

# STONEWALL DEMOCRATS OF DALLAS

2024 Endorsement Screening

## Day 1 Questionnaires

HD 100

CD 24

Dallas County Tax Assessor

CD 5

HD 107

Dallas County Commissioner #3

Dallas County Commissioner #1

Dallas County Sheriff

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

# STONEWALL DEMOCRATS OF DALLAS

2024 Endorsement Screening

## HD 100 Questionnaires

Candidates:

Rep. Venton Jones - VJ

Justice McFarlane - JM

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### Question 3: Pronouns

VJ - He, Him, His

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JM - He/HIM

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

VJ - I affirm that I am a Democrat with 100% Democratic Voting History

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JM - Yes, I can affirm that my policies are in alignment with the Texas Democratic Party

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

VJ - I am currently the incumbent serving in this position. With my election in November 2022, I was honored to make history by becoming one of the first Black gay lawmakers elected to the Texas House of Representatives, and the first Black State Legislator openly living with HIV in the United States.

I am a member of the House Committee on Public Health and the House Committee on Corrections. In addition to my committee appointments, I am the Legislative Chair of the Aggie Caucus, a member of the Texas House Democratic Caucus Special Committee on Education, Texas Legislative Black Caucus, and the Texas LGBTQ House Caucus.

Prior to serving as State Representative, I have had a long history of successfully implementing innovative and effective initiatives nationally, throughout the State of Texas, and locally in Dallas County. My work has included service in various high-profile leadership roles working with some of the nation's leading public policy organizations, lawmakers, and community leaders improving healthcare and economic policy. I am the Founder and CEO of the Southern Black Policy and Advocacy Network (SBPAN), a non-profit with the mission of improving health, social, and economic conditions impacting Black communities in the U.S. South.

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JM - I earned my Political Science degree. I have been an active member in my community and have worked with several different organizations.

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

VJ - I have been a current member of Stonewall Democrats since 2019. Additional service included serving as a member of the Stonewall Dallas Board of Directors from 2007-2009.

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JM - I am not a member of the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas.

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

VJ - I have committed my life and career to fighting for equity and social justice for diverse populations of LGBTQ communities living throughout this House District. Public health, anti-LGBTQ discrimination, and safety are all issues I have worked on in my professional career and will continue to lead when re-elected as State Representative for House District 100.

During the 88th Legislative Session, I fought hard to protect the LGBTQ community against the 150+ anti-LGBTQ bills filed. In addition to fighting bills that would harm LGBTQ people, I also advanced legislation that would improve the quality of life, healthcare access, and reduce discrimination against LGBTQ Texans.

For my work during the 88th Legislative Session, I was honored to receive the following awards:

Hon. Harryette Ehrhardt Distinguished Democrat Award - Stonewall Democrats of Dallas  
Freshman of the Year - Texas House LGBTQ Caucus  
LGBTQ Texan of the Year - Dallas Voice  
Legislative Equality Champion - North Texas LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce

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JM - I know that the specifically with the LGBTQ+ youth, the rate of homelessness and poverty is higher. This relates to discrimination happening in the job market and domestically for this group.

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

VJ - Support economic development and community revitalization, Increase access to quality public healthcare, Fight for Texas public education, Fight for equality for all Texans

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JM - Rebuilding the Texas Infrastructure, as the Texas Energy Grid.

**Question 9: When elected:**

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

VJ - I am proud to say that we created an inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ staff and activists as they were in the capitol, fighting against harmful legislation. We let everyone know that our office was a safe space, away from hatred.

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JM - My staff would be pretty young, and many would fall in some category of LGBTQ. I would generally promote staff that best suits the needs of my constituents.

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

VJ - Yes. Since I have been elected, I have meet regularly with members of the LGBTQ community and will continue to do so in my second term.

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JM - I would definitely appoint people to speak to many different members of the community, in where there are also people who are LGBTQ+.

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

VJ - I will continue to fight to ensure that Texas views all LGBTQ families as equals under the eyes of the law. I believe that an employer should never be able to fire someone based on their gender identity or the person they love.

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JM - I will maintain policies of non-discrimination in the private and public sector, by promoting anti-discrimination practices that exist within the private and public sector.

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

VJ - I will oppose any legislation that will attempt to limit the ability of LGBTQ couples to adopt and provide foster care.

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JM - I would continue to ensure in the legislative body that all LGBTQ+ couples are allowed to adopt and give foster care.

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

VJ - Yes, I actually authored this session's anti-sodomy law and made historic progress in the House since its been introduced by the original HD 100 Representative, Sam Hudson in the 80s.

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JM - Legislation pertaining to the repeal of the sodomy law should be enacted to fit the Supreme Court decision.

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

VJ - Yes

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JM - Legislation pertaining to the repeal of the Texas Marriage laws should be enacted or updated to fit the 2015 Supreme Court decision.

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

VJ - Yes, I support legislation that will aid public schools in creating safe spaces for LGBTQ students. I will also support legislation that requires specialized diversity, equity, and inclusion training for guidance counselors, all administrators, teachers, faculty, and staff.

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JM - I will support any legislation that schools provide proper resources to support their students or staff who are LGBTQ+.

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

VJ - These laws are not ethical and seek to harm our students at all levels. I will support the House LGBTQ Caucus' efforts to fight this legislation and will fight to repeal it in future sessions.

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JM - I would address the laws in disagreement, and my solution would be to create institutions in place that allow for certain transgender students to participate in the gender of their choosing based on a medical assessment.

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

VJ - I firmly believe that the Texas Abortion bans are unconstitutional and those decisions are between a doctor and their patient. At no point should the state be involved in these conversations. I am proud of my 100% pro-choice record and will continue to support pro-choice policies.

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JM - I would address the ban in disagreement, this ban is strictly against the constitution's will of providing Americans with the right to privacy.

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

VJ - Support funding for the unemployment compensation fund. Support additional funding for healthcare services (including mental health). Support freezing property taxes in certain legacy areas to prevent housing displacement

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JM - I would make a bill dedicated to repairing and updating infrastructure in Texas. This alone would be beneficial to the area I represent, district 100, which has construction workers, teachers, and health workers.

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

VJ - I support efforts to expand healthcare access to ALL Texans!

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JM - I would support a Medicaid Expansion, that still has not been done by Texas.

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

VJ - I will support legislation that will help improve the environment and oppose legislation that will continue to accelerate harm to our air, water, and land.

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JM - I want to expand the amount of green energy, solar and wind, into the Texas Energy Grid.

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

VJ - There must be an independent inspection of the independent power grid in Texas. Based on that inspection we must provide funding to make the necessary repairs to the grid and ensure all equipment is up to code and able to withstand extreme weather events.

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JM - Texas does not have enough energy to keep up with the demands of Texas, so it must expand upon its energy grid, and possibly update some of the older infrastructure.

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

VJ - In order to support national efforts to end HIV by 2030, I will fully support and champion legislation that will restore funding for HIV prevention in Texas, including access to PrEP. Our office remains in contact with key decision holders in Texas Health and Human Services to make sure they are keeping their promises made during the legislation session.

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JM - I would work with people who have HIV and medical professionals to find the best policy and/or continued funding of HIV prevention.

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

VJ - I strongly support legislation that would ban reparative/conversion therapy in Texas.

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JM - I will support efforts against forced conversion therapy in Texas.

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

VJ - I will support legislation that repeals harmful anti-immigrant laws like SB3 (4th Special Session) and SB4 (4th Special Session) I will support funding for healthcare, including undocumented families. I will support legislation that will not separate families or lock children in cages.

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JM - I think Texas should help undocumented immigrants by acknowledging their status in the state, while also protecting their status from unjust repercussion.

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

VJ - Yes

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JM - Yes.

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

VJ - I will repeal any laws that will limit the ability of Texas to vote. I will also support mail-in ballots and for the ability for all Texans to be automatically sent ballots to vote.

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JM - I would open more polling places within the state and additionally make programs for high schools and state universities to register individuals to vote.

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

VJ - I would showcase the Stonewall endorsement on my website, printed materials, newsletter, and social media.

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JM - I would include the endorsement on my website.

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

VJ - None

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JM - No.

**This completes the questions and answers for this race.**

# STONEWALL DEMOCRATS OF DALLAS

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## CD 24 Questionnaires

Candidates:

Francine Ly - FL

Sam Eppler - SE

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### Question 3: Pronouns

FL - she/her

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SE - he/him/his

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

FL - Yes. I participate in each and every election I am eligible to vote in.

