



Texans for Courageous Courts 2020 Judicial Questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

Texans for Courageous Courts is a project of Empower Texans. We believe judges should be courageous, willing to pursue and provide justice even in the face of political and social pressure, and embracing of accountability.

We will make endorsements during the 2020 **primary** and **general elections**. We do not always endorse a candidate in every race where one is sought. Our focus is primarily on the state appellate courts, but we will entertain questionnaires from district court candidates and consider making endorsements in such races in extraordinary circumstances.

To be considered for an endorsement, candidates must apply for an interview by submitting a completed questionnaire. Interviews are not guaranteed. The deadline for submission is Friday, December 13th.

Our endorsement of a candidate is based on our belief that the candidate will demonstrate courage on the bench. This means ensuring justice without succumbing to special interests, including the interests of government officials, and welcoming accountability for their actions.

Our endorsement of any particular candidate does not represent a criticism of any other candidate in the race. Men and women of goodwill can – and often will – disagree on the solutions to the issues facing Texas; that debate is healthy and necessary in a constitutional republic.

These questions are designed to elicit discussion of each candidate's philosophical underpinnings and are not designed to ascertain how the candidate would rule on any particular case or controversy. Answers are not expected to touch on the specifics of any live or anticipated case.

Additionally, some questions relate to policy affecting the judiciary. While candidates are unlikely to have a direct role in making these policy changes, judges carry particular weight as leaders on these issues and so their views on them are particularly important.

We welcome your comments, questions and thoughts on these and other issues. Additional pages – although optional – are welcome and may be attached to the document.

1. Why did you decide to run for this position?
2. Who would be or is your role model as a judge?
3. Should the wishes of voters be a factor in judicial decision-making? Please explain why or why not.
4. Should the doctrines of sovereign or governmental immunity ever result in the complete denial to any plaintiff of a remedy for damages they have sustained? Why or why not?

Initials: _____

9. Define "judicial activism."

10. How should a judge balance their duty to protect and defend the constitution while avoiding judicial activism? Should judicial restraint be admired or should it be viewed as an abdication of judicial responsibility?

11. What is the principal purpose of the criminal justice system?

12. What factors are most important in fashioning a sentence in a criminal case?

Initials: _____

13. Is there a problem in Texas with abuse of the criminal justice system for political ends? If so, what can and should be done to reform this problem?

14. In your opinion, do judges too often avoid making tough decisions in cases with political implications? If so, why? Are there remedies to this problem?

15. Do you support changing Texas' system of judicial elections in any way? What proposals do you support? If you don't support any changes, why do you support our current system?

16. You are a candidate, but you are also a discerning voter. What qualities do you look for in a judicial candidate before entrusting him with your vote?

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17. If you are elected to the bench, how should your voters and supporters *measure* your success or failure?

18. Please briefly describe any past judicial experience. Please cite any experiences in which you have demonstrated courage.

19. Please describe your past experience as an attorney. Of what accomplishments as an attorney are you most proud?

20. In what ways have you been a leader in the legal profession, and/or the judiciary, outside of the courtroom?

Initials: _____

Please **sign** the completed questionnaire and return all pages as quickly as possible to be considered for an endorsement interview. **Note:** We will use this information to contact you to schedule an interview should you be selected. Please verify all fields are correct.

Please Print

Full Name:	Phone:
Campaign Address:	
Email:	
Campaign Website:	
Court Sought:	Counties Included:
Voting History (circle all that apply):	
GOP Primary: 2018 2016 2014 2012 2010 2008 2006 2004 2002	
DEM Primary: 2018 2016 2014 2012 2010 2008 2006 2004 2002	
General: 2018 2016 2014 2012 2010 2008 2006 2004 2002	

Signature of Candidate

Date

Please submit your completed questionnaire to **endorsement@empowertexans.com** as one PDF file. Separate files will not be accepted.

Note: The deadline for submission is Friday, December 13th.