



January 10, 2018

Question 1 Do you wish to receive the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Austin?	
Governor	
Jeffrey Payne	Yes I do.
Lupe Valdez	I would be grateful for your support of my campaign to give common Texans a voice in Austin. Opportunity in Texas ought to be as big as this state, but right-wing leaders in Austin have failed us. Together, we can win this and bring back some common sense in Texas. I need your support and hope to earn it.
Tom Wakely	Yes.
Andrew White	Yes.
Lt. Governor	
Mike Collier	Yes. I would be honored to have Stonewall Democrats of Austin endorse me for Lt Governor.
Comptroller	
Joi Chevalier	Yes.
Tim Mahoney	Yes.
State Sen. - SD25	
Jack Guerra	Yes.
Steven Kling	Yes.
State Rep. - HD46	
Sheryl Cole	Yes, I would be honored to have your support.
Casey McKinney	Yes, I wish to receive the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Austin.
Chito Vela	Yes, the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Austin and support of the LGBTQ community is very important to me.
State Rep. - HD47	
Candace Aylor	Absolutely!
Elaina Fowler	Yes, I wish to receive the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats.
Vikki Goodwin	Yes.
Will Simpson	Yes I would!
Sheri Soltes	Yes!
State Rep. - HD48	
Donna Howard	Yes.
State Rep. - HD52	
James Talarico	Yes, I would like to receive the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Austin!



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Question 2	Should you receive this endorsement, would you publicize our endorsement in your campaign advertisements and campaign literature?
Governor	
Jeffrey Payne	Absolutely.
Lupe Valdez	Yes, I would be honored to earn it.
Tom Wakely	Yes - of course!
Andrew White	Yes.
Lt. Governor	
Mike Collier	I will certainly publish it on my website and social media. I will include in other advertisements were practicable.
Comptroller	
Joi Chevalier	Yes.
Tim Mahoney	Yes.
State Sen. - SD25	
Jack Guerra	Yes.
Steven Kling	Yes.
State Rep. - HD46	
Sheryl Cole	Absolutely!
Casey McKinney	Should I receive the endorsement, I will publicize it in our campaign ads.
Chito Vela	Yes, if I receive the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Austin I would be proud to publicize the endorsement in print, online, and inform all staff/volunteers engaged in direct voter contact to tell voters.
State Rep. - HD47	
Candace Aylor	I will proudly share such an honor far and wide.
Elaina Fowler	Yes, I will proudly publicize this endorsement in my campaign advertisement and literature.
Vikki Goodwin	Yes.
Will Simpson	Absolutely – we are targeting over 10,000 doors between now and the primary, and we would add this to our push-ins and all online media.
Sheri Soltes	Yes!
State Rep. - HD48	
Donna Howard	Yes.
State Rep. - HD52	
James Talarico	Yes, we will likely publicize the endorsement in print and on social media.

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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.
<p>Governor</p> <p>Jeffrey Payne</p> <p>Lupe Valdez</p> <p>Tom Wakely</p> <p>Andrew White</p>	<p>Stonewall Democrats of Austin have a big impact on the voting of LGBTQ Texans and getting your endorsement would have a positive impact on my campaign. Being openly gay and being involved in the Dallas LGBT Community for several years I have supported LGBTQ causes and organizations for years. Through fundraising efforts of my nightclub, The Dallas Eagle, we have raised almost \$500,000 for LGBTQ organizations and events.</p> <p>In 2004, I was elected the first LGBT sheriff in the state and supported equality throughout my life personally and as a public servant. In the Sheriff's Dept., I worked to ensure all LGBT staff felt comfortable to be who they are on the job. I also implemented a policy for incarcerated transgender individuals that has been used as a model.</p> <p>We are at a time in history that regardless of our differences we have more in common than not and we need to unite against a common enemy. I do have a well-documented history of supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (LGBT) issues</p> <p>I am seeking your endorsement because I honor your history and agree with your mission: LGBTQ people themselves and their interests must be represented in Texas politics. All of us collectively must also be more proactive – not always on the defensive – in pushing for pro-equality laws in Texas. As governor, I would hope to work with Stonewall and other LGBTQ organizations to lead on equality issues in Texas.</p>
<p>Lt. Governor</p> <p>Mike Collier</p>	<p>When I joined Exxon many years ago out of college I was surprised to learn that they cared about diversity. I thought they only cared about finding oil. But as I matured in business I came to realize why diversity in business is important: companies want the best PEOPLE they can find, not just the best straight people (or white people or male people) they can find. My eyes were open. Later as a senior partner at PwC I was very active in supporting our firm's LGBTQ initiative for the same reason. Not only is respect and inclusiveness good for business, it's good for society! But it takes more than just words. Programs are needed because humans often will shun people that are not like them. Sometimes they don't even know they are doing it. That's what we worked on at PwC, having systems in place to compensate for this human tendency and make sure the cultures we created weren't hostile, but rather were welcoming, to all people. I believe we've made great progress in terms of inclusiveness in society, but certainly not among the Republicans who dominate politics in this state and never miss an opportunity to rev up a very small group of Texans who remain unenlightened as to LGBTQ matters. So, we have to boldly keep up this fight! The reason I seek Stonewall Democrats of Austin's endorsement is two-fold. I want the world to see that I am proudly pro-LGBTQ because I believe firmly that it's the right thing to do. I also want to earn the Democratic nomination or Lt Governor so I have a shot at beating Dan Patrick who I believe is the most hateful, dishonest man in Texas politics and I have a real shot at winning this. I need your help!</p>



