve as an advocate for members of the LGBTQ+ community.

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 collaborated with my colleagues and fought against H.B 25 especially when it came to the mental health and well being of transgender students when we debated this issue on the House floor, refused to sign on as a co-author and voted no on this bill.

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?

I worked with my colleagues and fought against this ban on our

bodies, refused to co-author S.B. 8 and voted no on this bill.

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?

I would by finding a way to stop the spread of COVID 19. Continue working in my district as an advocate for testing and the vaccine by providing access to testing and the vaccine as my office has continuously done across the HD 113 throughout the pandemic.

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?

During the interim of my first term at the onset of the pandemic, I drafted a letter to Governor Abbott that garnered bipartisan support from my colleagues in the Texas House that dealt with this issue specifically. It shed light on what we already knew when it comes to inequities in healthcare funding and options for all Texans and asked that more accurate data be collected when dealing with COVID 19 patients, victims and survivors early on.

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

Energy companies must continue to inspect, update, invest in and weatherize the Texas Power Grid to make sure what happened in February of 2020 will never happen again. In addition continuous recruiting and training of electrical workers is key. When touring a power plant in my district and talking to staff members it was clear that they were shorthanded and understaffed and positions were becoming extinct because of it.

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 would advocate for funding for HIV prevention in Texas to provide access to PrEP/pre-exposure prophylaxis medications that are 99% effective when taken as prescribed.

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

If asked I would author legislation that speaks out against such dangerous therapies that could and would eventually lead to mental distress and trauma.

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

As Vice Chair of the Texas House Committee on Public Safety, I recently took a trip down to the border and I was surprised to find during their presentation that Texas state troopers are processing approximately 30,000 immigrants seeking refuge each week and saddened by the disgraceful revelation that upon entry immigrants are being immediately entered in the criminal justice system.

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

Move more rapidly at quarantining those sufferers and first found to have contracted the disease, follow the science, believe in it, keep the public informed and consider vaccine mandates.

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.

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

We are currently experiencing the effects of climate change with last year's winter storm, wildfires rapidly spreading across the west coast and unseasonably warm temperatures even this winter as we currently experience drastic changes in temperature. Scientists have been known to agree that to avoid the most catastrophic effects of climate change, countries must immediately move away from dirty energy sources like coal, oil and gas and instead turn to renewable energy sources like wind, solar or nuclear power. Moving towards electric cars already on the horizon would be another solution.

If applicable to your office, how would you address voter suppression in

Texas and work to expand access to voting by eligible voters?

At the end of the 87th Regular Legislative session, I was one of the first Democratic House members in Texas to walk off the floor and I would absolutely do it again. I spoke out against the voter suppression bill on the floor and traveled to Washington, D.C. with 57 of my colleagues to lobby US Congress and US Senate about the passage of the John Lewis Voting Rights Act and the For the People Act all of which I would do again, if necessary. Now that this restrictive law has been enacted I will continue to fight against it, urge repealing it and advocate at the state for protections for Texas voters when it comes to our freedom to vote and to educate voters on ways to make sure under this law their vote always counts.

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

To assure we had fair maps testimony that was presented to the committee needed to be valued and considered seriously when drawing the maps. We should have never taken redistricting up during a special session. There was just not enough time.

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 have been affiliated with the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas since December of 2015.

2022 Texas Candidate Questionnaire

Michael Lange
Texas Land Commissioner

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.

My Friends of many years, people I have hired in my business life, organizations I am a member of and more. I treat everyone with equal respect.

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 am a long time sustaining member and major donor to the Texas Democratic Party. I vote Democrat. A Democrat since age 16. I Chaired the Business Roundtable Committee for the Texas Democratic Party from 2018-2021. Member Rules Committee at the 2000 DNC Convention in Los Angeles. National Delegate to DNC Convention in 2004 for Kerry.

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

The Land Commissioner manages an annual budget of \$ 3.4 Billion and growing. There are 800 full time staff, \$2.66 Billion in Veteran Loan Capital, up to \$600 Million of new Veteran loans each year, Serve over 1.4 Million Texas Veterans, take care of 1.6 Million visitors to the Alamo each year and the up to \$450 Million renovation project, manage 9 veteran residential care homes, 4 cemeteries, 13 Million acres (think 13 million American football fields) of public lands that produce more than \$ 1 Billion of investment income to the Permanent School Fund (K-12) that directly helps kids and teachers as well as manage the entire

Texas Coast from the beach out to 10.35 miles into the Gulf of Mexico and much more. A very complex job that very few Texans are aware of. Doing it well can have a positive impact and give Texans Better Lives. I have almost 40 years of experience in small business and large complex organizations doing this type of work. I have managed larger teams in multi-billion dollar companies in Texas, the U.S. and overseas. Real world experience and common sense for a complex and important job. Better Lives, LANGE for Land.

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

Make Texas the Small Business Champion of the US for both employers and employees. Best place to operate one. Increase the contribution from the Land Commissioner to well over \$ 1 Billion to the Permanent School Fund with better management to help fund public schools, use my TEXAS HAS YOUR SIX plan for Veterans and Gold Star Families to ensure that state benefits for them are easy to understand and access as well as be the best in the Nation. Create more advanced hurricane planning and recovery for the Texas coast and deal with coastal erosion in a more effective manner. Complete the renovation of the Alamo to preserve it for future generations. Texas is currently ranked 45th in the Nation in Reading skills for K-12. 44 states do it better. We are in the bottom 5. Texas should be in the top 5. I will be a force for change to improve Reading skills and get it to the top 5 and maintain that place.

