



January 10, 2018

Question 1	Do you wish to receive the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Austin?
County Judge Sarah Eckhardt	Yes.
Commissioner PCT 4 Margaret Gomez	I do wish to receive the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Austin.
County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir	Yes, I would be honored to receive the endorsement of Stonewall Democrats.
TCDP Chair Dyana Limon- Mercado	Yes!
Anne Wynne	Enthusiastically, YES!

Question 2	Should you receive this endorsement, would you publicize our endorsement in your campaign advertisements and campaign literature?
County Judge Sarah Eckhardt	Yes.
Commissioner PCT 4 Margaret Gomez	Yes, I will publicize your endorsement on my campaign advertisements and campaign literature.
County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir	I will be proud to show your endorsements in any of my campaign materials.
TCDP Chair Dyana Limon- Mercado	Yes!
Anne Wynne	Yes, of course I will.

Question 3	Please tell us why you are seeking the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Austin? Do you have a history of publicly supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (LGBT) issues? If so please briefly describe this history.
County Judge Sarah Eckhardt	The struggles of our LGBTQ neighbors to be recognized and embraced by our community is the struggle of every person who has felt marginalized even villainized. In the 70's and early 80's I was an outspoken advocate for my LGBTQ classmates in public schools in Houston. In the 80's and 90's I grieved and rallied with my colleagues in the theater and restaurant communities of New York City living through the dark early years of AIDS. In July of 2015 I stood joyously with my fellow Travis County judges marrying droves of happy same-sex couples immediately after the Obergefell decision. In the 2 ½ years since, my Friday no-frills weddings have filled my Facebook with happy same-sex couples, many of whom have been together for years and are finally recognized and embraced as couples.



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Commissioner PCT

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Margaret Gomez

I am seeking your endorsement because I have advocated for the rights of lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender issues in every aspect of county policies and in my campaigns. A transgender person handled my campaign reports in 1998 and remains a supporter today. I have hired a lesbian in my office.

County Clerk

Dana DeBeauvoir

In the summer of 2015 the Obergefell case created equal opportunity for gay couples to marry. I was delighted to work with Judge David Walshberg and other supporters to quickly implement the new law in Travis County. While other County Clerks dithered or flatly refused to respect the civil rights recognized by the Supreme Court, Travis County made over 300 dreams come true (in the first weekend) by processing as many marriages licenses as possible for gay couples over extended office hours for the next two weeks. I can't think of a prouder moment in my career.

TCDP Chair

Dyana Limon-Mercado

The endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats is important for voters who identify as LGBTQ, and for allies who actively support the LGBTQ community, to know that they can count on particular candidates, myself included, to stand with them and fight for them day in and day out, no matter what. As Deputy Executive Director of Planned Parenthood Texas Votes, during the most recent special legislative session I initiated the One TX Resistance coalition, which was comprised of LGBTQ organizations (including Equality TX, HRC, and other Stonewall organizations), immigrant rights organizations, reproductive rights organizations and other progressive organizations, to coordinate and to leverage resources, messaging and audiences to defend against extremist attacks by Gov. Abbott and the legislature, like the "bathroom" bill. Our message was clear, an attack on any Texan is an attack on all Texans. That sort of intersectional lens is imperative for the future of the progressive movement and the future of the Democratic Party. As such and as a leader within the Planned Parenthood federation I have created space for identity caucuses including diverse LGBTQ caucuses, to discuss and highlight issues Planned Parenthood needed to address to be a better ally to the LGBTQ community. This work has included how to better educate staff to provide sexual health services and education to trans patients, and committing to using inclusive language internally and externally that respects and welcomes all gender identities and sexual orientations in the reproductive rights movement.