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Comptroller	
Joi Chevalier	Stonewall represents a series of values that are core to the Democratic Party and that exists within the story of Texas. The iconoclastic Texas political history included those who championed others, ensured visibility to all corners of the state citizenry, including those most needing representation as a core value of being 'Texan.' This included a commitment to understanding that Texas has a diverse population. Initially that focused on race, but for me, growing up in 70s Houston, and spending much time in Montrose as a teenager, I realized that that also included LGBT+ Texans. Those were some of the first voices I heard that expanded the definition of 'diversity,' and realized that civil rights have to be clear and afforded to ALL, or it means less to everyone.
Tim Mahoney	I am seeking the endorsement of Stonewall because it is the right thing to do, and I have long been a supporter of LGBTQ issues, including most recently the right to have no sexuality at all, or as it has been stated, the right to be "asexual". My cousin, who is also named Timothy Mahoney, has been an employee of the Human Rights Campaign, and has had the support of his family members for as long as I can remember, even some of those who have been conservation Republicans (I've noticed that some of their political perspectives have softened in the last few years, not only because of the love that they have for their relation, but because of the outrageousness of the current republican milieu.
State Sen. - SD25	
Jack Guerra	I believe we are all American citizens and have equal rights. As a Democrat, I believe in justice. I really don't have a history of publicly supporting in demonstrations but I support my many Gay friends openly.
Steven Kling	I've been campaigning for over 9 months on a strong 'protect equality' message, speaking out against the bathroom bill and so-called 'religious freedom' legislation that discriminates against gay couples seeking to adopt, etc. My campaign seeks to unseat a hardcore right-wing religious extremist, member of the so-called 'Freedom' Caucus, right-hand of Lt. Governor Dan Patrick and co-author of every anti-LGBTQIA bill to come out of the Senate.
State Rep. - HD46	
Sheryl Cole	The LGBT community is one of strong activist tent poles of progressive politics with an admirable history of fighting for human and civil rights. I, too, strive to make sure the arc of the moral universe bends towards justice. I have a public voting record from my time on Austin City Council supporting LGBT issues. I sponsored the resolution supporting Marriage Equality before the issue was settled by the Supreme Court, making Austin the first city in Texas in support. I also advocated for Municipal IDs, a measure that would have benefits for many communities and populations, including transgender Texans. I have consistently stood against discrimination and will continue to do so at the Texas Legislature.



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Casey McKinney | I will always fight to end discrimination based on race, ethnicity, national origin, language, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. I have over forty years in the Democratic party promoting civility and speaking out against bigotry and other forms of intolerance that have entered our political discourse. It is unacceptable to target, defame, or exclude anyone because of their race, ethnicity, national origin, language, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. While freedom of expression is a fundamental constitutional principle, we must condemn hate speech that creates a fertile climate for violence. I condemn Donald Trump's demonization of prisoners of war, women, Muslims, Mexicans, and people with disabilities; his playing coy with white supremacists; and the climate of bigotry he is creating. I also condemn the recent uptick in other forms of hate speech, like anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

Chito Vela | This is the first time I have sought public office so I have never been invited to publicly take a stand on LGBT issues. Now I am proud to have the opportunity to demonstrate my commitment to basic human rights for all. The endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats is one of many ways to signal that commitment. My history of supporting LGBT issues as a private citizen has been largely through participation in progressive causes alongside the LGBT community. As an immigration attorney, I have defended immigrants fleeing persecution based on their sexual identity. I defended a client who is transgender for years, fighting to get him into the US ICE LGBT detention center in Santa Ana, California city jail from the male detention center where he was being held. I was able to get him transferred to the facility and eventually was able to get him released from custody. In addition, I have defended LGBT clients from Mexico and Central America who were fleeing threats, violence, and discrimination based on their sexual identity.

State Rep. - HD47

Candace Aylor | I am seeking the endorsement of Stonewall Democrats of Austin both as a member of the LGBTQIA community, and as a strong supporter of our liberation. Being a member of a historically marginalized group that has precious few protections, and no inclusion in civil rights law, we are battle tested. Our everyday existence, despite these barriers, makes us supremely qualified to fight for the rights and protections of people historically set in the margins. One issue I have been working on for the past year is the blatant exclusion and subversive oppression of LGBTQIA youth and their families in the mental health and substance use recovery policies of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. As co-chair of the Behavioral Health Advisory Committee to HHSC, I have advocated for policies to prohibit the discrimination of LGBTQIA youth and families, and included language in a grant proposal draft I was working on with agency staff to begin to measure the impact, disproportionality and disparity they experience through services provided and overseen by the agency. Unfortunately, Executive Commissioner Charles Smith chose to reject that language, just days before the grant was to be submitted in late 2016. His justification for doing this was the impending filing of the Texas bathroom bill. To this day, HHSC does not measure rates of suicide by LGBTQIA youth, and LGBTQIA people are not included as a protected class by the agencies anti-discrimination policies. I have a strong track record of defending and demanding our rights and protections in places of power, and I will continue to do just that as the representative of Texas House District 47.