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

It would be included on my campaign media with Pride!

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

I believe in treating everyone with equal respect. It is one of my campaign priorities. You can find it on my website: Langeforland.com

Would you be willing to appoint a liaison to meet with the LGBTQ

community on an ongoing basis? If not, why?

Yes, very important.

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. Treat everyone with equal respect

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?

Not applicable to Land Commissioner but would support

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

Yes, long overdue

C. Supporting safe schools for LGBTQ students?

Yes

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

Yes

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.

Not applicable to Land Commissioner.

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?

Believe in the right of a human to control their own person but not applicable to Land Commissioner. Do not support SB 8.

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?

I would make Texas the small business champion of the U.S.

for both employers and employees. Make Texas the best place to operate a small business. Public/private partnerships with small business to create good new jobs across Texas that are sustainable. Need to offer more support for small businesses directly affected by Covid.

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?

Not applicable to Land Commissioner. Medicaid in Texas needs to be expanded to the levels offered by the Federal Government;

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

Note applicable to Land Commissioner. Would require winterization of all critical points on the grid with no opt outs with annual audits and upgrades to standards they have in the NorthEast of the US where these type storms occur regularly.

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

Not applicable. Would support funding for HIV prevention

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

Not applicable. Treat everyone with Equal respect.

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

Not applicable to Land Commissioner but would Give Dreamers a clear path to a state ID.

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

Get more free rapid tests and especially more free PCR tests for Texans. Open more outlets and get test results back quicker than we do now. Make it much easier than it is now.

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?

I think it is a good idea, would be supportive.

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

The change in weather is real. We have to deal with it as a state and a nation. Environmental safety is a fundamental concern.

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

I believe in voting rights. Foundation of Democracy. Not applicable to Land Commissioner but full support for voting rights.

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

Not applicable to Land Commissioner. We needed to be more effective in winning in November 2020. We need candidates that can win Democrat and Independent voters in November 2022. LBJ said, the primary voter is powerful. But if the candidate chosen in the primary has little chance of winning in November, all we have done is gift the other side an easier victory and the other side are 100% against us. The focus needs to be winning in the Texas of November 2022.

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. Would have no issue pledging to join.

2022 Texas Candidate Questionnaire

Jay Kleberg
Texas Land Commissioner

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.

In 2020 and 2021, I led an alumni effort at my high school to push the administration to hire a Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and to develop a comprehensive strategic plan to address the recruitment, school environment and post-graduation experience for all students, including LGBTQ+ students. We were successful in our efforts and in early 2021 the school hired a new DEI officer and the board is working on a comprehensive strategic plan to ensure that the school reflects the diversity of the country.

While the General Land Office does not directly impact policies relating to LGBTQ+ protections and equality. However, we still need leaders at every level of government who will stand up and fight for all Texans, regardless of who they love. As an ally, I will do just 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 affirm my affiliation with the platform and policies of the Texas Democratic Party. I'm a Democrat and have always stood for Democratic values. I've voted in three Republican primaries in my time as a Texas voter. I voted in two Republican primaries in El Paso, one of which was for my run in the District 78 primary over a decade ago to give my community a voice in a Republican-led legislature, and in another primary to ensure the weakest Republican matched up against a Democrat in the general election.

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

I've spent my entire life working to protect and preserve this beautiful state. From my time working on the ranch as a kid, to my work with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation, to the environmental advocacy curriculum I've helped develop for a new feature film called Deep in the Heart: A Texas Wildlife Story, it's clear that we are in a crisis and Texas has the unique ability to lead the way in addressing climate change. I also produced a critically-acclaimed film, The River and the Wall, that showed the irresponsibility of Trump's border wall from an environmental perspective.

I believe loving Texas and accepting the science behind climate change go hand-in-hand. Equipped with land management experience, a deep understanding of our state's environmental challenges, and an MBA from the University of Texas, I'm ready to get to work.

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

My top priorities if elected as Texas Land Commissioner are to adequately fund our Texas schools through the General Land Office's contribution to the Permanent School Fund, address the effects of climate change and diversify our state's energy portfolio to strengthen our grid, and to prepare for future natural disasters by fortifying our coast and other vulnerable areas of our state.

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

I would display my endorsement by the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas anywhere my campaign uses other endorsements, including, but not limited to, on social media, in mail pieces, on TV and digital ads, and on our campaign website. I would be proud to showcase the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrat of Dallas.

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

From an office management perspective, I will take conscious steps to hire a diverse staff, including members from the LGBTQ+ community. I also will insist that my staff's preferred pronouns are used in their work correspondence and email signature blocks, and when possible, I will ensure my office supports unionized workers. To ensure that the GLO reflects the diversity of the state, I would also hire a Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

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

Absolutely. Throughout this campaign, I have made conscious efforts to get input from folks with diverse perspectives and identities across the state. I have a team of LGBTQ+ advisors who have ensured that I am running this campaign with the knowledge of issues most important to the LGBTQ+ community. If elected, I will continue to do the same.

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 fully support non-discrimination ordinances that protect our most vulnerable Texans. No person should be denied employment--or any other right--based on sexual orientation or gender identity. We should not be debating whether or not Texans deserve the right to equal and fair treatment 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?

