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<b>Question 1 Why are you seeking this public office? (Please be brief)</b>	
<b>Alison Alter</b>	I believe that city government should solve problems and create a climate in which all can thrive. I am running because I don't like the kind of city we will be if we continue to allow a few special interests to write the rules and dictate agendas.
<b>Nicholas Virden</b>	I'm seeking public office because I want to bring fresh, innovative ideas to the dais. Millennials are one of the biggest populations in Austin, yet they're severely underrepresented in this town. Along with my agenda for affordability, mobility, and sound budgeting, I'm also a proponent of the rights of the historically marginalized like the LGBTQ+ community and I will ensure that their voice is heard on the city council just as much as any heterosexual person's.
<b>Robert Walker</b>	I believe that I can influence our City government for the better with my financial, analytical and negotiating skills. Also, I am frustrated by the lack of fiscal discipline and the fact that the council needs to focus much more on priorities. I want to help find creative ways to make taxpayer dollars stretch farther, and also find a way to relieve the tax burden on our citizens at the same time. I disagree with the incumbent on some very key votes, specifically her support of the mobility bond, her opposition to Uber/Lyft, and some others.

<b>Question 2 Please tell us why you are seeking the endorsement of SDA. Do you have a history of involvement in Democratic politics and/or LGBTQ issues? If so please briefly describe this history.</b>	
<b>Alison Alter</b>	I am a life-long Democrat. I interned for Democratic Senator Paul Simon in college and hosted events for Bill Bradley's presidential campaign when teaching at Stanford. My husband and I have several close family members and friends that are active in LGBTQ issues.
<b>Nicholas Virden</b>	I am seeking the endorsement from SDA because I believe that we need people to encourage LGBTQ+ inclusion in our society by showing that they are people, just like everyone else. I want to be seen as a person that can bridge the bi-partisan gap and be a voice for minority groups on the council. At the University of Texas at Austin, I worked on bi-partisan policy issues with the University Democrats and when I was in Young Americans for Liberty, I led the group's marriage equality event that we held in April 2015, 2 months before gay marriage was officially legalized in the United States. The event was highly successful and received plenty of social media acclaim.
<b>Robert Walker</b>	Equality, kindness, compassion and charity are very important in and to our society, and I know that these are very important to the SDA as well. I do not have a history of involvement in Democratic politics or LGBTQ issues.

<b>Question 3 Do you believe LGBTQ individuals should be protected against discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression?</b>	
<b>Alison Alter</b>	Yes.



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<b>Nicholas Virden</b>	Yes. LGBTQ+ individuals should have equal access to opportunities for advancing their careers. The only thing that should matter when they're being hired are their skills, not how they experience their identity or sexuality.
<b>Robert Walker</b>	I am a firm believer in equality for all and am staunchly against discrimination of any kind. I will work to ensure that no person or group of people is discriminated against.

<b>Question 4</b>	<b>If elected would you commit to appointing LGBTQ individuals to City Boards and Commissions?</b>
<b>Alison Alter</b>	Yes and I would particularly welcome LGBTQ applicants from D10.
<b>Nicholas Virden</b>	Yes.
<b>Robert Walker</b>	I will commit to identifying the very best individuals for City Boards and Commissions, and will consider all people without discrimination.

<b>Question 5</b>	<b>Do you think that the Austin Police Department is doing everything it can to make its officers aware of and sensitive to the rights and dignity of Austin's LGBTQ citizens?</b>
<b>Alison Alter</b>	I would like to see improved and more consistent training on transgender matters.
<b>Nicholas Virden</b>	The Austin Police Department is definitely taking the right steps to ensure that the LGBTQ+ community is included in their public dialogues. There is a liaison for the police department, the decoration of police cars with rainbow colors shows and increased perception of the rights of LGBTQ+ citizens, and APD has joined forces with Equality Texas to institute new training protocols and procedures for handling hate crimes and other violent disputes involving LGBTQ+ citizens. It's important to encourage police to improve their relationships with the community, but I think APD is doing their part in some areas.
<b>Robert Walker</b>	I do not know enough about the training the officers receive with respect to the rights and dignity of Austin's LGBTQ citizens to be able to answer definitively. I am eager to learn more about their training, and how I can help as a future City Council member to improve relations between the Police Dept and every citizen of Austin.

<b>Question 6</b>	<b>If elected, would you act to increase recruitment of LGBTQ employees for the police, fire, and emergency medical services? What proposals would you suggest to make coming out on the job safer for LGBTQ employees?</b>
<b>Alison Alter</b>	The City of Austin benefits from a diverse workforce. This is especially true of our police, fire, and emergency medical services who regularly interact with the community in high pressure and tense situations. The city needs recruiting practices that ensure diversity in applicants and hiring practices that value diversity. Such diversity would include LGBTQ hires. We also need to provide more support for APD's LGBTQ liaison.



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<b>Nicholas Virden</b>	With organizations already dedicated to the causes of including LGBTQ+ individuals in police, fire, and emergency medical services, I would act as a strong proponent of those organizations' missions and goals. In those fields, I would ensure that nobody could be dismissed from their professions simply for coming out.
<b>Robert Walker</b>	I believe that each prospective employee should be evaluated and hired on their merits, and without being discriminated against.