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Elaina Fowler	I am seeking the endorsement from the Stonewall Democrats because Equality and civil liberties should be for everyone. Currently, our lawmakers get to pick and choose which group of Texans to elevate and which group to disenfranchise. This an injustice to All Texans, but this behavior directly targets the LGBT community and puts them at a disadvantage on all social and economic levels. I publicly support Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (LGBT) issues through community efforts. During my time as liaison to the Texas Children’s Commission, I advocated for LGBT foster youth. As a former organizer wI advocated for policies and practices that affirm and support LGBT youth and that implemented protection from bullying, exclusion, and discrimination in school, putting them at physical and psychological risk as well as disrupting their education. I continue to advocate for LBGT youth protections in our schools through my community outreach with Girl Empowerment Network.
Vikki Goodwin	I believe as a society we should support all people, and not marginalize people who are LGBT.
Will Simpson	I do not have a history per-say – I am not an activist, nor a politician. I am a father of a child who I saw treated very poorly as he came out about 8 years ago. While I have seen him improve and shine, we are now stepping backwards in our state legislature as the religious rhetoric is taking over and I am taking a stand.
Sheri Soltes	I am seeking your endorsement because people who are LGBT are an important part of our community. I support my LGBT friends and family, co-workers, campaign volunteers and public figures because I support everyone based on their character and their merit and stand up for anyone who is treated unfairly by others, especially government.
State Rep. - HD48	
Donna Howard	I am seeking the endorsement of Stonewall to clearly recognize our shared objectives, and to commit that we will strive together in the next legislative session to advance equal rights for all Texans, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. My history of supporting LGBT issues began well before I was elected to the Texas House. I was proud to support Rev. Dr. Larry Bethune’s efforts to make University Baptist Church a welcoming space for the LGBT community in Austin, and I have worked to foster a similarly welcoming environment as part of the leadership of the First UU Church. Since taking office, I have been a solid vote for pro-LGBT legislation. On multiple occasions, I have been named a “Champion of Equality” by Equality Texas; I have also been recognized by Lambda Legal for “standing up for the rights of LGBT Texas Residents.” In the most recent session, I authored HB 943, which would have established a Transgender Healthcare Advisory Committee to help identify and address any gaps in care for the transgender community. Unfortunately, the bill failed to get a hearing; however, I plan to file similar legislation next session.



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<p>State Rep. - HD52 James Talarico</p>	<p>The Stonewall Democrats Club has been an incredibly important part of the Central Texas progressive community. As a former president of University Democrats, I saw the powerful work of your organization up close. I've tried to be a strong ally to the LGBTQIA community throughout my life. The first political event I ever attended was a rally for hate crime legislation in 1998 (when I was in fourth grade) led by Fmr. State Rep. Glen Maxey outside George W. Bush's governor's mansion. As a student activist at The University of Texas at Austin, I co-sponsored legislation in the Student Government assembly to support domestic partner benefits. And as an educator, I included gays rights in my classroom curriculum. I hope to continue this allyship as a member of the Texas Legislature, where it's desperately needed.</p>
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Question 4 Why are you seeking this public office?	
<p>Governor Jeffrey Payne</p>	<p>Back in July of this year I spoke with my husband Sergio and discussed the need for a progressive candidate to oppose the current Governor. After the "Bathroom Bill" battle and the tremendous waste of time and money by our legislature on an issue that was a non-crisis, I felt it was time to do something. I felt the Governor's office would be a good place to start to actually enact change in our state. With a legislature that is packed with far-right Republicans starting at the top seemed more logical.</p>
<p>Lupe Valdez</p>	<p>After last session, I was fed up. We need to give common Texans a voice in Austin. Opportunity in Texas ought to be as big as this state, but right-wing leaders in Austin have failed us. Together, we can win this and bring back some common sense in Texas.</p>
<p>Tom Wakely</p>	<p>I'm running for office not because I want to but because I have to. Greg Abbott is a neo-fascist and if all of us don't stand up to him now we will suffer the fate of 1930's Europe.</p>
<p>Andrew White</p>	<p>The Trump/Abbott extremism has to stop. We need to get back to the business of public service, focusing on education, health care, and jobs – while treating all Texans with fairness and civility. And I'm tired of Democrats losing in Texas!</p>
<p>Lt. Governor Mike Collier</p>	<p>One-Party rule is very bad for Texas. Leaders are not responsible to voters, they spend 100% of their time making sure they don't have a serious primary challenger. That means that Republican primary voters call all the shots, and it shows. Texans want great public schools, we want to bring people together to solve problems, we want our leaders to be honest, we want to live in a society that respects diversity, and we want public policy to reflect our values of decency and civility. Republican primary voters don't seem to care about any of these. Our political lives in Texas reflect this, and the only way to improve the situation is to beat Republicans, install Democrats in office, and force every politician to serve the majority of Texans.</p>
<p>Comptroller Joi Chevalier</p>	<p>While the role of Comptroller is not seen today as a vocal one, the Comptroller used to be a role that showed the citizens and legislature <i>what is possible</i> through revenue and budgeting, not just what can't be done. I'd like to be able to restore transparency, accountability, and clarity to our finances and reporting, so that we can find opportunities that exist to expand Texas' prosperity to all.</p>