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SE - Only Democratic voting history.

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

FL - In a deeply personal connection, my late brother-in-law's journey was one of self-discovery and the pursuit of acceptance. I knew him long before he recognized his uniqueness. Over the course of 15 years, he worked tirelessly to understand himself and seek acknowledgment. Unfortunately, upon returning home, he bore the scars of emotional and physical damage resulting from a tumultuous and destructive lifestyle driven by the quest for acceptance.

To honor his memory and the struggles he faced, I am committed to consulting with experts and administrators. My goal is to collaboratively develop a comprehensive plan that establishes a resourced infrastructure encompassing policies, structures, practices, and services tailored to meet the unique needs and preferences of LGBTQ+ youth. This initiative aims to create a supportive environment that fosters acceptance and understanding, preventing the kind of hardships my late brother-in-law endured.

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SE - After serving as a high school teacher, assistant principal, and principal in Dallas ISD for the past 6 years, it is incredibly important to me that we end immediately the hate and dangerous positions that far right politicians are promoting. It is not just hateful, but harmful to millions of LGBTQIA+ Americans. My office would be as a US Representative. Upon attaining this office, I would support passage of the Equality Act. Every American should deserve the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness free from prejudice, hate, and discrimination.

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

FL - I have met the legal requirements for the office I am seeking, U.S. Congress 24, fulfilling the criteria of being a U.S. citizen for seven years, residing in Texas with over 23 years of residency in District 24, and being at least 25 years old. My qualifications position me as the ideal candidate to represent the people of District 24, and my unwavering commitment to democratic values is evident through my longstanding support for the Democratic Party.

My professional background includes substantial experience as a legislative district director for the Texas House of Representatives. In this capacity, I played a crucial role in handling various responsibilities, including responding to constituent inquiries via calls and emails, crafting letters of recommendations or commendations for constituents, managing orders for Texas flags flown over the Capitol, scheduling tours, and reviewing and researching proposed laws, resolutions, constitutional amendments, and appropriations for all operational funds. This comprehensive experience provides me with a profound understanding of the legislative process, enabling me to effectively serve the constituents of District 24.

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SE - Dallas ISD Teacher, Assistant Principal, and Principal of a top-rated high school in Texas. Youngest high school Principal in Texas. 98% of first generation and economically disadvantaged students graduated in 2023 with high school diploma and associates degree from Dallas College. Supervise 4 million dollar school budgets and lead dozens of staff and team members, hundreds of families, and affecting thousands of DFW community members.

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

FL - Upon election, my commitment is to actively engage with the residents of my district, seeking their input for potential bills aimed at solving community issues. To facilitate this process, I will establish a bill recommendations committee, which will conduct in-depth studies during legislative recesses to thoroughly explore ideas brought forth by constituents. The objective is to identify areas within existing state laws that may require modification or the creation of new legislation to effectively address these concerns. Subsequently, I will collaborate with legal experts from the Federal Legislative Council—a legislative agency providing bill drafting services, research assistance, and other support for legislators—to author the proposed bills.

In my capacity as an elected official, one of my key initiatives will be to champion a bill for the establishment and development of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for Asian American Studies in public schools. This legislation seeks to empower Texas students with a comprehensive understanding of the ongoing struggles for Asian American equality. The curriculum will also encourage the development of critical thinking skills by delving into the study of racial and economic disparities in both Texas and the United States. Recognizing the timeliness of this effort, the creation of TEKS for Asian American Studies will contribute to crucial conversations about race, privilege, power, stratification, homogenization, and inequity.

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SE - I will name three things I will do on day 1. Propose and codify Roe v. Wade. 2. Support passage of Equality Act. 3. Proposing legislation to increase salaries of all 4 million teachers in America, all 400,000+ in Texas, with a \$7,500 federal tax credit (the same tax credit we currently give electric vehicles).

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

FL - Various studies have highlighted the positive impact of diversity and inclusion on business success. However, despite significant progress in LGBTQ inclusion in the workplace, there remain unique challenges in the realm of employment. As a leader, I am committed to implementing an inclusive, diverse, and equality-driven recruitment process that is both open and affirming for LGBTQ candidates. This approach seeks to ensure that opportunities for employment are extended to individuals from all backgrounds, fostering an environment where everyone feels valued and respected.

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SE - I would ensure diversity in hiring. Every organization is more powerful the more diverse they are. This includes diversity of all races, life experiences, LGBTQIA+ identification etc. I am very proud of my hiring record as a Principal in Dallas ISD.

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

FL - Yes

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SE - Yes, however I don't like liaisons. I would guarantee my attendance at LGBTQ community events like Stonewall Democrats meetings in Dallas at least once a quarter.

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

FL - I would support the Equality Act, legislation that prohibits discrimination against LGBTQ+ people.

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SE - The Equality Act would include numerous of these protections, I 100% support its passage immediately.

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

FL - I will vehemently oppose any attempts to limit access to FDA-approved birth control and reproductive care, firmly rejecting the criminalization of women and healthcare professionals involved. My advocacy centers on safeguarding reproductive rights. While demonstrating a commitment to reproductive freedom, codifying Roe v. Wade into law requires specific legislative measures. As a Member of Congress, I will:

1. Sponsor and support legislation explicitly designed to codify Roe v. Wade into federal law.
  2. Engage actively in committee discussions, proposing amendments and advocating for bills tied to reproductive rights.
  3. Advocate for floor votes by pushing for debates and votes on reproductive rights issues.
  4. Participate in public discourse to educate constituents and build support for codifying Roe v. Wade.
  5. Collaborate with advocacy groups and stakeholders to build coalitions supporting reproductive rights legislation.
  6. Address legal challenges to ensure proposed laws align with constitutional principles.
  7. Promote comprehensive legislation supporting reproductive health, covering abortion rights and broader aspects of reproductive health, family planning, and healthcare access.
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SE - First, we need a majority in the House. We don't have that, and I am the best candidate to beat extremist Beth Van Duyne in November and help flip the house. Then after keeping the Senate and Presidency, we would pass it. It has broad national support.

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

FL - I would spearhead efforts to improve healthcare funding and options for all Texas residents through a comprehensive approach. As a legislator, I would:

1. Proactively advocate for increased state and federal funding for healthcare programs, collaborating with fellow legislators for bipartisan support.
  2. Champion Medicaid expansion to broaden access for low-income individuals, emphasizing improved health outcomes and reduced costs.
  3. Allocate resources to strengthen community health centers and explore public-private partnerships for enhanced infrastructure.
  4. Address rural healthcare challenges with targeted policies, including telehealth solutions, and support initiatives to train and retain healthcare professionals.
  5. Secure funding for medical education programs and promote health information technology for efficient service coordination.
  6. Advocate for increased funding for mental health services, integrating them into primary care and addressing disparities.
  7. Collaborate with private entities and non-profits to leverage additional resources for healthcare initiatives.
  8. Promote innovation in healthcare delivery through value-based care models and alternative payment arrangements.
  9. Engage with constituents to understand healthcare needs, utilizing feedback to shape policies that address community challenges.
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SE - Expand Medicaid! Texas is one of 12 states that hasn't done this. It is unacceptable. I would further increase Medicaid coverage and benefits through legislation. This would incentivize states like Texas that the benefits of expansion are far too great to not expand just for political partisanship.

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

FL - Legislators can strive to create a healthcare system that is more inclusive, accessible, and efficient for all Americans through collaborative efforts. Guiding and endorsing initiatives to establish universal or single-payer healthcare in the United States and fortifying the Affordable Care Act (ACA) demands a comprehensive and strategic approach. Simultaneously, enhancing the ACA requires specific improvements. Success in this endeavor requires persistent commitment and a dedication to addressing the diverse needs of the population.

To effectively engage in public discussions and educate constituents about the benefits of universal healthcare, consider the following essential steps: Utilize diverse communication channels to convey the advantages of a single-payer system. Collaborate with healthcare professionals, organizations, and advocacy groups to form a supportive coalition. Actively participate in discussions with stakeholders to understand concerns and incorporate diverse perspectives. Sponsor and support legislation for a universal or single-payer healthcare system, engaging in committee discussions to advance healthcare reform bills. Propose and evaluate funding mechanisms, working with economists to ensure a sustainable model. Emphasize potential economic advantages, addressing policy challenges associated with the transition. Develop policies for smooth and equitable implementation, conducting town hall meetings to engage the public transparently. Collaborate with officials at state and federal levels, leveraging partnerships to share best practices and coordinate strategies for implementation.