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<p>Anne Wynne</p>	<p>In November 2004, I founded Atticus Circle in response to eleven states voting to add discrimination to their state constitutions by prohibiting same-gender couples from marrying. A national nonprofit, Atticus Circle educates and mobilizes fair-minded straight people to advance equal rights for LGBT partners, parents and their children. I testified in the Texas Legislature against the outrageous Texas Marriage Discrimination amendment and served as a spokesperson for the coalition of more than 150 organizations and thousands of individuals who worked to defeat the amendment. During the campaign, I debated the amendment's sponsor and its radical right proponents many times. In countless media interviews and public speaking engagements, I advocated for the thousands of families and children that would be hurt. Additionally, I've served as co-chair of the board of Equality Texas, and served on the national SLDN board that worked to successfully eliminate the U.S. Military's "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy. During the legislative sessions from 2005 until 2014, I was a persistent voice against anti-LGBT legislation and a proud champion for pro-LGBT bills. Most recently, I worked with the Austin Chamber of Commerce and Equality Texas in opposing the discriminatory "Bathroom" legislation at the Texas Capitol.</p>
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<p>Question 4 Why are you seeking this public office?</p>	
<p>County Judge Sarah Eckhardt</p>	<p>I love my job and I want to further Travis County goals of respect and support for every member of our community. While we have long had full domestic partner benefits we are reviewing our administrative practices and health benefits for any unmindful presumptions (e.g. does our health plan overlook some health needs of our transgendered colleagues?). While we have long welcomed and supported our LGBTQ employees in every job family and every level of Travis County government, we should take an honest look at whether we are as welcoming on a day-to-day basis as we believe ourselves to be.</p>
<p>Commissioner PCT 4 Margaret Gomez</p>	<p>I am seeking this office because I love county government in spite of its limitations. It is the government closest to the people outside of municipalities and I have direct contact with them about issues that affect them. I understand county government and I can make it work for my constituents. It still takes a minimum of three votes to achieve any goal(s) that commissioners may have.</p>
<p>County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir</p>	<p>I love serving as your County Clerk. I want to work to finish the civil, misdemeanor, and probate courts automations projects. These complicated projects have been years in the making and are very near completion. Also, I want to bring a new voting system to Travis County voters—ADA compliant, with the speed and accuracy of electronic voting, and with a voter verified paper trail. My plan is to have a paper trail system in place before the next presidential election.</p>



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Question 6	Would you advocate for and support a state law that would prohibit discrimination against or harassment of LGBT students or teachers in Texas public schools on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity?
County Judge Sarah Eckhardt Commissioner PCT 4 Margaret Gomez County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir TCDP Chair Dyana Limon- Mercado Anne Wynne	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Yes, I would advocate for and support a state law that would prohibit discrimination against or harassment of LGBT students or teachers in Texas public schools on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity.</p> <p>Yes. Again, these are basic civil rights that should be available to all persons.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Yes, I'm proud to have the support of Sen. Watson and Representatives Rodriguez, Howard, Israel, and Hinojosa, together we will work hard to protect the LGBT community.</p>

Question 7	In December 2017, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear a case from the Texas Supreme Court that ruled that the Obergefell v. Hodges decision did not guarantee same-sex couples the same employee benefits as their straight counterparts. Do you agree with this decision? If elected what steps would you take to ensure all employees are treated fairly in matters of compensation?
County Judge Sarah Eckhardt Commissioner PCT 4 Margaret Gomez County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir TCDP Chair Dyana Limon- Mercado	<p>I do not agree with that decision. Travis County provides parity in benefits and is prepared to defend it and demand it of others in litigation if necessary.</p> <p>No, I do not agree with the Obergefell v Hodges decision because I believe that we need to treat all same-sex couples the same as straight counterparts. I can begin now to ask the HR department to look at our policies to see if we are extending benefits to all of our employees regardless of sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity or marital status. I believe we are but it pays to monitor to make sure.</p> <p>In defiance of logic, you can be legally married, but not entitled to all the rights of a married person. We must correct this ruling. Gay rights are human rights.</p> <p>No, I do not agree with the U.S. Supreme Court decision to not hear the Pidgeon vs Turner case and I do not agree with the Texas Supreme Court decision that same-sex couples are not guaranteed the same benefits as their straight counterparts. As TCDP Chair I would support initiatives at the state and local levels led by LGBTQ groups to ensure fair treatment and compensation of all employees.</p>