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Tim Mahoney	With a background in public policy and law, I understand there has to be a systemic change in how Texas engages citizens in our economic efforts. What planning was done for hurricane Harvey? In an age of global warming, we need effective planning. I have the experience and skills to bridge the divide between most of the people in Texas to begin to own their own state. How to do that? By building on-going regional organizations built on mutual respect so we can find common cause to implement policies which are designed to build capacity for the common good. Even I was amazed that the federal government was able to pass that recent tax bill; they had the 50 year old pattern in place to satiate their economic greed. We have to build communities for the common good, or the future will be even bleaker.
State Sen. - SD25	
Jack Guerra	I believe the current Senator, Donna Campbell does not represent many in District 25. She is too narrow in focus and interest group and basically a Tea Party operative. I believe in supporting all residents in the district and to govern by bring people together.
Steven Kling	I joined the Army after and because of 9/11 to defend our country in its time of need. The election of Donald Trump and the current corrosive political climate that precipitated it was another call-to-action for me. It emboldened the forces of hate and fear in our state. I can no longer sit on the sidelines and let this happen.
State Rep. - HD46	
Sheryl Cole	House District 46 has gone without effective representation for multiple consecutive legislative sessions. I believe that I am a proven leader that will bring new energy to this office. East Austin and HD 46 is considered the core of Black Austin's political power. It needs to be strong and effective to make sure our issues are heard. The fights at the Texas Legislature are dire enough with Democrats as the minority party, and I can't sit idly by and allow my community to not have a voice.
Casey McKinney	I'm running for House District 46, despite hopeless odds, to demonstrate the sheer will and refusal to accept the status quo. I'm running to represent ALL the people of District 46. I will always fight to end discrimination based on race, ethnicity, national origin, language, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.
Chito Vela	I am running because I feel the community in this district is underserved. The longtime incumbent has abandoned the people of this district. She is widely ridiculed for simply not showing up to work. The Texas state legislature desperately needs Democrats to stand up to the insanity that is the Republican agenda in Texas. Reproductive freedom, racial justice, LGBT rights are among the many that are under constant siege each legislative session. I am planning to fight long and loudly to gut this onslaught of attacks on our humanity and dignity. I believe it's time for progressive Democrats to go back to their roots and effect change through activism and social justice movements. I believe that Democrats in Texas need to rally to recommit to an unflinching progressive agenda that is committed to social justice, civil rights and labor. In other words, we need to return to our roots as Democrats and ally politics with activism.

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State Rep. - HD47

Candace Aylor

I decided to run for Texas House District 47 on May 22nd, 2017, during a Texas House floor debate of an anti-transgender student amendment to a school finance bill. While we mostly celebrate winning the bathroom war this past session, what's rarely mentioned is that we lost a battle that day. During the floor debate I couldn't help but notice Paul Workman's ambivalence. While representative Moody from El Paso shared an impassioned plea for the protection of students that are transgender, Workman was kicked back with his boots up on his desk playing on his phone. I already knew Workman needed to be replaced. During Texas Muslim Capitol Day a friend of mine visited his office, and he treated her with such disrespect. During session I assisted and supported the Austin Justice Coalition in efforts to transform criminal justice policy. While our efforts resulted in a staggering number of Criminal Justice reforms receiving bipartisan support and passing through the legislature, his office made little to no effort to work with us. Constituents consistently report his continued ambivalence to the concern they share with him if it doesn't fit into the Republican agenda. I have worked on public policy reform at the legislature and with state agencies, with local grassroots organizations, as well as working on policy transformations at the federal level for several years. What I've learned over time is the decision makers are rarely people with lived experience in the systems for which they are responsible. I have work tirelessly to engage these leaders in common sense policy reform, only to realize that often special interests and donors would always supersede the best interests of the people. So I decided to run so that our voices would be heard in the state legislature not by our allies but by us. Supporting my campaign ensures the voices of The Stonewall Democrats of Austin are directly represented in the state legislature.

Elaina Fowler

I am seeking public office because as a society we have come too far to turn back the clock on civil rights to the days when bigotry was in shrined in our laws. As the daughter of two civil rights Foot Soldiers, the fight for recognition of individual constitutional rights is a concept that we should not be facing again in 2018. In fact this should not be a question. There are not nice people on both sides of the asle, there are the moral and the deplorable.

Vikki Goodwin

Primarily to support public education and to work on school finance reform. I also support local control, human rights and de-gerrymandering. I believe we need to change the direction of the leadership of Texas.

Will Simpson

Our basic democratic principles including the separation of church and state are under attack and this is how I believe I can be the most help to people.

Sheri Soltes

It is my way of fighting back against the many hurtful, wrong, damaging acts perpetuated for the last 18 months and longer against all vulnerable populations including LGBT, racial, ethnic, aspiring-American, first generation American physically or cognitively disabled, low income, indigenous, non-English as a first language speaking peoples plus animals and our environment. My training as a civil trial lawyer in the courtrooms of Houston in the 80's and 90's plus my 30 year of experience building my own business, a nonprofit that helps people living with deafness or physical challenges have provided me with both the fight and the finesse to not only win my primary, beat the Republican incumbent in Travis County's only Republican House district but to advocate for you on the Legislative floor and in the Capitol halls.