There are opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) by addressing gaps in coverage, particularly for lower-income individuals, and exploring methods to improve the affordability of healthcare plans through subsidies or adjustments to premium structures. Advocating for Medicaid expansion across all states can broaden coverage, while supporting innovative healthcare delivery initiatives can optimize efficiency and reduce costs. Measures to mitigate the rising costs of prescription drugs and increased investments in preventive care are essential for enhanced affordability and proactive health management. Strengthening consumer safeguards, such as preventing denial of coverage based on pre-existing conditions, and employing targeted strategies to address health disparities ensure equitable access to healthcare, especially for vulnerable populations.

By integrating these initiatives to establish universal healthcare with enhancements to the ACA, a more encompassing and inclusive healthcare system can be formulated, ensuring coverage and care for all Americans.

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SE - I include some of these provisions on my website. I believe even more life-saving, generic, drug prices should be controlled. President Biden did a great job with the initial list, but this should be expanded. In addition, the enrollment period should be extended. Healthcare is a human right and we should make it as easy as possible to give healthcare to every single American.

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

FL - Achieving the enactment of the John Lewis Voting Rights Act demands a strategic, multifaceted approach that integrates legislative advocacy, community engagement, and strategic communication. Leaders must cultivate bipartisan collaboration, sponsor relevant legislation, and participate in committee discussions. Public awareness campaigns should be initiated to educate constituents, utilizing diverse media channels. Community engagement involves town halls, partnerships with civil rights organizations, and collaboration with youth groups to mobilize voters. A comprehensive communication strategy includes media engagement, digital campaigns, and strategic coalitions to

amplify the message. Addressing legal challenges involves monitoring and challenging efforts to undermine voting rights through legal channels. Grassroots mobilization includes door-to-door campaigns, voter registration drives, and addressing Election Day issues. Legislative outreach involves collaborating with state legislators, advocating for state-level measures, and engaging with international organizations to showcase global significance and successful examples of protecting voting rights.

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SE - I'm copy-pasting my answer about Roe v. Wade... to me it's the same process! First, we need a majority in the House. We don't have that, and I am the best candidate to beat extremist Beth Van Duyne in November and help flip the house. Then after keeping the Senate and Presidency, we would pass it. It broad national support.

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

FL - The Build Back Better Act represents a comprehensive legislative initiative targeting infrastructure, social programs, and climate change. The Act strategically addresses transportation infrastructure, emphasizing road, bridge, and highway improvements, expanding public transit, and investing in electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, including charging stations. It modernizes rail services, improves airports, enhances ports and waterways, and promotes broadband expansion in underserved areas. Prioritizing the digital landscape, it allocates funds for electric grid and water infrastructure upgrades and initiatives for affordable housing. The Act integrates climate resilience into infrastructure, ensuring adaptability to climate change impacts. Social programs include investments in affordable childcare, pre-kindergarten education, paid family and medical leave, universal access to pre-kindergarten, affordable housing, healthcare access, Child Tax Credit extension, food security, and education/workforce development. Climate-focused provisions involve substantial investments in clean energy technologies, grid modernization, EV infrastructure expansion, energy efficiency, and measures to combat carbon emissions. While assessments of efficacy vary, the Act addresses critical needs, enhancing infrastructure, supporting social welfare, and advancing climate goals. Notably, visible improvements during road trips reflect the positive impact of infrastructure investments.

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SE - Of course not. Progress is not something that stops after one bill. Progress is continual. Every day we must be fighting for a more perfect union and a better tomorrow. Something that we lost since the passage of this Act was the Child Tax Credit. Child poverty skyrocketed after extremist republicans abolished this. I think no child in America should live in poverty.

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

FL - The filibuster is not utilized as a procedural tool in the U.S. House of Representatives; it is specific to the U.S. Senate. In the Senate, the filibuster empowers senators to obstruct or delay a vote on legislation by engaging in prolonged speech or employing other procedural tactics. However, the House of Representatives operates under distinct rules and procedures governing debates and the legislative process, and the traditional filibuster, as commonly understood, does not take place in this chamber. The House has its own set of rules and mechanisms to oversee discussions and voting on bills.

While the Senate maintains the filibuster, the House of Representatives relies on a different framework that includes restrictions on debate time and established procedures for voting on legislation. The decision to retain or abolish the filibuster involves careful consideration of the advantages of streamlined governance against potential drawbacks such as reduced safeguards for the minority and heightened policy instability. This issue is subject to nuanced debate within the realm of political discourse

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SE - Yes, Roe v. Wade and the right to access healthcare is too important to not support this.

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

FL - Policymakers consistently engage in thorough discussions and analyses to identify impactful and contextually appropriate strategies. It is crucial to underscore the recognition that the effectiveness of economic policies depends on various factors, including the specific context, intricacies of implementation, and the continually evolving dynamics of the global economy. Each sector, spanning infrastructure, education and workforce development, small business support, innovation and research, tax reform, trade policies, healthcare reform, environmental sustainability, financial regulation, and social safety nets, is interconnected, contributing to the overall strength and growth of the US economy.

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SE - Child Tax Credit, Teacher and First Responder Tax Credit, Latin American Trade over Chinese trade and repatriation tax incentives to move capital back onshore to hire more American workers, invent more, and build more in America. Texas specific, I would increase funding for on and offshore wind production, solar, and geothermal and use American workers to build this infrastructure.

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

FL - Article 1 of the Constitution explicitly assigns Congress the responsibility of providing for the general welfare. Consequently, Congress plays a pivotal role in constructing a more resilient and efficient system to address imminent pandemics, safeguard public health, and mitigate societal and economic repercussions. To enhance responsiveness and preparedness, Congress must lead a unified and organized initiative, involving actions such as enacting specialized legislation for pandemic preparedness, strategically allocating consistent funding, fostering international collaboration, managing strategic stockpiles of essential supplies, providing incentives for research and development, streamlining regulatory processes, implementing standardized data sharing, strengthening healthcare system resilience, investing in public health education, formulating workplace and school preparedness guidelines, ensuring equitable healthcare access, bolstering national testing and surveillance infrastructure, establishing clear coordination channels, and conducting comprehensive post-pandemic reviews for ongoing improvements. These measures collectively empower Congress to shape a resilient and effective system, ensuring the protection of public health and the mitigation of societal and economic impacts in the face of future pandemics.

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SE - Fully fund our government! Nothing is more damaging to national security, which includes the pandemic, than this scary type of politics extremist republicans are playing. Then, I would continue to be a voice for scientific research and better healthcare infrastructure.

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

FL - If there is no existing legislation, I am prepared to take the lead and endorse a comparable resolution to tackle issues of sexual harassment and discrimination in the U.S. House.

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SE - Yes.

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

FL - Advocating for comprehensive immigration reform, especially concerning the DREAM Act, involves crucial actions. Raise awareness about the DREAM Act through social media, community events, and discussions. Engage with legislators to endorse comprehensive immigration reform, specifically supporting the DREAM Act. Collaborate with

organizations dedicated to immigration reform and participate in local initiatives supporting immigrants, refugees, and DREAMers. Contribute to educational programs for DREAMers, including scholarships and mentorship. Advocate for inclusive policies that create a welcoming environment for immigrants and refugees. Share personal stories to humanize the issue and promote understanding. Stay informed on immigration policies affecting DREAMers, encourage open and respectful dialogue, exercise the right to vote, and use social media for awareness and mobilization. Support organizations providing legal assistance to immigrants, recognizing the importance of legal aid in navigating complex immigration processes. Taking these steps contributes significantly to the overarching goal of comprehensive immigration reform and plays a pivotal role in supporting the DREAM Act.

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SE - As an educator in Dallas ISD I've taught with amazing teachers who are DREAMers. The fact that they live in fear about their status is unacceptable. Our economy needs DREAMers and I would be on the frontline fighting for them and all who seek to make America their home as productive and contributing citizens.