Texas ranks among the top states with the highest income inequality and poverty levels. The richest 5 percent of households in Texas have average incomes 14 times as large as the bottom 20 percent of households and nearly 5 times as large as the middle 20 percent of households. The COVID-19 pandemic and near economic collapse only further exacerbated the problems with income inequality that our state has struggled with for decades.

While the General Land Office does not directly impact policies

relating to income inequality and growing poverty rates in Texas, it does manage Texas' 13 million acres of public lands—including coastal communities which are especially susceptible to the effects of climate change. Our coast provides employment for over 2.5 million people in Texas and we are the nation's top exporter. Our ports provide 368 billion dollars in economic value to Texas which we must protect, expand on and fortify. The GLO has the opportunity to play a major role in protecting all built infrastructure on the Texas coast and the livelihood of Texans living in coastal communities, which make up nearly 25% of our state's population and gross domestic product.

Additionally, the GLO must champion a diversified portfolio of renewable energy such as geothermal, wind, solar and offshore hydrogen production. There are more than one million jobs that can be created in the transition to a cleaner economy. The GLO can lead the way in addressing the climate crisis and work directly with communities across Texas to promote job and service opportunities and stimulate the economy.

Beyond this, our leaders should be focused on crafting policies that improve our economy and address the income inequality and growing poverty rates in our state. Policies that address and work to eliminate the gender pay gap, create jobs, and provide easily accessible, high quality, and affordable education to all Texans.

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

Instead of doing what's best for the health and well being of Texans, Gov. Abbott and his Republican buddies have gone all out in their culture war and are crafting policies based on half truths and disproven conspiracy theories. First and foremost, we need to ensure that we are increasing access to affordable, high-quality, health care services and insurance benefits. Additionally, we should have strict state-wide mask mandates, improve access to and further encourage vaccinations and boosters, and discourage all non-essential travel and public meetings.

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?

Because of the limited purview of the office of Land Commissioner, I would not have an official impact on any legislation passed. However, I would fully support legislation to require mandatory sexual harassment and Equal Employment Opportunity training.

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

We've seen climate change impact us already. All that we love is at risk, but we have the opportunity and ability to do something about it -- before it's too late. Texas is the top emitter of carbon dioxide in the country. We must take advantage of our state capacity to store carbon dioxide, invest in renewable energy, and partner with conservation organizations to ensure a future with clean air, clean water, and open spaces. The General Land Office (GLO) has the ability to lead Texas toward a carbon neutral future by 2050. If elected, I will work to make the transition to a clean energy economy, strengthen our grid, fortify our coast and port communities, conserve open space and working lands, and guarantee clean air and water for generations to come.

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

While redistricting is not under the purview of the General Land Office, I personally believe that fair representation in Austin and Washington, DC is fundamental to our democracy. Despite people of color fueling population growth in Texas, the Republican lead Legislature reduced Black and Hispanic majority congressional districts, split up communities of color, and diluted the power of Texans across the state. Recently, the Biden administration filed a number of lawsuits challenging Republican gerrymandering in Texas. Clearly, our current redistricting process is used to further political goals by drawing boundaries to protect incumbents and reduce competition, rather than ensuring equal voting power and fair representation. We need to reimagine our redistricting process to ensure that every Texan has a say in our democracy.

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, but I pledge to join the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas before the endorsement screenings.

2022 Texas Candidate Questionnaire

Michael Lange
Texas Land Commissioner

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.

I was endorsed by local chapter in San Antonio when I ran for City Council. My best friend at the time had to flee to Houston in order not to be under threat of bodily harm. She was a beautiful soul and transgender. Her surgery was paid for by the government in what she termed “a cattle call” for perspective patients. Serving as a Marine she always believed she was a woman, so she followed her truth. I miss her if you see her tell her I am looking for her. Her name is Anna Marie Rosenberg.

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 absolutely make this affirmation and I have a consistent history with voting for our platforms values.

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

This office has the potential to be much more as the previous administration has proven it to be. I wish to expand on those accomplishments and have the desire to integrate mental health components. Most notably it has been disconcerting knowing how board members under GLO lack diversity. I plan to change that.

My academic background has engrained System’s Theory in my approach to critical thinking and problem solving. This skill set is essential in running a successful organization and fostering

healthy relationships between this government agency and Texans.

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

Pandemic issues loom and more so now than last several months as a surge continues upward. The GLO needs a multi-strategy approach to disaster preparedness at this point and moving forward. Specifically considering a natural disaster coupled with pandemic contagion we will need a diverse board under the GLO to include medical teams, mental health professionals, specialized teams on military family and their resilience, etc. We will also need to expand our efforts to solidifying more meaningful care with Veterans benefits, mental health providing, and begin expanding more programs and grant incentives to provide more options for our education system. This of course also involves making sure that we focus on mental health providing to serve our children, with an emphasis on providing care with all inclusive measures.

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

I wear my rainbow colors with pride, and I would include your endorsement front and center. We are all in this together.

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

I would look for the best applicants to create boards for making more informed decisions. The only way that can be possible, is if we cast our nets into every segment of our population and to be all inclusive, with providing opportunities. Having a diverse panel of qualified professionals will only lead to comprehensive problem solving and stronger decision making.

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

One of my main goals when I'm in office, is to immediately begin to build Democrat bridges across the State of Texas. We need more unity in our communication, so that we can message more effectively and united.

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?

We will always put our beliefs in writing and policy driven issues. We would most certainly will put a non-discrimination policy. That goes without saying, but yes, sometimes you have to say in writing.

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?