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<p>State Rep. - HD48 Donna Howard</p>	<p>I am seeking re-election to the Texas House to continue fighting for healthy families, equal opportunity, and responsible government at the State Capitol. I am particularly concerned by the retirement of Joe Straus, and the potential for a new Speaker of the Texas House who might be less inclined to stand up against discriminatory legislation. I am committed to fighting against any attacks on the LGBT community, and working to ensure that past gains for equality are not reversed.</p>
<p>State Rep. - HD52 James Talarico</p>	<p>Our country and our state are in trouble. When I was a teacher, I always told my students to be part of the solution. So now I'm taking my own advice. I grew up in this community and I'm ready to fight for it at the State Capitol. From Round Rock to Taylor, we're ready to build a future where every Williamson County family can get ahead. We're ready to stand up to extremists and restore respect, reason, and responsibility to our politics. The incumbent, Rep. Larry Gonzales, announced his retirement a few months ago, making this an open seat. This will be one of the closest races in Texas. It won't be easy, but our community is worth fighting for. Together, we can make Texas as good as its promise.</p>

Question 5	Would you advocate for and support a state law that would prohibit employment discrimination against LGBT individuals on the basis of sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity?
<p>Governor Jeffrey Payne</p>	<p>Absolutely. Putting those protections into law is essential to every LGBTQ Texans quality of life.</p>
<p>Lupe Valdez</p>	<p>As governor, I would support legislation with teeth to ensure non-discrimination protections are in place. It's the right thing to do and no one should ever encounter legalized discrimination while looking for a job.</p>
<p>Tom Wakely</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Andrew White</p>	<p>YES.</p>
<p>Lt. Governor Mike Collier</p>	<p>Yes Absolutely.</p>
<p>Comptroller Joi Chevalier</p>	<p>I would support clarifications of the Civil Rights Act through the inclusion of the Equality Act that has been discussed at the federal level. Texas should do something quite similar to the Equality Act. The goal of the Comptroller's office is to highlight and show the financial hurdles or opportunities to support various initiatives, including the worthwhile ones above. The forecasts and budget should reflect support for these where applicable.</p>
<p>Tim Mahoney</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>State Sen. - SD25 Jack Guerra</p>	<p>If there is not one already, there should be to clarify and codify in our State penal code.</p>
<p>Steven Kling</p>	<p>Yes.</p>



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State Rep. - HD46	
Sheryl Cole	Yes, with the federal climate the way it is, it seems unlikely that we will see an expansion of protected classes to include LGBT folks in the near future - so we need to take matters into our own hands and create these protections here at home.
Casey McKinney	Yes.
Chito Vela	Yes, I would support such legislation because anti-discrimination in the area of employment is one of the core values of my personal and professional life.
State Rep. - HD47	
Candace Aylor	As an advocate and activist for our community, I have publicly stated my support for this, both in calling for the civil rights of LGBTQIA people to be protected through anti-discrimination policy, and as a candidate in response to the US Supreme Court decision, explained in greater detail below in #7.
Elaina Fowler	Absolutely, as the Exec, Dir of AFSCME Texas Retirees, I know that employment discrimination is illegal, but as we all know, once again, the LGBT community is singled out and these laws are disregarded.
Vikki Goodwin	Yes.
Will Simpson	Yes, as an executive leader in technology, the first time I helped get language like this into company policy was 1999, supporting and advocating for such a state law is second nature to me.
Sheri Soltes	Hell yes!
State Rep. - HD48	
Donna Howard	Yes, and I have previously coauthored legislation to do just that.
State Rep. - HD52	
James Talarico	Yes, strongly.

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?
Governor	
Jeffrey Payne	Again, Absolutely. Students in Texas need to be safe and free from bullying and discrimination of any kind.
Lupe Valdez	Yes, absolutely. Our children should never be uncomfortable to be who they are.
Tom Wakely	Yes.
Andrew White	YES.
Lt. Governor	
Mike Collier	Yes Absolutely.

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Comptroller	
Joi Chevalier	The goal of the Comptroller's office is to highlight where enacting laws – or not enacting them – have financial consequence and show the financial hurdles or opportunities to support various initiatives, including the worthwhile ones above. The forecasts and budget should reflect support for these where applicable. In the case of SB4, it was very clear what the cost would be to this state by examining effects in N. Carolina, even if the current Comptroller would not provide similar. The Comptroller has the ability and should provide clarity on the positive and negative impacts of this type of legislation, to determine if it is truly be a priority.
Tim Mahoney	Yes.
State Sen. - SD25	
Jack Guerra	Yes.
Steven Kling	Yes.
State Rep. - HD46	
Sheryl Cole	Yes, this kind of harassment and discrimination must not be tolerated.
Casey McKinney	Yes.
Chito Vela	I would absolutely advocate and support legislation that prohibits the discrimination and harassment of LGBT individuals in Texas public schools.
State Rep. - HD47	
Candace Aylor	I appreciate that this question makes the important distinction that we should not only ensure protections of civil rights of people and deter oppression based on sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity, but that we should also ensure justice when students and teachers become the targets of harassment simply for daring to exist openly, and so I wholeheartedly would support these much needed improvements to state law.
Elaina Fowler	Absolutely, during my time as an organizer with Texas American Federation of Teachers I advocated for policies and practices that affirm and support LGBT youth and that implemented protection from bullying, exclusion, and discrimination in school, putting them at physical and psychological risk and limiting their education. I continue to advocate for LGBT youth protections in our schools through my community outreach with Girl Empowerment Network.
Vikki Goodwin	Yes.
Will Simpson	Yes, we are going backwards with such things as the bathroom bill in our public schools already, this tide must be stemmed and reversed. This kind of discrimination should not be tolerated at all.
Sheri Soltes	Absolutely!
State Rep. - HD48	
Donna Howard	Yes, and I will fight hard against any measure seeking to institute such discrimination.
State Rep. - HD52	
James Talarico	Yes, strongly.