### **B. Temporary Protected Status (TPS)**

FL - Supporting comprehensive immigration reform, especially regarding Temporary Protected Status (TPS), requires several actions. Stay informed on TPS and immigration issues, educating your community about the need for reform. Advocate for legislative action by expressing support to elected representatives and encouraging endorsement of bills for fair immigration policies. Connect with advocacy groups, participate in campaigns, and contribute to collective efforts for policy changes. Engage with TPS-affected communities through events and workshops, using media platforms to highlight reform necessities. Support legal resources by contributing to organizations aiding immigrants and volunteering for legal clinics. Collaborate with businesses for inclusive employment practices, forming coalitions for unified advocacy. Attend public forums to voice concerns, participate in cultural events promoting diversity, and encourage civic engagement, including voter registration. Leverage personal networks to garner support for comprehensive immigration reform, recognizing sustained efforts and collaboration as key to positive policy changes, including those for Temporary Protected Status.

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SE - See answer above.

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

FL - To address climate change, a comprehensive strategy is imperative, covering mitigation, adaptation, and sustainable practices. Key tactics include the shift to renewable energy, enhanced energy efficiency, support for reforestation and sustainable agriculture, adoption of circular economic models, bolstering infrastructure resilience, water management initiatives, and sustainable urban planning. Advocacy for emission reduction policies, carbon pricing, global collaboration, public awareness, and climate education is crucial. Ongoing scientific research, community engagement, corporate responsibility, and individual actions like reducing, reusing, and recycling are vital components in the collective effort toward a more sustainable and resilient future, involving governments, businesses, communities, and individuals.

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SE - I am the only candidate in this race who is a member of Gen Z and whose siblings are millennials. Our Earth must be protected and preserved for not just the next 75 years of my lifetime, but for all generations who follow. I would point to carbon footprints, rising global temperatures, and increase in disastrous weather. In other words, I would be a champion for science (pretty easy when you're a former high school math teacher). I might even use a whiteboard like Katie Porter.

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

FL - To the best of my knowledge, none.

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SE - No.

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

FL - I plan to share my endorsement on my social media profiles.

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SE - I would post it on social media and list it on my website. In addition I would film a video of me talking about why this endorsement matters so much to me.

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

FL - I've been a member for a couple of years.

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SE - Yes, I will. I've been attending the club meetings as I could when balanced with my job as a high school Principal in Dallas ISD. I'm new to political scene in Dallas. I've been pretty busy with my roles in education. My belief in running this bold campaign as a first time candidate at age 27 is that we need to get rid of extremist republicans in Congress with a new generation of leadership in Washington. Also, I think we need more educators in Congress.

**This completes the questions and answers for this race.**



# STONEWALL DEMOCRATS OF DALLAS

2024 Endorsement Screening

## County Tax Assessor Questionnaires

Candidates:

Elaine Campbell - EC

John Ames - JA

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

**Question 3: Pronouns**

EC - she/her/they/them

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JA - He/Him

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

EC - Yes. I have only voted Democrat in my voting history since the age of 18.

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JA - Yes, I am a 4 term elected Democrat and I vote in EVERY election.

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

EC - I am an avid co-conspirator of the LGBTQ+ community and very much understand the needs of the community. I proudly advocate loudly and stand up for equality and rights for all. As a recent example, during this past legislative session, I spoke out and held sessions regarding the harm that was being directed towards the transgender community specifically but spoke out openly and loudly for all by even going to Austin to Lobby legislation.

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JA - As the County Tax Assessor, I work with citizens from all aspects of Dallas County including members of the stonewall community. I treat EVERY resident with the same respect regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation.

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

EC - The Tax Assessor Collector must be a person who is not only a servant leader in order to maintain an efficient office but also a community activist, advocate and organizer. I am the only candidate for this position who has an extensive history as a person who is an active community organizer who also has a history as an executive who has managed large teams effectively and efficiently. When making decisions, a leader needs to make sure we are in touch with the people closest to the problem, understanding that one solution may not meet the needs of all and then implementing solutions that may need to be hybrid based on the different needs in different communities. The only way to understand this is to actually stay involved in communities which I am now and will continue to be.

I have a long history as a System Engineer and Systems Engineer executive as well as a community organizer and activist which is the combination needed in this position.

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JA - Prior to being the Dallas County Tax Assessor, I worked with City and School Tax Offices for 15 years. I have served as the Dallas County Tax Assessor for the past 15 years for almost 30 years of experience in the Tax Collection industry. I hold every certification available in the field of Tax Collections. I have served on statewide boards and committees in the field and continue to be involved at the state and local level. I also hold a degree in Business Administration.

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

EC - There are a few plans specific to the office of Tax Assessor-Collector that I have. Some I have already started and some I will start after elected.

Education regarding the role is very critical. I am finding out that many people do not understand what the Tax Assessor - Collector is responsible for and what options people have regarding paying property and ad valorem taxes. I will make

sure that there is consistent in-person representation from the tax office at community events in order to stay in touch with the community and make sure education is consistent and thorough.

We need to make sure the tax office is open during times the community is able to visit in person when needed. Currently the tax offices do not have extended hours that I am aware of so that needs to be corrected.

The current mission statement of the Tax Office is “Provide Dallas County Citizens with Excellent Service using Innovative Technology to Ensure Quality Collections.” which is wonderful however innovative technology is not the best way to assure access is available for ALL neighborhoods & demographics in Dallas since internet infrastructure is not equal in all neighborhoods. I will make sure I am continuously advocating for the technical infrastructure needs where it is needed, working with other city and county leaders advocating for ALL communities & where internet infrastructure is currently lacking, make sure access to the tax office is maintained by partnering with businesses & making sure the office is open.

Finally, I will attend community events to assure that we are making changes to processes or other changes that might be needed based on the input of the community. I am a strong believer in process improvement based on the needs of the community

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JA - As the current Tax Assessor, I will continue creating efficiencies, providing fair service and quality collections. As an administrative official, I do not make laws, but run my office within the boundary of the laws creating an environment that is easy and convenient for Dallas County residents to conduct business.

**Question 8: When elected, how will you recruit, retain, and create an inclusive environment for LGBTQ and LGBTQ-friendly staff?**

EC - I will assure we are partnering with all groups that represent LGBTQ community members and have and attend recruitment fairs partnering with LGBTQ groups. This includes groups like Lesbians who Tech, Campus Pride Job fairs, working with Dallas Voice and taking advice from the community to assure we are inclusive.

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JA - As the current Tax Assessor, my office recruits and hires from all aspects of the Dallas County community including Stonewall members. Our policy is to hire without discrimination and I'm proud to say my team is one of the most diverse teams within Dallas County including members from all aspects of the LGBTQ community. Everyone is treated equally regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation.

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

EC - Absolutely. Yes.

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JA - I would be glad to appoint a liaison.

**Question 10: 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?**

EC - Definitely. Dallas county has non-discrimination policies in place and these policies are managed by HR but I will work to assure there is protection in real time and in practice. I know that often a policy alone does not protect so, again, I will assure I am involved in the community in order to hear first hand if the policy needs to be changed or reiterated in any way.

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JA - Dallas County already has a non-discrimination policy that the Tax Office follows.

**Question 11: 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”?**

EC - Dallas County has a "Religious Accommodation Request Form" that is managed by HR so I would meet with HR to understand what is needed to manage this this situation arises. I would not work outside of policy but will work to change any policies that allow discrimination. I will assure that the lawful work duties are clearly documented and explained during the hiring process though so there are no surprises.

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JA - The Tax Office is governed by the laws and rules of the state of Texas. My team and I manage our office within those laws and rules while maintaining flexibility to serve our residents.

**Question 12: 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?**

EC - \*\*question not applicable to this office\*\*

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JA - \*\*question not applicable to this office\*\*

**Question 13: 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?**

EC - \*\*question not applicable to this office\*\*

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JA - \*\*question not applicable to this office\*\*

**Question 14: How would you address the issues of non-Dallas County Residents using Parkland?**

EC - \*\*question not applicable to this office\*\*

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JA - \*\*question not applicable to this office\*\*

**Question 15: How can the county play a part in expanding voting rights and access, including voting centers and extended hours?**

EC - \*\*question not applicable to this office\*\*

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JA - \*\*question not applicable to this office\*\*

**Question 16: 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?**

EC - No

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JA - No - I have previously been endorsed by Stonewall and look forward to your continued support.

**Question 17: How would you showcase your endorsement by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas if received? Would you include the endorsement in your campaign media?**

EC - I would proudly include the endorsement in my campaign media, social media and verbally mention Stonewall Democrat's Endorsement every opportunity possible.

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JA - Yes, I would proudly include Stonewall Democrats endorsement on campaign media.