This is not applicable to the Land Commissioner Office, but I support a loving home for children, regardless of the family makeup. To love a child is divine.

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

Not applicable to the office, but I support you.

C. Supporting safe schools for LGBTQ students?

Mental Health is one of my prime directives, so I will do what I can to make sure that our LGBTQ students have the critical care that they need at a time when they need it most.

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

Not applicable to the office, but you have my support.

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.

Not applicable to the office, but you have my support.

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?

Not applicable to the office, but you have my support.

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?

Not applicable to the office, but you have my support.

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?

Not applicable to the office, but you have my major support.

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

Not applicable to the office, but we need to tend to this urgently.

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

Not applicable to the office, but you have my major support.

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

Not applicable to the office, but you have my support.

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

Not applicable to the office, but we can find a place for security and humanity.

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

Not applicable to the office.

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?

I would support this, absolutely.

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

We need to focus carbon sequestration. We need to start

being pre-emptive with carbon emissions, and find new ways to diversify our energy portfolio. If Texas wants to stay the economic power house that it is, it will have to join the future, and that future in green. It is important to note that our response to climate change will involve Disaster readiness and recover relief, which climate change will certainly affect our state. This is top priority. We need to make sure that we have strong logistics for providing our citizens with the urgent help and support they will need, not if, but when a natural disaster hits our state again.

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

Not applicable to the office, but you have my major support.

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

Not applicable to the 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?

Of course I would be honored to be a member.

2022 Texas Candidate Questionnaire

Jinny Suh
Texas Land Commissioner

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.

I believe equality for all Texans is essential to a successful state and that includes LGBTQ+ Texans. I have witnessed the attacks on transgender kids carried out in the state legislature and have been outspoken throughout my campaign about my total support for the LGBTQ+ community. My efforts in the past have included modeling inclusivity in events that I have organized and attended. Currently, I am very passionate about supporting fellow candidates up and down the ballot and encouraging more diversity in our elected officials and candidates. Several of the ones I publicly support are from the LGBTQ+ community and we have discussed the importance of running for office proudly as who we are and supporting each other. While not part of the community myself, my experience as an Asian American woman gives me some idea of what it is like to be treated as an “other” and the desire to be seen as an individual and not solely as a stereotyped identity.

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 that I fully support the Texas Democratic Party platform. I have always voted for Democrats, have supported many Democratic campaigns with donations of time and money over the years, am a member of several local Democratic clubs, including Southwest Blue Action Democrats, Circle C Area Democrats, and Asian Democrats of Central Texas, and volunteer

for my precinct chair.

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

Texas needs strong Democratic leaders who are running for the right reasons - to responsibly serve Texans in their official capacity, use their position to advocate and fight for Democratic values, and work to elect Democrats up and down the ballot. Texas also needs elected officials that treat facts as facts, and not as opinions. Relying on facts will be essential to proactively facing the challenges ahead, instead of being reactive and allowing people to suffer as a direct result of willful ignorance and inaction. Running for office is also important for me as a woman of color because Texas becomes more diverse every day and reflecting that diversity in our candidates will be the key to bringing more voters to the polls to vote Democrat and put us on the path to electing great leaders.

With my background as a community organizer, licensed attorney, small business owner, and working mom of two small children, I understand that everyday Texans want leaders they can trust to gather all of the information and make thoughtful decisions.

After years of advocating for science-based policies statewide, I am a proven leader who can work collaboratively to craft solutions that move Texas toward a greener future, prepare and protect Texas from future weather disasters, and ensure everyday Texans have good jobs and bright futures. My strong science background, (B.S., M.S. biology), experience as a science teacher, and my years of work as an advocate in the Texas legislature combine to inform my approach of using facts and evidence to address big problems, like the looming issue of climate change facing Texas.

My proven track record of fighting for what is right and taking action to improve Texas makes me the right choice for Texas Land

Commissioner.

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

Using my strong background in science, advocacy, and bringing together people from different backgrounds, I aim to be a leader that works collaboratively with stakeholders from all sides, including experts in climate science, labor union representatives, and fellow leaders and elected officials. Together we can craft solutions that move us toward a greener future, prepare and protect our state from future weather disasters, and ensure everyday Texans have good jobs and bright futures. To get there, we need a Land Commissioner with the vision, strength, and backbone to get the job done for the betterment of all Texans.

I will work towards making Texas greener by incentivizing the development of a more robust renewables industry and greener technology. This will not only help protect our environment and fulfill the General Land Office mission of being a prudent steward of our Texas state lands but will also be an important part of ensuring our air and water quality are not compromised.

Though most responsibility for public education funding falls to the Texas legislature, the General Land Office plays a part by generating revenue for the Permanent School Fund. Coming from the perspective of a former schoolteacher, former PTA leader, and mother to two children who attend public elementary school, increasing funding for public schools is of the utmost priority for me and I can identify at least three ways I can help.

First, with conscientious and shrewd management of our state lands, I can increase the revenue generated by the contracts issued by the General Land Office. Second, I would advocate for an increase in the amount that can be put towards the Permanent School Fund. In 2019, Texans voted overwhelmingly for an amendment to increase the amount that could be transferred

to the Permanent School Fund every year by the General Land Office and the State Board of Education to \$600 million each (it was previously \$300 million). I would urge for an even greater increase. Finally, I would use my position and influence to work with other leaders and elected officials to advocate for better support for our public schools, regardless of where the funds originate. Education is the backbone of our society, and Texans suffer the consequences when our public schools are left holding the bag because they do not receive the support they need.