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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?
Governor Jeffrey Payne Lupe Valdez Tom Wakely Andrew White	<p>That decision is flawed. Employee benefits cannot be determined on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, that creates a second class citizenship and that runs contrary to the constitution. I would encourage passing protectinos and measures to assure LGBTQ Texans who are legally married receive the same benefits as those who are in opposite-sex marriages.</p> <p>No, I do not agree with the Texas Supreme Court's discriminatory decision. I would proudly support legislation that ensures LGBT individuals don't have their wages threatened by their employer.</p> <p>NO - all marriages should be treated equally.</p> <p>I do not agree with this decision. All married couples, including LGBTQ couples, should have the same benefits that come with marriage. As Governor, I would operate the same way I have done in my businesses and in my campaign: make it clear to my staff how much I value diversity. I have a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination of any sorts, including against LGBTQ people.</p>
Lt. Governor Mike Collier	<p>I do not agree with the decision. I believe same-sex couples should have the same legal protections as straight couples. I would support legislation enshrining in Texas law the protections that were effectively denied by the Supreme Court. As for compensation equality, I would follow the same path I followed at PwC to ensure that compensation decisions are not influenced by gender, sexual orientation, race etc. I will insist on policies of this nature in Texas government each and every place I can exert influence.</p>
Comptroller Joi Chevalier Tim Mahoney	<p>The decision creates an unequal playing field for the purposes of talent acquisition, employee retention, and creating fair and equitable compensation packages for all employees and potential employees in the state. It also potentially creates an uneasy office culture where benefits are clearly not available to all employees. There is significant downside by not having the opportunity for fair compensation. The Comptroller's Office has the unique ability to demonstrate those costs through reporting and forecasting.</p> <p>No, I do not agree with this decision. I will continue to advocate for those who identify themselves as a family unit get benefits.</p>
State Sen. - SD25 Jack Guerra Steven Kling	<p>In Texas, there needs to be a bigger collaboration before any bill can reach a Senate committee; I would support making this larger collaborative.</p> <p>I would be proud to introduce legislation that would guarantee employee benefits regardless of spouse's gender and regardless of employer's belief system.</p>

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State Rep. - HD46

Sheryl Cole

A marriage that does not include the legal benefits of marriage is simply not equal. The United States has tried separate but equal before - it doesn't work, and it prolongs oppression. I am strongly in favor of passing laws to combat discrimination, of which this is yet another form of.

Casey McKinney

I applaud last year's decision by the Supreme Court that recognized that LGBT people like other Americans - have the right to marry the person they love. But there is still much work to be done. LGBT kids continue to be bullied at school, restaurants can refuse to serve transgender people, and same-sex couples are at risk of being evicted from their homes. That is unacceptable and must change. I support legislature that will fight for the continued development of sex discrimination law to cover LGBT people. I will also fight for comprehensive federal non-discrimination protections for all LGBT Americans, to guarantee equal rights in areas such as housing, employment, public accommodations, credit, jury service, education, and federal funding. I oppose all state efforts to discriminate against LGBT individuals, including legislation that restricts the right to access public spaces. I support a progressive vision of religious freedom that respects pluralism and rejects the misuse of religion to discriminate. I will also combat LGBT youth homelessness and improve school climates. I support LGBT elders, ensure access to necessary health care, and protect LGBT people from violence; including ending the crisis of violence against transgender Americans. I will also promote LGBT human rights and ensure America's foreign policy is inclusive of LGBT people not just in Texas, America but around the world.

Chito Vela

This is a very scary time for LGBT in Texas. The Texas Supreme Court is clearly aligned with forces that would treat same sex couples as second class citizens. If elected, I would work with the statewide advocacy groups to push through legislation that would put safeguards against discrimination into statute.

State Rep. - HD47

Candace Aylor

I do not agree with the decision of the US Supreme Court to uphold the Texas Supreme Court's ruling. When it was announced I issued a statement pledging to make the rights and protections of LGBTQIA people a priority of my campaign. In my post on December 4th I stated the following: "Starting today, since the "leaders" of this state took it upon themselves to maintain their assault on my existence, my family, and the millions of Texas residents just like us... and for the little girl that is me... My campaign promise of "Our Children's Future" now includes ensuring LGBTQIA rights and a ban on discrimination against LGBTQIA youth, adults, and their families in Texas policy making." I intend to make good on this promise by filing legislation, or supporting any existing plans or efforts to file legislation, to include LGBTQIA people in the Civil Rights protections and anti-discrimination laws and policies of Texas as my first action as the representative of Texas House District 47.

Elaina Fowler

No. I agree with the City Houston and applaud them for continuing to extend these benefits to all couples. I am disappointed in SCOTUS for not clarifying and more disappointed in the Supreme Court of Texas for creating this inconsistency in the first place. It has now been left to the legislature to clarify and amend this policy. I stand firmly with Equality.



