

Candidate Questionnaire Responses
Judicial

January 8, 2020

Question 1	Do you wish to receive the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Austin?
Chief Justice, Supreme Ct Amy Meachum	Yes. Very much so. I received this endorsement in my only other constested race in 2010, and it would mean a great deal to me -personally and professionally- to receive it this time, as well.
Jerry Zimmerer Supreme Ct, PL 6	Yes, I am seeking the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Austin.
Kathy Cheng	I would be honored and humbled to receive the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Austin.
Larry Praeger Supreme Ct, PL 7	Yes.
Brandy Voss	Yes, I would appreciate the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Austin very much!
Staci Williams Supreme Ct, PL 8	Absolutely. I have previously enjoyed the support of the LGBT community in Dallas County, and I really need the support of Austin Stonewall Democrats of Austin during the primary and general elections.
Peter Kelly	Yes.
Gisela Triana CCA, PL 3	Yes.
William Demond	Yes.
Elizabeth Frizell	Yes.
Dan Wood CCA, PL4	Yes.
Tina Clinton CCA, PL 9	I have carried the Stonewall endorsement every time I ran in Dallas County. Now that I am running statewide, I would like to do the same. It lets the voters know what values I carry and whose voices I find significant in my campaign.
Brandon Birmingham Chief Justice, 3rd	Yes, I would be proud to do so.
Darlene Byrne	Yes.

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<p>Keith Hampton</p>	<p>I very much hope to receive your endorsement. I have devoted my 30-year career to preserving our liberal democratic way of life, one that is inclusive and respectful of minority rights. The Equal Protection Clause, the right to privacy, the Due Process Clause are all part of my DNA. Your endorsement would be a heartfelt affirmation of my life's work.</p>
<p>53rd District Maria Cantu Hexsel</p>	<p>Yes, I would be honored to have the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Austin.</p>
<p>Kennon Wooten</p>	<p>Yes, it would be a tremendous honor to receive the endorsement of the Stonewall</p>
<p>167th District Dayna Blazey</p>	<p>Yes. I am seeking the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Austin.</p>
<p>David Wahlberg</p>	<p>I would be honored to receive Stonewall's endorsement.</p>
<p>200th District Maggie Ellis</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Jessica Mangrum</p>	<p>Absolutely!</p>
<p>353rd District Tim Sulak</p>	<p>Definitely; humbly and gratefully.</p>
<p>390th District Albert Amado</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Julie Kocurek</p>	<p>Yes, it would be an honor to receive the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Austin.</p>
<p>460th District Selena Alvarenga</p>	<p>Yes!</p>
<p>Amy Meredith</p>	<p>Absolutely would be honored to receive the endorsement of Stonewall Democrats of Austin.</p>
<p>County Court at Law 4 Tanisa Jeffers</p>	<p>Yes, absolutely.</p>
<p>Margaret Chen Kircher</p>	<p>Yes, I would be very grateful for this endorsement, and it would mean a great deal to me.</p>
<p>Dimple Malhotra</p>	<p>It would be an honor to receive the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of</p>

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Question 2	Should you receive the endorsement, would you publicize our endorsement in your campaign advertisements and campaign literature?
<p>Chief Justice, Supreme Ct</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Amy Meachum</p>	<p>Yes. I am actively seeking this endorsement, as well as the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas, Stonewall Democrats of San Antonio, and the Houston GLBT Political Caucus, and will proudly publicize any and all endorsements from these organizations.</p>
<p style="padding-left: 40px;">Jerry Zimmerer</p>	<p>I have and will publish all endorsements from the LGBTQ community. I have recently posted a Video which stated my position of inclusion and support for LGBTQ community. See: https://www.facebook.com/JerryForJustice/videos/458234554869049/</p>
<p>Supreme Ct, PL 6</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Kathy Cheng</p>	<p>Yes, I would publicize such recognition.</p>
<p style="padding-left: 40px;">Larry Praeger</p> <p>Supreme Ct, PL 7</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Brandy Voss</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Yes, I would publicize the endorsement on social media, e-mail announcements, and written materials.</p>
<p style="padding-left: 40px;">Staci Williams</p>	<p>I would use the endorsement in campaign literature and on my campaign website.</p>
<p>Supreme Ct, PL 8</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Peter Kelly</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p style="padding-left: 40px;">Gisela Triana</p> <p>CCA, PL 3</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">William Demond</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Yes.</p>
<p style="padding-left: 40px;">Elizabeth Frizell</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p style="padding-left: 40px;">Dan Wood</p> <p>CCA, PL4</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Tina Clinton</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Yes.</p>
<p>CCA, PL 9</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Brandon Birmingham</p>	<p>Yes, I would publicize the endorsement on all campaign literature, including social media and advertisements. I am and have been a proud member of the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas for over 5 years (SDD).</p>
<p>Chief Justice, 3rd CCA</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Darlene Byrne</p>	<p>Yes.</p>