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

Yes, the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas endorsement will be proudly and prominently used on social media and campaign materials.

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

As Texas Land Commissioner, I would implement inclusive policies in the General Land Office that treat LGBTQ individuals and allies to the LGBTQ community as valued members of the staff. In fact, my hope is to start with those policies even before being elected and to grow my campaign staff in a way that celebrates diversity. I plan to bring all voices to the table and will rely on them to inform my decisions and plans as a candidate. It is already known and will continue to be known that I am an ally and I will continue to use my voice to advocate for LGBTQ individuals to be free from discrimination, especially in the workplace.

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.

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?

Though not under the purview of the General Land Office, as a statewide elected Democrat I would consider it part of my responsibilities to be a vocal advocate of our Democratic values and platform, including advocating for legislation and policies concerning LGBTQ individuals. I support legislation that allows LGBTQ individuals the same opportunities and protections to adopt and provide foster care.

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

I would publicly support and advocate for legislation to repeal the anti-sodomy law overturned in Lawrence v. Texas.

C. Supporting safe schools for LGBTQ students?

All students should be able to go to school safely. I would publicly support and advocate for policies and legislation to protect LGBTQ students.

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

I would publicly support and advocate for the repeal of the Texas Definition of Marriage Amendment.

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.

All children deserve to be treated with respect and kindness. The attacks against transgender children in Texas are reprehensible. As a parent and someone who is very much involved with the politics that affects our schools and schoolchildren, I will continue to stand up to protect our children, including transgender children.

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?

S.B. 8 is an outrageous law and while the General Land Office does not have direct control over reproductive healthcare, as an

elected Democrat, I would use my position to advocate strongly that all Texans have access to comprehensive, high-quality reproductive healthcare including access to abortion. Regulation of reproductive healthcare and abortion should be about science and medicine, not politics.

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?

There are a number of ways new leadership at the General Land Office could aid in addressing the inequities in Texas. For instance, one of the main things the General Land Office handles is disaster relief funds. Currently, there is a system in place where political biases are affecting who receives these funds and how quickly. As the next Texas Land Commissioner, I would instead focus on ensuring that the people who need the funds the most receive their relief and quickly. I would also increase the visibility of the programs at the General Land Office that are designed to help veterans, a population that often suffers from the effects of income inequality and poverty. As an outspoken advocate for a more equitable society with a strong safety net, I would use my voice to speak up for those that need outside support to provide them with a quality existence. Speaking from the point of view of someone who grew up without many luxuries, I am a strong proponent for policies that combat the deleterious effects of poverty. A person should not suffer their entire lives solely because they were born into poverty.

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?

As the founder and leader of Immunize Texas, a statewide, grassroots advocacy group that has been fighting for better public health policy for the past six years, healthcare and public health are extremely important to me. I am deeply concerned about our state's abysmal statistics regarding maternal mortality, especially among women of color, our lack of preventative healthcare access, and the ever-increasing struggle Texans outside metropolitan areas face to access basic healthcare and

hospital services. I also know what it is like to grow up without health insurance and the effects that had on my life. It is for all of these reasons that I believe healthcare, including mental healthcare, is a right.

Texas needs leaders who prioritize low-cost, comprehensive healthcare for all Texans and support basic measures like Medicaid expansion, increased support and infrastructure for healthcare providers in rural and underserved areas, and ensuring communities of color can access high-quality healthcare. I would use my position as a statewide elected Democrat to continue to advocate on this issue.

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

The failure of the Texas Power Grid during Winter Storm Uri had many causes. One of the ways in which a forward-thinking Texas Land Commissioner can alleviate the issues revealed by Winter Storm Uri is by diversifying our energy sources in Texas. If we had a robust, diverse set of energy sources, when one source fails, such as natural gas, other sources could fill in to make sure that Texans can have reliable power. I would also like to see Texas seriously consider moving to a capacity market, or at the very least, to improve the system by which energy is bought and sold. Our weather patterns are too unstable now to be the basis for 30 year contracts. Finally, I would like to work together with the state legislature and Railroad Commission to strengthen our requirements for energy producers and pipeline operators to not only make sure our grid can withstand future extreme weather events but also to protect workers from pipeline explosions and protect citizens from harmful effects to the environment.

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

Though not a part of the General Land Office, I would publicly support and advocate for legislation to restore HIV prevention funding including PrEP.

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

I would publicly support legislation to make conversion therapy illegal.

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

In relation to the General Land Office, I do not support state lands being used for building a pointless border wall, as is being done by the current Republican Land Commissioner. As far as general principles, I support a more humane and equitable immigration system at the state and federal level.

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

First and foremost, we need leaders in place who respect science and medicine. These are not political issues by nature but they have become politicized during the pandemic and Texans have suffered as a result. A comprehensive plan should be prepared based on the things we have learned in this pandemic. The plan should address our infrastructure needs, rapid response actions, and how we manage the fluctuations that come with a contagion that may come with variants. We need to strengthen our healthcare infrastructure and support our frontline workers to make sure we have the resources ready to deal with another pandemic. There should be details about how we ensure our safety net is robust enough to withstand another pandemic to deal with issues of unemployment, housing, education, etc. We also need to be sure to have supplies and a protocol in place to handle medical research, triage services, medication and/or vaccination distribution, and any other associated services necessary to recover from a pandemic. And finally, there should be templates available for clear messaging to the public about what to expect, what action is needed to recover from a pandemic, and an easily understood scientific or humanitarian explanation for why certain actions need to be taken to protect the public.