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Vikki Goodwin	I do not agree with the decision that same-sex couples aren't guaranteed the same employee benefits as their straight counterparts, and I think the Supreme Court should have heard the case. I would be in favor of a law stating all employees should be treated fairly in the matters of compensation.
Will Simpson	All persons should be entitled to the same rights and privileges regardless of sexual orientation.
Sheri Soltes	Same-sex couples must be treated equally under the law. From everything to availability to insurance as dependents to adoption, to hospital access in times of crisis and need. Not doing so is unequivocally criminal and must be addressed. As a Representative, I can do that through legislation. I would include representatives from the LGBT community to ensure the legislation was drafted to best reflect your interests.
State Rep. - HD48 Donna Howard	I was disappointed to see the Supreme Court take a pass on the matter, and I would support legislation to ensure fair treatment for all employees. (Full disclosure: my husband is a Civil Rights Attorney, so in order to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest I would decline to take a lead role on this issue.)
State Rep. - HD52 James Talarico	The Texas Supreme Court's ruling last year is a major setback for our movement for equality in Texas. I fully support the City of Houston and Mayor Turner's efforts to respect the marriages of all their city workers. As a State Representative, I will fight for measures to ensure same-sex couples receive the same employee benefits as their straight counterparts.

Question 8	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?
Governor	
Jeffrey Payne	Again, absolutely. Having been a product of the foster system in Louisiana, I understand how important it is and we should not limit the rights of LGBTQ foster parents. I would advocate fiercely for that law.
Lupe Valdez	Yes, of course.
Tom Wakely	Yes.
Andrew White	YES.
Lt. Governor	
Mike Collier	Yes I support same rights and protections and yes absolutely I would advocate for such a law in Texas.
Comptroller	
Joi Chevalier	The goal of the Comptroller's office is to highlight and show the financial hurdles or opportunities to support various initiatives, including the worthwhile ones above. The forecasts and budget should reflect support for these where applicable.



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Tim Mahoney State Sen. - SD25	Yes.
Jack Guerra	Absolutely. Yes.
Steven Kling State Rep. - HD46	Yes.
Sheryl Cole	Yes and yes - It is absurd that a state with such a deep child welfare crisis as Texas would seek to remove perfectly qualified candidates from the pool of potential adoptive parents, when there is no reason an otherwise qualified LGBT couple should be discriminated against during the adoption or foster process.
Casey McKinney	Yes.
Chito Vela State Rep. - HD47	I absolutely support the policy that LGBT foster or adoptive parents should have the same rights and protections that heterosexual parents have and would support such a state law.
Candace Aylor	Yes. Not only would I support such a law, I have. During this past legislative session I testified against the bill that legalized discrimination against LGBTQIA youth, their families, and LGBTQIA foster & adoptive families, and warned of the risk of harm to youth that could be forced into adoptive families that would not represent their best interests nor evidence-based foster & adoptive care models.
Elaina Fowler	Absolutely, I support LGBT foster or adoptive parents and state legislation that would support such rights. I am an advocate of foster and adoptive rights for the LGBT community. This has been one my priority issues listed on my website since day one of my campaign. HB3859 must be overturned.
Vikki Goodwin	Yes.
Will Simpson	I would support and advocate for this law.
Sheri Soltes State Rep. - HD48	Absolutely. It is painful that these questions still even have to be asked. I can't wait to fight like hell for all of these issues.
Donna Howard	Yes, and last session I had numerous conversations--including this one --with the author of foster care legislation to voice concerns that provisions of his bill might negatively impact LGBT access to the foster care system.
James Talarico State Rep. - HD52	Yes, strongly.

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Question 9	If elected, how would you stay informed of the concerns and interests of your LGBT constituents?
Governor	
Jeffrey Payne	This goes without saying. I am part of this community, and just as I have for the last 20+ years, I will continue to support, communicate with and promote the LGBT community.
Lupe Valdez	To ensure LGBT issues are heard and the state is informed on the issues facing our community, I would take initiative on the creation of an LGBT Taskforce and make sure legislators know it's a priority in the Governor's Office.
Tom Wakely	Through consistent community contact.
Andrew White	I would regularly meet with LGBTQ constituents and have an LGBTQ liaison in the governor's office.
Lt. Governor	
Mike Collier	The Lt Governor is responsible, directly and indirectly, for a number of positions in Texas Government. I will select a member of the LGBTQ community who works directly with me to serve as my official liaison to the LGBTQ community.
Comptroller	
Joi Chevalier	I would be glad to have a staff participant meet with constituent groups like Equality Texas or HRC to share development knowledge or citizen concerns relevant to the Comptroller's office, or to have me or my staff meet with a state-level liaison or engage with a state-level task force, when available.
Tim Mahoney	Yes.
State Sen. - SD25	
Jack Guerra	Have my office door open for regularly scheduled meetings; I will be there for everyone.
Steven Kling	By constantly speaking with groups like Stonewall Democrats and intend on encouraging members of the LGBTQIA community to apply for positions on my staff. Additionally, I intend to have a section of my Senate website to provide an alert to my office in cases of legal discrimination.
State Rep. - HD46	
Sheryl Cole	A grave concern for residents of House District 46 - LGBT or not - is that we have not had effective or accessible representation at the Texas Legislature, and I will change that - my office will always have an open door for constituents, and I would be happy to work with groups like Equality Texas or the Stonewall Democrats to organize around defeating the next permutation of the Bathroom Bill or to pass one of our priorities mentioned above.
Casey McKinney	When elected, I will maintain on staff -an "active" LGBT constituent services and I am committed to being visible within the community.
Chito Vela	have extensive contacts within the local LGBT community in my district and I can't imagine they wouldn't take advantage of my open door policy at the capitol.