**Question 18: 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?**

EC - 3 years I think. I am a proud member of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas

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JA - I have been a member in the past and then my membership lapsed. I am currently a member. I have been a friend and supporter of the Stonewall Democrats for the past 15 years.

**This completes the questions and answers for this race.**

# STONEWALL DEMOCRATS OF DALLAS

2024 Endorsement Screening

## CD 5 Questionnaires

Candidates:

Ruth Torres - RT

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

**Question 3: Pronouns**

RT - she/her

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

RT - Yes, Democrat

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

RT - TX has demonstrated an increasing and significant level of discrimination against various groups including LGBTQ+ under the current state leadership including but not limited to assaults and murder of transwomen, this along with the level of homelessness and suicide especially among pre and teenagers within LGBTQ+ community are particularly concerning to me.

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

RT - I am a Human Resources Consultant and DEI change agent for over 25 years.

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

RT - Hire staff and bring together community leaders and SME's to work on impactful root issue legislation aligned with my platform and the most urgent issues affecting my district.

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

RT - I hope to recruit from those who demonstrated capability and commitment during their work on my campaign and ensuring a culture where everyone is welcome, valued and respected.

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

RT - Yes

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

RT - Title VII or any other written policy isn't worth the paper it is on absent a culture that walks the talk everyday. I have developed non-discrimination & DEI policies and training for over 2 decades.

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

RT - Congress has a duty to codify Roe; to respect women's rights, protect women's lives, ensure safe open access to travel roads and ensuring doctors don't leave the state, and implement policies as to equal pay and opportunity in the

workforce, affordable health care and contraceptives, timely processing of rape kits and prosecution, child support enforcement and proper care and permanent homes for children in fostercare- so that women actually have a real choice.

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

RT - I want to eliminate the barriers to affordable health care by preventing insurance companies from limiting who can be included in a plan based on relationship, age or any other factor. The person purchasing the plan should be able to include anyone they want to their policy without explanation. I would also promote transparency on health care monopolies, promote co-ops, find ways to expand Medicaid and increase access to affordable healthcare throughout the district including rural communities via shared spaces, physician and nursing scholarships and incentives to the most needed areas.

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

RT - See #12 answer. We need to bring down the costs from the Marketplace. I want to increase competition, break up monopolies of largest insurance companies and promote coops. We need to focus more on preventative care as well as educating people on their health trajectory and resources to change that trajectory. I would also like to try a pilot program where employers can completely get out of health care management of employees by instead giving workers X\$ so the worker can go out into the marketplace or coop and buy the plan they want, include whoever they want on their policy. I would like to see the data on impact.

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

RT - By educating people on why it is so important to protect our democracy and finding out who are the key opposition and what they want to get the vote through.

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

RT - It was a major achievement but a LOT more needs to be done.

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

RT - I support reform of the filibuster. Congress is supposed to WORK for the people, not be hijacked and prevented from a vote without clear and justified cause.

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

RT - We MUST support small and medium farms and businesses and innovation. We must break up the various industry monopolies including but not limited to our food chain controlling prices. We must address the talent gaps, issue work permits to everyone in the US so they are working in the open, legitimate jobs with fair wages and paying into social security.

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



RT - We need to develop the process for dealing with various threats and have regular test runs of scenarios with ability to develop and distribute vaccines / medicine efficiently via existing venues while supporting business and education continuity. We need to ensure honest, scientific based communications and increase the level of trust in US government. We need to make sure taxpayers don't foot the bill for development of vaccines that are then unaffordable for us to get while the company makes trillions.

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

RT - Yes, more importantly I will lead policies on enforcement of complaints with penalties and costs on offenders, not secret payoffs at taxpayers expense.

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

RT - I will fight for a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers as well as work permits for every non-citizen in the US. I will work with stakeholders to understand the nuances for comprehensive reform and a process that eliminates huge groups seeking unscheduled entry including increasing quotes based on a formula driven by unemployment rate and distribution of immigrants so that we have the level of workers in the jobs needed, where they are needed, have sponsorship and resources are available for them instead of concentrations in overpopulated areas lacking adequate resources. Taxpayers should not be incurring the cost to house and feed immigrants with benefits not available to US citizens.

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**B. Temporary Protected Status (TPS)**

RT - I do not understand the requirement for TPS holders to return to their home country to apply for an immigrant visa other than to make it extremely more difficult and expensive for the applicant. I would move to eliminate that requirement completely absent compelling reason to vote otherwise for a waiver option due to good cause or hardship.

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

RT - Promote renewable energy and incentivize use of products that reduces plastic and electronic waste. Strengthen industry regulations and penalties on top polluters.

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

RT - No.

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

RT - On my campaign website. Yes.

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

RT - I have been a member before. Yes.

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**This completes the questions and answers for this race.**

# STONEWALL DEMOCRATS OF DALLAS

2024 Endorsement Screening

## HD 107 Questionnaires

Candidates:

Linda Garcia - LG

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

**Question 3: Pronouns**

LG - She/Her

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

LG - Yes, I am affiliated with the Texas Democratic Party. I have only ever voted Democrat.

---

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

LG - While I am not a career politician, I have dedicated much of my life to advocating for my community. I do believe that not being a career politician is a strength to what I can contribute to legislation. I have advocated for the representation of people of color (POC) and equal pay during my time working in film. I am a published author of a book on demystifying the stock market for POC, as well as working through changing our money narratives. Becoming a published author was a crucial step as it placed me in public libraries across the US, as the intent was always to bring digestible resources for interpretation to communities of color. We have helped our community open over 2,000 brokerage accounts and move our communities in motion toward understanding capitalism in this country, something that has been gatekept and weaponized for far too long. I believe that my ability to understand systems and being able to demystify those systems for folks as well as having a keen eye to identify solutions moving forward, will be a strong contribution to my community. I have my community's best interests in mind.

---

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

LG - I submitted the membership form and fee on December 29th, 2023.

---

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

LG - The LGBTQ+ community has always been part of my life. Not only do I have first cousins who are LGBTQ+, but some of my best friends from a very young age are part of the community. Our son's godfather is gay, and we had to break traditional religious beliefs for that to be an official role for our son. As a family, we have made it a point to raise our son in a home that does not assign toys, clothes, and colors to a gender.

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

LG - My main responsibility is to ensure that our constituents understand the types of resources that they can have exposure to if they call on us—ensuring that our constituents have access to the resources they need.

Once I get into office, some of my plans are to increase my participation in House District 107. District 107 comprises 62% Hispanic, 19% White, and 14% Black, with a per capita income of \$24,488. The constituents in the district are the working class, and many of them are not aware of the services a District office offers. As a State Representative, my office can assist constituents with any issues involving a state agency. My plans are also to educate the residents on the legislative process to make sure they come down to Austin during session and speak for or testify against legislation. I plan to host public town halls during the year to educate constituents on positive and negative bills impacting my community. I look forward to being a strong advocate for commonsense, positive legislation but also a strong defender

of hateful legislation disproportionately hurting my district and fellow Texans. Lastly, my background is in financial literacy and I plan to work on making financial literacy specifically to the stock market mandatory in schools in Texas in order to educate students on ownership in the stock market versus consumerism alone. This topic gets overlooked because of its systemic complexity. The fact is that only 15% of Americans are direct shareholders of the stock market. Out of those 15%, 90% are White and own 90% of all shares. They are also in the top 10% of wealthiest Americans. This is a massive disservice as we all pour into consumerism in these companies but do not benefit from their capital gains. I am in the process of reviewing the current mandatory financial literacy programs in schools as it has not been updated since 2012. Our money system has been far too complicated and inaccessible to most unless we come from a legacy of generational wealth. At the root of our issues in communities of color is the lack of resources.

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**Question 9: When elected:**

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

LG - Having diverse staff members is essential to meet the needs of our community. When elected, I will hire qualified candidates who will reflect the various communities within our district. I've actively implemented inclusive hiring practices in my own business. I've seen firsthand the immense value and contributions these individuals bring, enriching our team with diverse perspectives and experiences. This commitment extends beyond rhetoric; it's a foundational principle that underscores our dedication to creating an inclusive environment where everyone, regardless of their background or identity, can thrive and contribute meaningfully.

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

LG - Yes, of course.