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?

I would support such legislation.

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

Climate change is the biggest threat to the state that the General Land Office can impact. Using my extensive background in science, advocacy, and bringing together people from different backgrounds, I aim to be a leader that works collaboratively with stakeholders from all sides, including experts in climate science, labor union representatives, and fellow leaders and elected officials. We can craft solutions that move us toward a greener future, prepare and protect our state from future weather disasters, and ensure everyday Texans have good jobs and bright futures. To get there, we need a Land Commissioner with the vision, strength, and backbone to get the job done for the betterment of all Texans.

My strong science background (B.S., M.S. biology), experience as a science teacher, and years of work as an advocate in the Texas legislature combine to inform my approach of using facts and evidence to address big problems, like the looming issue of climate change facing Texas.

I will work towards making Texas greener by incentivizing the development of a more robust renewables industry and greener technology. This will not only help protect our environment and fulfill the General Land Office's mission of being a prudent steward of our Texas state lands but will also be an important part of ensuring our air and water quality are not compromised.

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

The attack on voting rights in Texas and nationally has been one of the most critical issues over the past year. The suppression of voting rights is an attack on the foundation of our democracy. The

frenzied effort to disenfranchise voters, especially voters of color, voters with disabilities, and voters in Democratic-leaning areas strengthened my resolve to fight to protect the right to vote for all Texans.

The continuous measures enacted by Texas Republicans to make it harder for people to vote are outrageous. The great lengths that Democrats are forced to go to year after year to overcome new barriers are unnecessary and exhausting. I have been part of voter access efforts in the past and plan to continue my work. As a statewide elected Democrat, I would use my voice to advocate for all Texans being guaranteed their right to vote.

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

Texas Republicans actions during the redistricting cycle - the twisting themselves into knots trying to dilute the voting strength of voters in cities and urban areas, and of people of color who have fueled 95% of the population over the past decade - are appalling. Additionally, the redistricting process suffered from a lack of transparency. As a result, instead of having maps drawn according to the rules, Texas once again finds itself as the defendant in lawsuits alleging that the new maps are illegal racial gerrymanders.

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 currently a member of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas

and am not planning on joining at this time since I don't live in the Dallas area and need to prioritize operational spending at the moment.

2022 Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Juan Renteria

Dallas County Court at Law No 5

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.

I have family members and very close friends who are LGBTQ+. As such, I am strongly in support of equal rights and equal opportunity to anyone regardless of who they choose to love.

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 affirm the platform and policies. Prior voting history is Democratic.

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

Current judge for the court. Prior associate judge for the City of Dallas.

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

I am researching ways to fast track cases to help alleviate the backlog caused by Covid19.

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 make an official announcement as well as showcase in campaign media.

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

I intend to offer internships, and volunteer opportunities.

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 think if your job requires you to fulfill certain duties, those duties must be fulfilled despite your religious beliefs.

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

Making the court more digital, not requiring hard copies and requiring parties to confer before filing motions.

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

Helping to make the court more “user friendly” by updating certain procedures and allowing input from the community on how to improve the court.

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. Representation is lacking. I think more community outreach would help as well as allowing limited Zoom trials.

What is your general judicial philosophy?

Liberal

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?

3 months

2022 Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Nicole Taylor

Dallas County Court at Law No. 5

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.

I have a close family member who identifies as lesbian/queer. I have learned to listen to understand and not to judge. I understand the challenges she faces because I am her primary family support. I am constantly learning how to not only love her, but to be an ally to the community that she loves. This relationship has shown me that there really is no separation in community. We are all family.

Additionally, I serve as Counsel to Abounding Prosperity, a Dallas agency that supports HIV/AIDS education, prevention, and treatment.

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 that I am a Democrat and have voted in the Democratic primary/caucus for most of my voting history. From 2002 thru 2011, I lived in Ellis County and was not often afforded the opportunity to vote for Democratic candidates. Because I refused to vote for any Republicans, I had to sometimes vote for their opponents who were Libertarian. Please know, if a Democrat was on the ballot, they 100% received my support.

Please list some of your qualifications and experiences pertinent to the

office you are seeking:

*Licensed to practice law for 22 years

*Represented Plaintiffs and Defendants in civil litigation, primarily in County Court at Law

*Experience in all matters that come before the court including, but not limited to: Contract disputes, Real Estate disputes, Employment matters, Evictions, Eminent Domain

*Experience in JP, Federal and District courts with bench trials and jury trials

*Participated in mediations, arguing motions before the court and discovery disputes

*Clients include businesses, governmental entities, non-profits, trade associations, foundations and social service organizations

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

I will continue the legacy of Judge Mark Greenberg who retired in July and encouraged me to run for this bench. I will be prepared and on time for court each day out of respect for the parties and court staff. I will not pre-judge a case, listen intently to the facts and I will render a decision based solely on the rule of law. Judge Greenberg had the highest case disposition numbers of all county court at law courts because he ruled without delay and was efficient in his court administration. Because of this, he was a well-respected jurist. I seek to continue what he started by doing the job, rather than wearing the title. The only thing that I will add is the continuation of virtual hearings for non-jury trials to allow the courts to be accessible by all parties that will not take them away from their jobs or create unnecessary legal expense for those represented by counsel.