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State Rep. - HD47	
Candace Aylor	I would continue to attend meetings of Stonewall Democrats of Austin, as well as extend invitations to the community to join me for Town Hall discussions of the important issues that will face us during the 86th legislative session, which will undoubtedly include ensuring protection and justice for our LGBTQIA family.
Elaina Fowler	I would stay informed by communicating regularly with leaders such as councilman Jimmy Flannigan. In addition work closely with Equality Texas and Austin LGBT Chamber of Commerce, Out youth, AIDS Austin and by forming a community coalition in HD 47 where I can meet with with these groups to have dialogue and implement solutions. My door is always open to my constituents and I will require my constituent services staff to be trained to address the intersexual needs of the LGBT community as you would with any constituent population.
Vikki Goodwin	If elected, I would reach out to organizations such as the Stonewall Democrats, the Austin LGBT Chamber, and the Human Rights Campaign in order to stay informed of the interests of the constituents.
Will Simpson	I would do it the same as I do for all communities – meet with them and talk to them face to face.
Sheri Soltes	Of course. I would be honored to be considered your Representative whether you live in my district or not. The more informed I am, the better job I can do on your behalf. Working with people who are deaf or have mobility related disabilities for 30 years and low income injured persons before that has acquainted me with the struggle of underrepresented people. So has growing up Jewish, especially in 1970's Fort Worth where I was the first Jewish student to ever attend my high school. While the details and timing are different, the lifelong awareness about and sensitivity towards "the other" is always there.
State Rep. - HD48	
Donna Howard	I communicate frequently with members of the local LGBT community, and my staff maintains very close contact with Equality Texas and other groups advocating for LGBT issues.
State Rep. - HD52	
James Talarico	By making a concentrated effort to conduct LGBT outreach and constituent services throughout HD-52 and the greater Austin area.

Question 10 Have you attended other events in the LGBT community? Which events?	
Governor	
Jeffrey Payne	I have attended and sponsored too many events to list. My involvement in the Dallas LGBTQ community has been well publicized.
Lupe Valdez	For over 15 years, I've been a proud member of the Stonewall Democrats in Dallas and attended their meetings regularly. I've also been to many Victory Fund trainings, Pride parades where I brought along members of the Sheriff's Department, and others.
Tom Wakely	YES. I've participated in many San Antonio gay pride events over the years.



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Andrew White Lt. Governor	YES. I just attended a Houston GLBT Political Caucus meeting.
Mike Collier Comptroller	I've been to two house parties hosted by members of the LGBTQ since launching my bid for Lt Governor. I also briefly attended one party at the TDP 2014 convention. And of course in my PwC days I attended a number of events involving the LGBTQ community. And I'm sure I will attend plenty more if I am nominated to for Lt Governor, and I'm looking forward to it!
Joi Chevalier State Sen. - SD25	Plans are still in development, but the campaign will attend several coordinated events in Travis County, with the other statewide candidates, to discuss core issues: healthcare, education, immigration, civil and voting rights. We will work with the Travis County Democratic Party to plug into any coordinated efforts and participate as directed.
Tim Mahoney State Sen. - SD25	Besides the annual Gay Pride parades, I have been a member of the Stonewall Democrats group here in Austin.
Jack Guerra State Rep. - HD46	Not lately. Gay Pride / Stonewall Parade in NYC in early 90's.
Steven Kling State Rep. - HD46	I have attended many events within the LGBTQIA community including Pride events over the last several years. I attended the March for Equality in Austin this past year as well as the vigil for the Pulse nightclub shooting this past June. I submitted testimony against the Bathroom Bill (SB 6) as well and attended several protests against its existence as well as protests against other so-called 'Religious Freedom' laws in the 85th Legislature.
Sheryl Cole State Rep. - HD47	I have a long history of attending PRIDE and HRC events.
Casey McKinney State Rep. - HD47	Yes, I participate - sponsor in the annual Austin Pride Parade and stand ready to participate in town-hall meeting, community indicatives' and other forums that promote, encourage and protect the well being of the LGBT community.
Chito Vela State Rep. - HD47	I attended the Austin LGBT Bar Association fundraiser at Umlauf Sculpture Garden in 2017 and have attended other events in the past, including fundraisers for AIDS Services of Austin.
Candace Aylor State Rep. - HD47	Yes. I have attended Austin Pride for several years, and assisted with organizing that event this past year. I also was an active participant in organizer of the equality March this past summer, and was a speaker for the LGBT event last January on inauguration day. I also attended the press conference, kickoff event, and inaugural meeting of the LGBT Quality of Life Commission.
Elaina Fowler State Rep. - HD47	Yes. I have attended and supported numerous events in the LGBT community in Austin for the Octopus Club, Austin Gay and Lesbian Foundation (PRIDE), Austin Gay and Lesbian International Film Festival but also in Birmingham Alabama where I served with Birmingham Aids Outreach.
Vikki Goodwin State Rep. - HD47	I've attended some events held by the Austin LGBT Chamber.



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Will Simpson	No, I am not aware of any LGBT specific event I have attended.
Sheri Soltes	I have attended Austin's Pride Parade three times. I do have LGBT friends of many years and socialize with them regularly here and in Las Vegas and New York. I also support Strong Family Alliance, a new nonprofit that is a resource for parents of LGBT youth, started by my friend Janet Duke: www.strongfamilyalliance.org
State Rep. - HD48 Donna Howard	I have participated in the Austin Pride Parade on numerous occasions, and also attended a variety of Equality Texas' Merry Merry Martini Mixers.
State Rep. - HD52 James Talarico	Yes, Pride Parade/Festival.