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Keith Hampton	Yes. In my view, it would bear the mark of a candidate devoted to the ideals of equality, personal autonomy and inclusiveness. Every Democratic candidate should do so because it is a clear reflection of our shared values and consistent with the oath of all officials.
53rd District	
Maria Cantu Hexsel	Yes, I would be proud to publicize Stonewall's endorsement on my campaign literature, social media, and website.
Kennon Wooten	Yes, I would also publicize the endorsement on social media platforms and when canvassing in neighborhoods throughout Travis County.
167th District	
Dayna Blazey	Yes. If I receive the endorsement I will publicize it and feature it as I would any other endorsement.
David Wahlberg	Absolutely.
200th District	
Maggie Ellis	Absolutely, and with PRIDE.
Jessica Mangrum	Yes, of course.
353rd District	
Tim Sulak	Certainly.
390th District	
Albert Amado	Yes, I would be proud to.
Julie Kocurek	Absolutely. I would be proud to publicize the Stonewall Democrats' endorsement.
460th District	
Selena Alvarenga	Yes, I would be proud to display your endorsement. Will share on digital media for sure. As of the time of writing, I am undecided as to whether I will display endorsements on campaign flyers as the space is limited and I don't wish to play favorites between the deserving people and organizations supporting my campaign.
Amy Meredith	Absolutely.
County Court at Law 4	
Tanisa Jeffers	Yes, absolutely.
Margaret Chen Kircher	Yes, I would proudly publicize this endorsement on my campaign literature and social media platforms.

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Dimple Malhotra	I would proudly publicize SDA's endorsement in my campaign advertisements and literature. I believe strongly that it is important for the community to be very clear about a candidate's commitment to being a strong ally in the fight against discrimination and bigotry.
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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.
Chief Justice, Supreme Ct Amy Meachum	This group and their mission matter to me, and I consider myself to be an ally to the LGBTQ+ community. I have been on the bench in Travis County for nearly a decade as a civil and family court judge and have presided over a hundred same-sex adoptions, same-sex marriages and divorces. On the day Obergefell was decided, we opened up our courtroom to same-sex couples to grant 72-hour waivers and to perform weddings (this was covered by The New York Times). After Obergefell, I tried a first-of-its-kind jury trial regarding whether a 30-year same-sex couple was common-law married under Texas law (the jury found they were). In addition, Travis County has a docket where individuals can seek Gender Marker Changes, and my fellow judges and I continue to grant these where certain factors have been met. In addition to my work on bench, I have supported numerous LGBT candidates for office before taking the bench and since (behind the scenes).
Jerry Zimmerer	I am a life member of the Houston GLBT Caucus. I am seeking the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Austin for the position of Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court. I am doing so because I believe I am the best and most qualified candidate for the position. I also seek this indorsement because I believe Stonewall shares my values of inclusion and diversity of opinions and lifestyles and the recognition that labels do not change the fact that all people are entitled to fairness and justice and deserve to have a voice in our government and recognition from our elected officials. I oppose prejudice of any kind. I believe LGBTQ is a label, and that gays are entitle to the same human rights. Accordingly, LGBTQ rights should be respected under the law. So, YES!!! I am seeking the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of Austin.
Supreme Ct, PL 6	