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

If I'm blessed to receive the Stonewall Democrats' endorsement, it will be prominently featured on all campaign social media

platforms, on the campaign website and with your permission, on my campaign t-shirts documenting my supporters.

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

The only positions that I will be able to directly hire are Court Coordinator and Court Reporter. Dallas County is responsible for hiring the Clerks and Bailiffs. I will ensure that any available positions are posted on all available hiring platforms with language included to indicate that we provide equal employment opportunities to LGBTQ family members. Additionally, we are allowed to accept legal interns during the summer to gain experience while in law school. I look forward to partnering with Lambda Legal and OUTLaw student organizations at the local law schools to solicit candidates for the program.

I will retain staff by respecting each person as a professional and allowing them the space to do their job.

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”?

Justice is blind and impartial and should be administered regardless of personal beliefs. I will never fail to perform my duties due to my religious beliefs. If a subordinate felt the need to express a refusal to perform a lawful duty due to their religious beliefs, I will ask them to do their job without bias or to seek reassignment.

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

I would continue to use the virtual hearing option for motions and some bench trials (which depends on the number of witnesses and the length of time for the trial). Virtual hearings provide efficiency for the court, attorneys, and their clients. It saves the clients legal fees that would be paid for transportation to in-person hearings and the time that attorneys and parties wait to be heard. Additionally, it saves on the time and travel expense of

expert witnesses who may appear virtually.

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

*Dallas County has an Alternative Dispute Resolution Center that provides free mediation services to parties who cannot afford mediation. Mediators who participate in this program provide pro bono services and this Center provides an affordable alternative to resolving legal disputes. I would look at the current court docket to refer cases that qualify to participate in this subsidized resource created for Dallas County residents who need the assistance. Additionally, it helps these cases to be resolved more quickly than going through the civil litigation wheel that takes a year or more to reach conclusion.

*I would like to create a list of certified interpreters to be called on when a party does not speak English, as their primary language. I often see parties who use family members (often children) to interpret the complexity of a legal proceeding before the court. They rarely have counsel and do not know that they will need language support to participate in the proceeding. I would ask court staff to contact parties before each hearing to determine if assistance is needed and partner with agencies/schools that may provide pro bono/low-cost interpreters.

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?

I do not believe that juries reflect society. Until we are able to provide paid leave from work and childcare at the courthouse, we will miss citizens who cannot afford to participate without subsidized salary for missed time from work or due to childcare concerns. Our juries are comprised of those who have the time to serve and those who are unsuccessful in avoiding the service and these members do not always provide the diversity of peers that are needed for robust deliberation.

What is your general judicial philosophy?

I will decide cases based only on the facts and the law, without

allowing my personal or political preferences influence the decision.

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 have been a proud member of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas since December, 2021. I have volunteered to serve on the Voter Registration Committee with Millie and Martin.

2022 Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

Paula Rosales

Dallas County Court at Law No. 4

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.

I have long witnessed and allied myself with the LGBTQ+ cause. Like so many others I have stories of family and friends who have struggled with legal issues, depression, work discrimination and so much more. I have two lifelong friends who struggled to build their life together. Texas had not yet allowed same sex marriages so in order to enjoy their right to marry were forced to hold their ceremony in New Mexico. In my Court I tolerate no discrimination or disrespect for one's identities.

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?

As a National Delegate to the 2012 DNC National Convention I have pledged to support the Platform of the State and National Democratic Party platform. I have only voted in Democratic primaries.

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

I am seeking re-election to this County Court. As a former and current Judge I have dedicated myself to being completely prepared for upcoming cases and done my utmost to ensure the community's access to our justice system.

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

During my first term, my commitment was to making the court system more accessible to all litigants. And I am proud of the work I have done to ensure everyone appearing before me has a voice. Although, the non-prevailing party may disagree with my decision or ruling, I take the time to clarify why the court ruled the way I did. Also, the pandemic provided the courts with unprecedented opportunities to utilize technology to conduct trials and hearings. By conducting Zoom dockets, parties who may have been unable to appear due to time constraints, family or work commitments, or transportation issues have been able to join and be heard thereby avoiding default judgements. Also, attorneys have expressed their support for continued remote proceedings. Therefore, as long as the Texas Supreme Court permits trial courts to conduct remote proceedings, I will continue to conduct half of my dockets via Zoom or Courtcall (another Dallas county courts specific remote platform).

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

I will welcome the inclusivity and bravery that the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats embodies. My Court is one of absolute respect for identity and inclusivity. I would be honored to receive Stonewall Democrats's endorsement. And I will definitely include such an endorsement on my campaign media.

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

In addition to absolute respect, I have long performed same-sex marriages, referred to those before me with their appropriate pronoun and have hired staff who observes same or similar values.

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 Court genuinely tries to respect everyone's beliefs . As a place of justice all my subordinates must fulfil their duties according to the strict letter of the law to ensure that all parties have equal and fair access to my Court and its rulings.

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

When I first took the bench, the scheduling/docket control orders between the parties were optional. This created an environment of uncertainty regarding what procedural deadlines were still in place on the day of trial. Thus, one side could assert a challenge or an objection to the other side's expert witness on the very day of trial. This was not a good situation because in some cases a party could be left without the possibility of ever presenting a case once her expert is struck. I created a policy that requires parties to file a scheduling/docket control proposed orders containing all procedural deadlines up until the day of trial. While it adds to my responsibilities because I personally review and approve every single scheduling control plan, in the long run, it creates a more efficient and effective way for the parties and the court to handle substantive issues before trial.