<b>Question 7</b>	<b>Do you think the City of Austin is doing enough to ensure equality for its LGBTQ employees? For example, how would you address organizational issues such as transgender employees transitioning on the job?</b>
<b>Alison Alter</b>	We need to recognize that the city does a lot to support the LGBTQ employees compared to other Southern cities. The city needs to retain its commitment to a 100% rating on the HRC Municipal Quality Index and ensure transgender issues are addressed.
<b>Nicholas Virden</b>	Yes. The City of Austin is very good at walking the walk when it comes to LGBTQ+ issues, especially since we're one of the most LGBTQ-friendly cities in America. If people want to transition on the job, that's their choice. As long as it doesn't interfere with the quality of their work, they should be able to transition in peace, use whatever bathroom they feel comfortable with, and have the dignity of a human being since that's exactly what they are.
<b>Robert Walker</b>	I am not privy to some of the information required to answer this question fully, but, again, I am for equal treatment of all employees.

<b>Question 8</b>	<b>If elected, would you continue to uphold the current requirement that a company that receives economic incentives from the City not discriminate against its LGBTQ employees?</b>
<b>Alison Alter</b>	Yes.
<b>Nicholas Virden</b>	Yes, of course!
<b>Robert Walker</b>	I will work to ensure that any company that receives economic incentives from the City does not discriminate against any person or group.

<b>Question 9</b>	<b>How familiar are you with organizations, such as Out Youth, the Austin Gay &amp; Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, and AIDS Services of Austin that serve the LGBTQ community? If elected, would you support increased funding for the services organizations like these provide? What services do you think are crucial for LGBTQ residents?</b>
<b>Alison Alter</b>	I look forward to learning more about these organizations. I think surveying the needs of the LGBTQ residents would be one of the first tasks of a LGBTQ Quality of Life Commission.



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<b>Nicholas Virden</b>	As I've said before, I would be a proponent of groups that foster understanding and support to our LGBTQ+ neighbors and give a voice to those in the community. Emotional support and health education support services are probably the most crucial to LGBTQ+ citizens as they tackle societal norms head on by coming out or transitioning.
<b>Robert Walker</b>	I know some about AIDS Services of Austin, and I am thankful for this compassionate organization. Believing in equality, I would need to evaluate requests for increased funding on the merits.

<b>Question 10</b>	<b>Describe a step you would take, or have taken, or a proposal you would make, or have made as a member of Austin's City Council that would specifically benefit Austin's LGBTQ community.</b>
<b>Alison Alter</b>	I would support the creation of a LGBTQ Quality of Life Commission.
<b>Nicholas Virden</b>	Even though it's silly that we even have to have this debate, I would ensure that transgender students in public schools or using public facilities would have the same rights as heterosexual students to use the locker rooms, bathrooms, or whatever else that they feel most comfortable using so that we can respect their dignities as citizens of a democracy.
<b>Robert Walker</b>	Being a champion of transparency and accountability, I believe that equal treatment of every citizen and employee of the City of Austin will be to the benefit of every Austinite.

<b>Question 11</b>	<b>Do you support the requirement that all single-occupancy public restrooms are made available to all people, (for example families and transgender people)?</b>
<b>Alison Alter</b>	Yes.
<b>Nicholas Virden</b>	Yes.
<b>Robert Walker</b>	I want not only to respect the rights of all people, but also to protect all people from being in potentially unsafe environments.

<b>Question 12</b>	<b>The Texas Democratic Party recently adopted a plank in their 2016 Platform that reads, "support the right of all people to use facilities and participate in all aspects of life in a manner that is consistent with their gender identity, irrespective of the gender they were assigned at birth". How would you advance or further the goals of this Platform plank in Austin and how would you work with other jurisdictions to advance or further the goals of this plank?</b>
<b>Alison Alter</b>	Austin is leading by example in this area, for instance, with its gender neutral bathroom ordinance.



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<b>Nicholas Virden</b>	Since this questionnaire has gone through an exhaustive list of issues, if elected and if any issue comes up regarding our LGBTQ+ community's rights, I would be there to ensure that the city is protecting them and improving our relations with them since we pride ourselves in being one of the most LGBTQ-friendly cities in the country. We've got to Keep Austin Weird (read: diverse) somehow!
<b>Robert Walker</b>	I will require a lot more information about this issue, and believe we need to be fair, but also to protect all people, especially women and children, from potentially unsafe environments, even as it relates to public restrooms, etc.

<b>Question 13</b>	<b>Do you believe that public schools should institute rules and policies to prohibit harassment and discrimination against LGBTQ students?</b>
<b>Alison Alter</b>	Yes.
<b>Nicholas Virden</b>	Yes. Public schools should protect the rights of all children, especially those that are in a fragile period of development and discovery during their lives like LGBTQ+ students.
<b>Robert Walker</b>	I believe that public schools should institute rules and have them in place to prevent discrimination of anyone.

<b>Question 14</b>	<b>If elected, how would you stay informed of the concerns and interests of your LGBTQ constituents?</b>
<b>Alison Alter</b>	I would support the creation of a LGBTQ Quality of Life Commission and additionally I would ask the D10 nominated Commissioner to regularly engage with the D10 LGBTQ community.
<b>Nicholas Virden</b>	By attending meetings of groups that are concerned with LGBTQ+ issues, such as the ones listed in the questionnaire.
<b>Robert Walker</b>	I believe that all constituents of mine are equal, and I will do my best to be a good listener, enquiring when I am ill-informed on an issue.

<b>Question 15</b>	<b>Have you attended functions in Austin's LGBTQ community and, if so, which?</b>
<b>Alison Alter</b>	I have attended private functions.
<b>Nicholas Virden</b>	Not yet, but I was involved at UT Austin with the LGBTQ student groups.
<b>Robert Walker</b>	No.