---

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

LG - I support all non-discrimination policies. I strongly believe everyone should be respected for who they are. This includes advocating for strong measures to ensure equal opportunities in employment, housing, healthcare, education, and public accommodations, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression. No one should face discrimination or harassment simply for being who they are, and these policies are crucial steps toward fostering a society where every LGBTQ+ individual feels safe, respected, and able to fully participate in every aspect of our community without fear of prejudice or bias.

---

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

LG - First to note, I will work with fellow Democratic State Reps apart from the LGBTQ+ Caucus and help support any of the Caucus's legislation. Second, I will support legislative initiatives by local groups to file legislation to support the ability to foster and adopt in the state.

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

LG - Yes, sodomy law is a violation of personal freedom and reinforces societal prejudice and stigmas. As mentioned above, I would support any Caucus's and legislative initiatives.

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

LG - I am in favor of repealing the amendment, which would be a step towards ensuring equal treatment for all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Allowing same-sex couples in Texas to have their relationships legally recognized and enjoy the same rights and benefits as opposite-sex couples should be a right. Furthermore, repealing this amendment aligns with the principles of social justice and human rights, as it promotes inclusivity and ensures that all individuals have the freedom to marry the person they love, irrespective of their sexual orientation.

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

LG - Supporting safe schools for LGBTQ+ individuals is crucial for creating an inclusive and supportive environment. It is important for us to conduct training and workshops to educate students, teachers, and staff on LGBTQ+ issues, including understanding gender diversity, recognizing biases, and promoting respect and inclusion.

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

LG - As a State Representative, I will be tackling these issues head-on in order to ensure a safe and inclusive environment for our transgender community. As mentioned, I am committed to actively oppose any legislation that will harm our LGBTQ+ community.

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

LG - It is important that we protect reproductive rights for people. Advocating against the ban is crucial to ensuring that people have autonomy over their own bodies and the right to make decisions regarding their reproductive health. While the ban severely limits access to essential healthcare services for those seeking abortions in Texas, it disproportionately affects individuals who already face barriers to healthcare, such as low-income individuals, marginalized communities, and those in rural areas. In return, I will work with allied representatives and organizations to pass legislation to undo the terrible bans placed upon all of us.

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

LG - This topic is one of my passions and is hardly ever represented at a state level. The wealth divide is a massive issue. As a State rep elect in a district that serves a lower-income community, this topic is important to me as it affects those I will be serving directly. I am a child of immigrants who grew up in a low-income household benefiting from affordable housing; I know how important these types of resources are. Raising awareness of the resources put in place to help our communities is a big part of a potential catalyst to change someone's economic experience. I also understand firsthand the transformation that can occur when a person understands financial literacy and the confidence that comes from that. I want to review the current financial literacy that was enacted in 2012 to make sure it is up to date and includes topics that build generational wealth. In addition, with the environment as an urgent issue, I would support Job programs and work with the federal government allies, unions, the Texas Climate Jobs Project, and other allied groups to bring green union jobs to stimulate the local economy and help our district. In particular, with the Biden Administration launching the American Climate Corps, I would like to see how the state of Texas can work with the new program to bring good-paying union jobs to the district.

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

LG - Given that, as a country, we capitalize on healthcare (something I am personally against), I believe it is our responsibility to increase healthcare by expanding Medicaid coverage to ensure that more Texans have access to affordable healthcare services, most especially for our low-income individuals and families. We can't ignore the health and well-being of our community members, especially when we have not raised the minimum wage since 2009 and have not factored in the cost of living. I am committed to advocating legislation to ensure better healthcare options and to bring us closer to a universal system where no Texas is left without life-saving healthcare.

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

LG - We must promote responsible consumption and sustainable practices and understand that combating climate change is urgent and a more significant issue than only personal use. The legislature must make conscious choices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by investing in energy efficiency, weatherization for our homes, buildings, and grids, and more renewable energy in Texas. While Republican representatives are pushing to worsen the crisis and trying to take away local city environmental actions and commissions, I will fight back against these types of state preemption efforts from passing the Texas House of Representatives. Furthermore, I hope to join and support initiatives from the Texas House Caucus on Climate, Environment, and the Energy Industry and legislation from the chair, Rep. Erin Zwiener. Personally, this is something that I have worked on in our household as we have transitioned to electric cars and worked on inputting low-consumption lightbulbs in our home. As a representative of HD 107, I understand and want to be mindful that some of these changes incur costs, but I also want to acknowledge that this is an urgent issue. Finally, I also plan to look into past environmental legislation by Rep. Neave and other representatives who did not pass in previous sessions that can be refiled.

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

LG - It is important that we strengthen the reliability of the electricity in Texas. We need to prioritize investing in upgrading, weatherizing, and expanding the electrical grid infrastructure to cater to the growing energy demand. This includes improving transmission and distribution systems, deploying smart grid technologies, and implementing energy storage solutions. In addition, this is an opportunity to expand on clean, renewable energy that can help us in the summer and be weatherized to last during all seasons. We need to work on taking proactive measures to protect the grid from extreme weather events, such as winter storms, hurricanes, and heatwaves. This can involve reinforcing power lines, substations, and other infrastructure, as well as implementing weather forecasting and disaster response protocols.

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

LG - As a state that ranks as one of the highest in HIV diagnosis, this should be a pressing issue. I will help support and prioritize bills that address the restoration of these funds as well as access to PrEP, which disproportionately affects our low-income communities.

---

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

LG - I would lead the fight against reparative/conversion therapy in Texas by advocating for clear legislation banning these harmful practices, especially for minors. Alongside this, I'd support the launch of public awareness campaigns, collaborate with mental health professionals to promote affirming care, and support survivors by ensuring access to appropriate mental health resources. By working closely with advocacy groups and emphasizing the importance of inclusive mental health practices, I aim to protect LGBTQ+ individuals from the damaging effects of conversion therapy and foster a more accepting and supportive environment statewide.

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

LG - As the daughter of immigrants whose parents benefited from President Reagan's immigration reform, and has allowed me the opportunity to apply for this very Stonewall endorsement as State Representative-Elect, advocating for immigration reform at the state level is deeply personal to me. I'm committed to ensuring that all immigrants, including asylum seekers, have access to legal support and resources, and I'll fight for policies that enable immigrants to be able to work and contribute to our state's prosperity on paper. I understand firsthand the importance of integration programs and educational opportunities for immigrant families, and I'll work to expand these initiatives. Furthermore, I believe in and would champion measures that provide pathways to citizenship for DREAMers, aligning with the belief that our diversity is our strength and that everyone deserves a fair chance at the American dream. However, I understand this is a federal issue, and I would collaborate with federal leaders to pass comprehensive reform that values the immense contributions immigrants bring to our communities, embodying the principles of compassion and inclusivity that shaped my own family's journey. Finally, with Abbott's legislation, like the recent SB4 on immigration, I would work to repeal this type of legislation and always stand up against any similar legislation.

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

LG - Yes, ensuring a safe and inclusive workplace environment is crucial for the development and well-being of young staffers. By supporting legislation that promotes mandatory sexual harassment training and equal employment opportunities, we are taking important steps toward creating a nurturing environment for young professionals.

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

LG - The way I would address voter suppression in Texas and in my district is by advocating for policies that safeguard the rights of voters and actively opposing any measures that seek to suppress voter participation; we can contribute to combating voter suppression and promoting a fair and inclusive voting system in Texas. It is crucial to fight for the principles of democracy and strive for an equitable electoral process where everyone's voice is valued.

In Texas, where voter suppression laws already exist, I stand resolute in my commitment to fight against these barriers to voting. I'll work tirelessly to introduce and support legislation that counteracts these suppressive measures. I will seek to partner and hear insights from grassroots organizations like the Texas Organizing Project, the Texas Civil Rights Project, your organization, and others. We'll launch targeted educational campaigns, hosting bilingual workshops and town halls to ensure everyone understands registration procedures, polling locations, and voting requirements.

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

LG - It would be an honor to receive the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas endorsement. If I receive the endorsement for my campaign, I'd prominently feature this endorsement on all campaign materials, including literature and posters, and share the announcement on social media platforms. It's a testament to our shared commitment to advancing LGBTQ+ rights in Texas.

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

LG - No

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**This completes the questions and answers for this race.**

# STONEWALL DEMOCRATS OF DALLAS

2024 Endorsement Screening

## County Commissioner #3 Questionnaires

Candidates:

Commissioner John Wiley Price - JWP

Derek Avery - DA

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

**Question 3: Pronouns**

JWP - He/Him

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DA - He/Him

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

JWP - I affirm the party platform

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DA - Yes, and I have only voted in Democratic primaries and democrats in the general elections.