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

My first class of interns created several Q&A videos to help self represented litigants navigate the court system with more predictability. These videos have now been edited and should be uploaded on my court website soon. Also, when possible, I participate in continuing legal education programs and present on those topics. Finally, I believe that all courts should have access to social workers because these professionals are in a unique place to assess an individual's particular needs (i.e. homelessness, unemployment, loss of business, etc.)

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?

While a judge is limited on what she can say so as to keep the public's confidence in her impartiality, I believe that we must do everything possible to make our juries as inclusive as possible. I will oppose any efforts to limit our citizen's access to jury service. I have observed that on most days a great majority of jurors who answer summons tend to be less diverse. I believe more can be done in the way of educating the community at large regarding

labor laws that protect jurors when they answer the call to serve as jurors.

What is your general judicial philosophy?

Judicial philosophy tends to be a discussion for appellate courts. However, like liberal appellate judges, I believe that the constitution is a living document. Moreover, it is my belief that when there is little legal guidance on point, the specific facts of a case will be critical when making sense of an antiquated law.

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 recently renewed my membership this year. I believe I have been a member for at least three non-consecutive years.

2022 Dallas County Candidate Questionnaire

DeMondre Montgomery

Constable precinct 3 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.

As a member of the LGBTQ+ community I have had my fair share of interactions with individuals that have been less than favorable. I understand the direct discrimination and scrutiny that our community is constantly being dealt, not because of how we view ourselves but because of how someone looking in from the outside perceives us to be. Being that I serve an active role within the LGBTQ+ community I have heard many of the issues and challenges first hand that are faced on a daily basis. With that being said I am more personally connected with the changes that not only the community but myself want to see taken into consideration and acted upon.

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 Democrat.

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

I have been a resident of Dallas my entire life. I have had the honor of working for the Dallas County Sherriff as a jailer; as well as, working along side the current Constable of Smith County Precinct 1 as a deputized constable. I have aided in developing procedures for civil process, studied and taught the systems for inputting civil papers; along with, implementing new technology

and systems to ensure the Constables office runs more efficiently.

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

It has been a rising issue with adolescences not attending school properly, whether it be them skipping or leaving early. Very few people have knowledge that the Constable is able to enforce truancy within their precincts. As a young African American male I have learned the importance of an education and the necessity for our youth to be present and attentive in class. It is in my plans to combine community outreach with not only the adults within the community but the youth as well in order for them to understand the importance of an education and the consequences of choosing not to attend school.

It is also in my plans to begin reforming the rise in homelessness. Within Dallas County there are many city owned buildings that have been vacant for years providing nothing more than a decaying eyesore within the city. I believe with the work of city officials and organizations these unused areas can be transformed into wellness centers and various resources for the citizens of Dallas in need of helping hand.

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

I love to show off those that support my campaign. A formal thank you will be given along with a showcase of what your organization offers within my campaign accounts.

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

My plan on creating and maintaining a LGBTQ+-friendly staff is simple and thorough. It is in my plan to be inclusive, show my support not only publicly but within the work space, maintain a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination, and implement an employee resource group specifically for those individuals of the LGBTQ+ community. By conforming to these initiatives the workplace will be welcoming and supportive.

Would you be willing to appoint a liaison to meet with the LGBTQ

community on an ongoing basis? If not, why?

Yes, it is important to be able to get feedback from various groups within the community. By having someone committed to understanding and acknowledging problems specific groups face it becomes easier to better address the needs of those persons.

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 firmly believe that all individuals deserve a fair chance no matter their sexual orientation and should not be judged based on their decision.

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”?

It would be my priority to understand where the employee is coming from in regards to their reasoning for being unable to fulfill the duty. From there steps can be taken to have the responsibility of that specific order be placed on someone more willing and forthcoming. It is never my intention to force or be forced to do something that goes against a legitimate religious belief.

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?

In order to ensure the process of eviction to be fair it would be necessary to take into account the individuals payment history well before the pandemic began. It becomes easy to tell those who are in dire need of assistance versus those individuals that have simply been using the system. If an individual has been paying within a timely manner for majority of their lease agreement it would be wise to take a step back and perhaps consider that they are simply down on their luck during times which have been trying for nearly every American. I believe

each eviction should be looked at on a case by case basis in great detail to determine what actions can be taken to aid the individual; as well as, root out those individuals abusing the aid being given for their greed.

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?

I was previously charged by Smith County for “impersonating a peace officer”. These charges have since been dismissed and found to be false. There is currently and ongoing Federal Investigation in regards to discrimination against Smith County.

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 have been a member for approximately one year.

2022 Dallas County Candidate Questionnaire

DeMondre Montgomery

Constable precinct 3 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.

I feel that everyone should be treated equally and with the utmost respect.

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. Democratic

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

Former Assistant Chief at Constable Precinct with over 25 years of service in Dallas County, and Civil Process Instructor, this is the core duties of the Constable's Office.

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

I will be informed, involved, and engaged in the community.

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

Yes

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

I will require deputies to take culture diversity and sensitivity classes.

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. I think that it is important to treat everyone fairly, equal, and to be impartial.

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 address that issue on a case by case basis, but I will ensure that the law is followed.

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?

Yes. As Assistant Chief, I stayed in constant communication with the Dallas County Civil DA to ensure that we were abreast with all the latest developments and changes pertaining to COVID 19, and the information was decimated down to deputies and office staff.

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.