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Kathy Cheng	The LGBTQ community is one of the fastest growing members within our community who are actively speaking out on not just issues impacting the LGBTQ community but also other issues that impact our community at large. In furtherance of that activism, the LGBTQ community also are actively involved in civic engagement, which are all efforts that align with my vision of community activism, engagement and educating I have supported the LGBTQ community as a participant of the Pride Parades. I have also supported the LGBTQ community in attending LGBTQ fundraising events, galas, and/or meetings. constituents to empower our voters.
Larry Praeger	Stonewall Democrats is an active, well-recognized Democratic organization promoting civil rights. Their advocacy for equality is consistent with my own beliefs. In 2010, when I ran for the 5 th District Court of Appeals, the first time running for any office, the first political endorsement I received was from the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas. I participated in Stonewall events during that campaign. My first job out of law school in 1982 was working as an assistant county attorney in Bell County, Texas. I was responsible for Child Protective Services cases, including foster care, custody, and termination of parental rights. I opposed policies disqualifying same-sex couples from acting as foster parents and disqualifying LGBT persons from adoptions. I realize that parenting ability is not related to sexual orientation. I also have a long history of representing LGBT individuals on family law matters.
Supreme Ct, PL 7	
Brandy Voss	Stonewall Democrats of Austin has bravely advocated for equality, and you did it long before it was socially acceptable. Your endorsement would not only send the message that our values are aligned, but it would set a standard for me personally that I would always strive to live up to. My work with the Thirteenth Court of Appeals limited my individual activism expression. But as a private attorney, I appeared as counsel for numerous law professors, who are amicus curiae in Cause No. 13-18-00219-CV, <i>Treto v. Treto</i> , pending in the Thirteenth Court of Appeals. The issue in that case is whether a female spouse in a same-sex marriage, whose name was placed on the couple's child's birth certificate but who had not given birth to the child, should be treated as a parent under the Texas Uniform Parentage Act (just as a male in a heterosexual marriage would be treated as a parent). Our amicus brief argues that same-sex spouses must be treated the same as heterosexual spouses, and any other holding would violate <i>Obergefell</i> .

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Staci Williams	I have long been an ally of the LGBT community. My earliest awareness of the LGBT community came from having members of my family and friends who identified as LGBT. As a lawyer and judge, I have interacted with the LGBT community on a much larger and different scale, from participating in various activities such as the annual Dallas Pride Parade and LAMBDA Legal dinners. I have also attended various forums on issues of importance to the LGBT community. Additionally, on the day that the U.S. Supreme Court released the <i>Obergefell</i> decision, I suspended my docket and performed marriages for many LGBT couples. Prior to my service as a judge, my advocacy for issues important to the LGBT community goes back many years. In 1986, I created a training program entitled, "The New Disability Issues: Alcohol, Drugs and AIDS," for a conservative defense company. Although I was threatened with being fired for presenting this training if the General Counsel received any negative comments, I pushed for the training and the training received rave reviews. The supervisors appreciated hearing "cutting edge information" on how to handle AIDS related issues in human resources.
Supreme Ct, PL 8	
Peter Kelly	As a lifelong Democrat, I am committed to progressive causes, including LGBTQ issues. I have long worked to ensure that all Texans (including my daughters, one of whom has a girlfriend) are treated fairly under the law. Simply put, I share the values traditionally associated with LGTBQ organizations.
Gisela Triana	Most voters will not know the judicial candidates on their ballot. As judges, we cannot campaign on issues that may appear before us. I think it is imperative to reach out to organizations that are like minded and with which we share philosophies and values, so that voters will know something about us. I share the core beliefs of Stonewall: that we should all be treated and protected equally by the law. I am proud to have always been endorsed by Stonewall and would be honored to be endorsed in my race for the Texas Supreme Court. As a District Judge, I performed same-sex commitment ceremonies and on the day <i>Obergefell</i> was decided, spent all day at the Travis County courthouse signing 72-hours waivers and marrying same-sex couples.
CCA, PL 3	
William Demond	I would be honored to receive this endorsement because I have proudly fought to secure equal rights for all under the law and trust the Stonewall Democrats are intimately familiar with the fight, the battlefield, and the increasingly entrenched (yet increasingly vulnerable) nature of our share ideological adversaries. I am seeking this endorsement because I recognize you are a respected voice within the LGBT community, believe your endorsement would facilitate my elevation to the bench (as well as all of the benefits that would result therefrom), and believe I am the best candidate for the position. No; however, the first associate my second law partner and I hired was gay. Additionally, I was a member of FLAG (Friends of Lesbians and Gays) at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina from 1998-1999.