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

JWP - I am always been an advocate and defender of the rights of all people, regardless of race, sex, ethnicity, or sexual preference.

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DA - I was the first Director of Housing at Abounding Prosperity Inc in South Dallas where I helped develop housing for LGBTQ+ adults and youth. A lot of people ended up homeless because of their identity as LGBTQ+ so my goal was to make sure everyone was housed, and we focused on safe housing to protect folks from harm in anyway. I'm my role as Commissioner, I will create inclusive policies to end discrimination, promote equitable healthcare, and promote housing for LGBTQ+ people.

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

JWP - I have been working in this capacity for the last 40 years.

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DA - I am a real estate developer who focuses on on affordable housing of all types. I worked as a property tax consultant for years as well. Those jobs allowed me to manage large budgets and an expert understanding of property taxes. I've been on several boards that deal directly with issue at the the county line Faith in Texas and the cash bail system. I worked to end cash bail to help to eliminate criminalizing the poor. I have lived experience with homelessness and food insecurity which helped shaped my care for the communities with the most need.

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

JWP - To continue to direct Dallas county government in a fashion that is efficient, equitable, and responsive to the needs of all of our citizens.

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DA - I have three main focus areas which are Housing, economic development, and transportation. Also, I have a plan to provide running water to Sand Branch, Tx. Day 1 that will be my first submission to the court.

1. I will submit a letter map revision to the army corps of engineers to remove it from the flood plain.
2. I will complete environmental testing to determine where there is contamination.
3. I will create a budget for remediation of environmental issues.
4. I will create a budget for water lines, sewer lines, and other utility upgrades. Approximately \$8,000,000
5. I will create a Tax Incremental financing zone with a tax freeze to protect legacy residents from property tax increases. The TIF will help with other community improvements for example a new community center.
6. I will create a private fund of \$4,500,000 to pay the water bills for 10 years for the legacy residents.

7. We have options to find this initiative. The us environmental protection agency has funds allocated for this purpose. The USDA has funds allocated for projects like this as well. The County has a AAA bond rating, so we can issue a bond to provide water for Sand Branch.

Also, I will submit a plan to end homelessness by acquiring the appropriate types of units through the county and providing more vouchers for our struggling residents. This can be accomplished by allocating funding the county already has and increased funding from HUD. We plan to partner with each city in Dallas county to add to their down payment assistance programs to allow more people the opportunity to own a home.

For economic development, we are creating a grant program for small And micro businesses for \$100,000 to help kick start business growth in Dallas county. There will be a special focus on historically under utilized businesses which includes black, brown, and LGBTQ+ owned businesses.

We will create a transportation plan to reduce travel to 1-hour or less throughout the county. We will do this with a mixture of transportation methods include small trolleys to light rails.

**Question 8: When elected, how will you recruit, retain, and create an inclusive environment for LGBTQ and LGBTQ-friendly staff?**

JWP - I will respect and demand respect for the LBGTO community in all areas of my capacity as a sitting Commissioner.

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DA - I will create an LGBTQ+ liaison staff position to make sure we are on the forefront of issues in the community. This staff member will make sure we recruit, retain, and welcome any LGBTQ+ staff to our team. We plan to create an all inclusive staff just like the campaign staff. We have an LGBTQ+ director now who will help recruit the permanent liaison once I am elected.

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

JWP - If time permits.

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DA - Yes, I will have a permanent staff position for a LGBTQ+ liaison on my staff.

**Question 10: 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?**

JWP - Yes.

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DA - Yes

**Question 11: 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”?**

JWP - The law always supersedes religious beliefs and affiliations.

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DA - I wouldn't be in that situation because I will fulfill all lawful duties. My faith is one of love and grace, so I don't see there being any conflicts. If a subordinate does not want to fulfill lawful duties, then they will need to be reassigned to another position or asked to resign.

**Question 12: 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?**

JWP - I will continue to work through my district, 3 health initiative, along with the Dallas County health and human services department.

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DA - As commissioner, I would partner with companies who fund research like Gilead sciences to fund marketing and access to pharmaceutical products to prevent educate and prevent the spread of HIV. Also, I would partner with local organizations that already do this work to help promote their efforts from a county level. This will amplify their voices and increase their reach.

**Question 13: 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?**

JWP - Continue to work as a leader in NHTBA.

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DA - For mental health survivors, I will make sure we publicly market the resources available in ways where it gets to everyone. People aren't aware of the current resources available. I will work to increase the efficiency of the mental health section of the jail. Also, I will advocate for release of non-violent people surviving mental health issues. I want to increase funding for people surviving mental health to alleviate medication costs and to fill in the gaps whether public system leaves. Also, one my major issues housing. Permanent supportive housing is a serious need to help create the environment for people to thrive. I will work on creating permanent supportive housing focused on mental health to stabilize our residents.

**Question 14: How would you address the issues of non-Dallas County Residents using Parkland?**

JWP - All of these issues must be addressed congruent with Parkland policies.

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DA - Parkland is designed for Dallas county, however the Parkland healthcare plan includes other counties to provide services. I like work to increase access to the Parkland healthcare plan to allow people use other resources outside of Parkland. This is allow Parkland to service Dallas county at a higher level.

**Question 15: How can the county play a part in expanding voting rights and access, including voting centers and extended hours?**

JWP - Continue to demand the un further access to the ballot. Provide adequate opportunities in location and time for all residents to vote in every election.

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DA - The county should promote open and fair elections. I believe we should have voting locations in as many places as possible. The county jail should be a voting location, college campuses, and rural areas to ensure everyone has access. People who work 9-5 or other ours should have the ability to vote outside of a short window of time. I would extend the hours to 10pm. Also, I will push for automatic voter registration with drivers license/state identification renewal. A pilot program I will test is voting by mobile application. These measures will increase voter turnout and access for all.

**Question 16: 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?**

JWP - No

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DA - No

**Question 17: How would you showcase your endorsement by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas if received? Would you include the endorsement in your campaign media?**

JWP - It would be added to my list of endorsements Publicly.

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DA - I will include in all of my marketing materials and social media.

**Question 18: 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?**

JWP - \*\*no answer provided\*\*

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DA - Yes, I will join before the screening.

**This completes the questions and answers for this race.**

# STONEWALL DEMOCRATS OF DALLAS

2024 Endorsement Screening

## County Commissioner #1 Questionnaires

Candidates:

Commissioner Theresa Daniel - TD

Opponent did not seek endorsement.

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

**Question 3: Pronouns**

TD - she, her, hers, herself

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

TD - I do affiliate with the Democratic party and have voted in the Democratic primary over 45 years.

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

TD - If memory serves me, I joined Stonewall Democrats in 1999 because it focused on yet another part of the community. Being a member of the State Democratic Executive Committee made me want to know as much about residents in the District as possible and Stonewall Democrats gave me another opportunity to do that. Also, being a member of the Rules Committee of the SDEC, I was instrumental in inviting the Stonewall Democrats to be included on the SDEC.

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

TD - My education and experience match the job. With masters and PhD in public policy and administration, I have been trained to work in the public arena. My work experience has also been in the public sector beginning with Legal Services and more recently with the Dallas Independent School District.

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

TD - One area is to work with Dallas councilmembers to increase the trails network in my district. I will also continue to expand mental health services to better match the needs of Dallas County residents. Also, as a member of the Regional Transportation Council, I'm involved in the safety and security of Dallas County residents in road planning and construction as well as increasing pedestrian and cyclist use of roads and paths for work and recreation.

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**Question 8: When elected, how will you recruit, retain, and create an inclusive environment for LGBTQ and LGBTQ-friendly staff?**

TD - Discrimination is wrong under any circumstance and all are welcome to be a part of Dallas County staff.

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

TD - Of course, if that would be helpful. But, I think part of my responsibility is to reach out to all parts of the Dallas County community and initiate communication.

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**Question 10: 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?**

TD - Yes. Under the laws enforced by EEOC. it is illegal to discriminate against someone because of that persons race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual, and pregnancy), national original, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. Discriminations is wrong under any circumstance.

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**Question 11: 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”?**

TD - It would depend on the situation. For example, if a Catholic employee wanted to attend church services on Good Friday afternoon during regular work hours, I would think accommodations could be made as long as the work product was not disrupted. Balance must be found between work responsibilities and personal beliefs.