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<p>Anne Wynne</p>	<p>Obviously, the Texas Supreme Court's decision is wrong. As chair of the Travis County Democratic Party I will work with allied progressive organizations to ensure all LGBT rights are preserved and protected. The Obergefell decision is clear – LOVE IS LOVE – and the rights of same sex couples are no different than any others.</p>
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<p>Question 8</p>	<p>Do you support LGBT foster or adoptive parents (prospective or current) having the same rights and protections afforded under current law to heterosexual foster or adoptive parents (prospective or current)? Would you advocate for and support such a state law?</p>
<p>County Judge Sarah Eckhardt</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Commissioner PCT 4 Margaret Gomez</p>	<p>Yes, I support LGBT foster or adoptive parents having the same rights and protections afforded under current law to heterosexual foster or adoptive parents and would support such a state law.</p>
<p>County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir</p>	<p>Yes, gay foster parents should have the same rights and be treated with the same respect as any other person who takes on the important job of offering foster care to children.</p>
<p>TCDP Chair Dyana Limon-Mercado</p>	<p>Yes, LGBTQ foster and adoptive parents should have the same rights and protections as heterosexuals foster and adoptive parents, and I would and have actively supported groups like Equality TX and the Texas Freedom Network in advocating for related public policies.</p>
<p>Anne Wynne</p>	<p>Yes and yes, of course. I will continue to show up and support good legislation, as I have for the past 5 consecutive sessions for Rep. Anchia's bill that ensures LGBT adoptive parents all the rights afforded to heterosexual couples.</p>

<p>Question 9</p>	<p>If elected, how would you stay informed of the concerns and interests of your LGBT constituents?</p>
<p>County Judge Sarah Eckhardt</p>	<p>I find some of the regular news sources such as BuzzFeed to provide good coverage of LGBTQ and even some unlikely sources such as Teen Vogue. The HRC at the national level and the Austin LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce at the local level supply me with steady flows of news and advocacy opportunities. And of course I will stay tuned to local leaders in the LGBTQ community for emerging issues.</p>
<p>Commissioner PCT 4 Margaret Gomez</p>	<p>My door is always open to concerns and interests of my LGBT constituents. In 2017, I hired an employee who is lesbian. She keeps me informed about activities in the LGBT community as well as about issues of concern and interest.</p>



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<p>County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir</p>	<p>I rely on Glen Maxey, Sarah Goodfriend, Celia Israel, and many other well-informed people in the LGBTQ community to assure me that I am up to date on all the issues, case law, and implementation opportunities. I want the Travis County Clerk to continue to be a leader in providing full services and civil rights to all my brothers and sisters regardless of sexual orientation or assignment.</p>
<p>TCDP Chair Dyana Limon-Mercado</p>	<p>As TCDP Chair I would ensure that LGBTQ advocates were well represented within the party structure and dialogue, and I would maintain proactive relationships with LGBTQ community leaders and organizations.</p>
<p>Anne Wynne</p>	<p>I will continue to engage members of the LGBT community and their allies in all parts of the community and I will continue to volunteer for a myriad of LGBT groups and organizations across the state.</p>

Question 10	Have you attended other events in the LGBT community? Which events?
<p>County Judge Sarah Eckhardt</p>	<p>Pride. Tons of weddings (check my Facebook page of happy couples!) Birthdays, funerals, happy hours, quiet dinners and other life moments of my LGBTQ friends and family.</p>
<p>Commissioner PCT 4 Margaret Gomez</p>	<p>I try to attend as many events as I can from the entire community. Some I am unable to attend because of the day they are held because of conflicts with my schedule since I now have a high school granddaughter who has need of my driving her to different events. I do make an effort to support events as a sponsor if I am unable to attend.</p>
<p>County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir</p>	<p>I don't believe I have this year.</p>
<p>TCDP Chair Dyana Limon-Mercado</p>	<p>In my professional capacity for Planned Parenthood and in my personal capacity I've attended and participated in Pride Week activities in Austin and around the state, as well as QueerBomb, numerous rallies during legislative sessions at the Capitol for LGBTQ rights, and community panels and forums speaking about the intersections of LGBTQ rights and reproductive rights.</p>
<p>Anne Wynne</p>	<p>I'm a table captain for the upcoming HRC Gala. I've served on several related boards and commissions. I've been to LGBT fundraisers, debates, bars, pride, and countless activities and events. I've also spoken to Pflag groups all over our state.</p>