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**Question 12: 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?**

TD - About half of the Dallas County budget is from sources other than property taxes, so I will seek and support outside funding to augment that tax base.

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**Question 13: 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?**

TD - I have been very involved in expanding the ways that mental health services are made available in Dallas County. For example, I worked to set up the Dallas County Deflection Center so that people arrested who showed signs of mental illness would be assessed and get treatment rather than being sent to the county jail.

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**Question 14: How would you address the issues of non-Dallas County Residents using Parkland?**

TD - The Parkland administration currently follows up on all bills incurred by non-Dallas County residents to get payment.

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**Question 15: How can the county play a part in expanding voting rights and access, including voting centers and extended hours?**

TD - I, and the other members of the current Court, actively support the voting rights of all residents by protecting convenient voting locations and establishing hours to accommodate voters lives as much as possible.

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**Question 16: 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?**

TD - Not to the best of my knowledge.

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**Question 17: How would you showcase your endorsement by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas if received? Would you include the endorsement in your campaign media?**

TD - All endorsements, including the Stonewall Democrats, will be appropriately included on campaign materials.

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**Question 18: 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?**

TD - If memory serves me, I have been a member of Stonewall Democrats since about 1999.

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**This completes the questions and answers for this race.**

# **STONEWALL DEMOCRATS OF DALLAS**

2024 Endorsement Screening

## **County Sheriff Questionnaires**

**Candidates:**

**Rodney Thomas – RT**

**Sam Mohamad – SM**

**Lupe Valdez – LV**

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

**Question 3: Pronouns**

RT - N/A

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SM - Male

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LV - She/Her

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

RT - I consistently vote for Democratic candidates.

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SM - Yes, as a rightful voter in the state of Texas, I affirm that I have voted for democratic parties in previous voting history.

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LV - Yes. I am a lifelong Democrat.

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

RT - I volunteered as a rape crisis advocate, directly assisting survivors, and worked with transgender individuals. I received training from the NYS Department of Health in forensic examination, and I have experience in addressing drug and alcohol abuse. Additionally, while serving as a Federal Officer with the Department of Justice INS in Miami, Florida, I interacted with transgender community.

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SM - As an individual person and as a peace officer my interactions and concerns has been the same as always. Respect for a people regardless of their identity or otherwise. Treatment of others is embedded within my faith. and profession . Humans must treat one another with honor, respect, and kindness.

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LV - I was the first LGBTQ and woman elected Sheriff in Texas.

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

RT - I bring 24 years of diverse law enforcement experience, including supervisory roles, specialized in gang and narcotics cases. I've also collaborated effectively within the Multi-Agency Jurisdictional Task Force. I am certified in Hostage Negotiations and Organized Crime. Additionally, I have completed training with the NYS Division of Criminal Justice as a Criminal Investigator and in Crime Scene Investigations. Furthermore, my passion lies in transforming law enforcement culture and implementing improved community policing practices within Dallas County.

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SM - Briefly stating: 23 years in law enforcement - still remain active. I have been a supervisor for the past 10 years and have shaped and reformed the operations of multiple law enforcement agencies. .

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LV - I was elected as Dallas County Sheriff in 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2016. I resigned to run for Governor in 2018.

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

RT - Once in office as the Dallas County Sheriff, I aim to allocate additional investigative resources to address hate crimes targeting the LGBTQ community. I will also establish policies aimed at fostering stronger connections between the Sheriff's department and the LGBTQ community.

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SM - Building the gap between community and law enforcement , restore order in the jail, combat human trafficking, fentanyl, and DWI

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LV - Regrettably, the Dallas County Sheriff's Office's current condition, particularly the state of the jail, has regressed to a level reminiscent of the challenges we faced when I first took office in 2005. The facility is consistently failing State inspections, grappling with severe over-capacity issues, experiencing rising costs for inmate housing due to inefficiencies within the Sheriff's Department, and tragically witnessing an alarming number of inmate and jailer fatalities.

These challenges require experienced leadership and a steadfast commitment to the values that make the Dallas County Sheriff's Office and jail system fair for all. Over the last year, elected officials, employees of the Sheriff's office, and community leaders have asked me to run again to help bring the Sheriff's Department up to the level it was when I left in 2017.

**Question 8: When elected, how will you recruit, retain, and create an inclusive environment for LGBTQ and LGBTQ-friendly staff?**

RT - By implementing diverse recruitment strategies, fostering an inclusive culture, and providing support networks, we aim to create an LGBTQ-friendly environment for staff.

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SM - I learned that putting the right person in the right position is a major solution to any problem. I will appoint people from within the sheriff's office who have the experience in running the jail operation based on their experience and knowledge. and not based favoritism/nepotism.

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LV - I have a proven record of this.

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

RT - Upon assuming office, I plan to introduce ongoing, proactive community-driven initiatives and engagement. The LGBTQ Liaison will act as a staunch advocate for the LGBTQ community, aiming to foster trust between the Dallas County Sheriff's Office and the communities it supports.

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SM - Yes, of course, as every Dallas County citizen \*community is of importance and to understand their needs. It is the law enforcement's duty and the LGBTQ rights to be met.

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LV - Of course.

**Question 10: 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?**

RT - I aim is to establish a non-discriminatory and non-judgmental work environment within the Dallas County Sheriff Department, respecting all religions and sexual orientations.

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SM - I learned that putting the right person in the right position is a major solution to any problem. I will appoint people from within the sheriff's office who have the experience in running the jail operation based on their experience and knowledge. and not based favoritism/nepotism.

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LV - Of course.

**Question 11: 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"?**

RT - Respecting personal beliefs is important, but it's crucial to ensure that all lawful work duties are fulfilled. I'd aim to find a balanced solution that respects religious beliefs while upholding the responsibilities required by the position. This may involve accommodating where possible or finding alternative solutions that don't compromise the essential duties.

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SM - One's work is a legal employee contract - as a peace officer we must fulfill all lawful duties.

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LV - While I respect an individual's right to their own religious beliefs, the job of working in the Sheriff's Office is very demanding and requires an individual that can handle difficult situations. In the case that this arises I would do the following.

1. Initiate an open and honest conversation to understand the specific nature of the religious beliefs and the reasons behind the reluctance to fulfill specific duties.
2. Create a safe and non-judgmental space for the individual to express their concerns.
3. Consult Legal Counsel.
4. Work with the individual to explore alternative solutions to address their religious beliefs and the job requirements.
5. Ensure that any accommodation for religious beliefs is applied consistently and fairly to avoid perceptions of favoritism.

**Question 12: 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?**

RT - \*\*question not applicable to this office\*\*

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SM - \*\*question not applicable to this office\*\*

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LV - \*\*question not applicable to this office\*\*

**Question 13: 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?**

RT - \*\*question not applicable to this office\*\*

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SM - \*\*question not applicable to this office\*\*

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LV - \*\*question not applicable to this office\*\*

**Question 14: How would you address the issues of non-Dallas County Residents using Parkland?**

RT - \*\*question not applicable to this office\*\*

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SM - \*\*question not applicable to this office\*\*

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LV - \*\*question not applicable to this office\*\*

**Question 15: How can the county play a part in expanding voting rights and access, including voting centers and extended hours?**

RT - \*\*question not applicable to this office\*\*

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SM - As a Sheriff: Inmates with felony records who are not on parole/probation are by law, eligible to vote. They will be able to vote in the county jail during the primary and on election day. There will be deputies who will be certified as VDRs and trained as election workers to make sure every eligible voter has their due right.

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LV - \*\*question not applicable to this office\*\*

**Question 16: 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?**

RT - No

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SM - N/A

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LV - Not at all.

**Question 17: How would you showcase your endorsement by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas if received? Would you include the endorsement in your campaign media?**

RT - Absolutely, if endorsed by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas, I'd proudly showcase this endorsement in my campaign media. It's a testament to my commitment to LGBTQ+ rights and inclusion, and it's important to highlight such support from respected organizations.

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SM - Yes - acknowledge Stonewall Democrats of Dallas - s. media (FB) as with any other endorsement

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LV - I would be honored to receive the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas again. My campaign would highlight it on our website and social media, send an email, issue a press release, and include it in our mail pieces.

**Question 18: 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?**

RT - I have been a member of Stonewall Democrats for one year.

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SM - I am not a member - not at this time as

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LV - I believe that I been a member for at least 20 years

**This completes the questions and answers for this race.**