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Elizabeth Frizell	Stonewall Democrats have a strong voting record and advocate issues that are important in the community. I am running for a Statewide Judgeship and Stonewall's endorsement will inform voters across the state that I will represent issues important to the LGBT community. I have represented a number of defendants who identify as a part of the LGBT community and I will continue to support them as a Judge.
Dan Wood	I support equality for all regardless of sexual preference and gender identity. I believe that Stonewall is a voice for the LGBT community and I would welcome Stonewall's support and endorsement. I have a history of supporting LGBT issues in society, in my own family and among my colleagues. I do not hesitate to employ members of the LGBT community and I am proud to count among my political supporters many who are in the LGBT community. I currently have an employee in my campaign who is transgender.
CCA, PL4 Tina Clinton	Please see question 1. I do have a history of supporting LGBTQ groups and issues. I am very inclusive in my court and educate my staff through my example. I have given to Lambda Legal and Stonewall Dems of Dallas regularly. I participate in Pride and other civic activities. On the day of decision, I was one of the judge that weddings in Dallas County. I still get called regularly for weddings for LGBTQ couples.
CCA, PL 9 Brandon Birmingham	I have long supported the LGBTQIA Community, well before I became involved in Politics. My law school writing credit - akin to a thesis for PhD students - was entitled, "Not Tonight Honey, It's Illegal." It was a case note in which I heavily criticized the 14th Court of Appeals decision upholding criminal penalties for what the penal code named, "homosexual conduct." That decision was just as wrong as the case upon which it stood: Bowers v. Hardwick. A few years later, the Supreme Court of the United States agreed, and struck down Texas's antiquated and discriminatory law in Lawrence v. Texas. Besides that, I am proud to have been endorsed by the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas both times I have ran for my current bench (2014 and 2018). I have volunteered to conduct same-sex marriages, and proudly agreed to hire Dallas County's first transgender person as a magistrate a few months ago, Katie Sprinkle.
Chief Justice, 3rd CCA Darlene Byrne	On my work on the trial court bench, I have served many LGBT youth and adults in their legal matters. I have served young people in foster care who are LGBT, I have presided over LGBT weddings and some divorces, I have issued name changes and gender changes. I have supported my daughter when she worked with Dragoween to raise money for the LGBT recovery community and I have attended several Stonewall Democratic club meetings. I authored this article on two of the youth on my docket: https://medium.com/@TransEquality/when-kids-cross-over-trans-youth-in-the-juvenile-and-family-court-systems-5b428d424225

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Keith Hampton	As a young attorney in 1991 (licensed in 1989), I wrote the amicus brief supporting early legal efforts at marriage equality in <i>State v. Morales</i> . It was a constitutional attack against Section 21.06. The effort was successful in the Third Court of Appeals (same court I'm running for now). But it was ultimately thwarted by a Texas Supreme Court that had been recently taken over by Republicans. Justice Comyn (current U.S. Senator) tossed out the decision, while Lloyd Doggett and three others were left dissenting. The vote was 5-4. Your endorsement matters because judicial selection matters. Your endorsement would inform all Democrats that I am a candidate genuinely devoted to the Bill of Rights. Please note my more recent work in exonerating four lesbian and bi-sexual women wrongly convicted of sexually assaulting two young girls, the "San Antonio Four." An award winning documentary, "Southwest of Salem," tells a less legalistic and more human story. The State Bar LGBT Committee awarded me the Judge Black Award in 2018.
53rd District Maria Cantu Hexsel	I would be honored to receive the endorsement of Stonewall Democrats. As a lifelong Democrat, who has close friends and family members who are part of the LGBT community, I have always publicly supported protection and equality for all citizens in all rights, regardless of sexual orientation. In addition, I've co-chaired events for the Texas Freedom Network, supporting their efforts to kill the bathroom bill and fight back against the politics of intolerance and division.
Kennon Wooten	I am seeking Stonewall's endorsement because (1) I am a proud Democrat and a proud ally to the LGBTQIA+ community; (2) I respect and appreciate Stonewall's leaders and programming; and (3) securing this endorsement will enable me to increase awareness about Stonewall on a broader scale. My history of publicly supporting LGBTQIA+ issues includes the following: (1) serving as a character reference for a dear friend, on two separate occasions, when she was seeking to adopt children birthed by her wife; (2) attending many events that advanced the interests of the LGBTQIA+ community; (3) speaking out when people said hateful or judgmental things about people in the LGBTQIA+ community; (4) voting to approve the LBGT Bar Association's request to become a section of the Austin Bar Association; and (5) making my ally status clear on social media platforms, including when celebrating the United States Supreme Court's <i>Obergefell</i> decision.

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167th District

Dayna Blazey

Throughout my career, I have sought to make our criminal justice system more progressive by using evidence-based best practices and innovative solutions to level the playing field while keeping our community safe. It's instrumental to work with activists and stakeholders in the community in order to ensure we are reducing and eliminating the disparities in our society that exist due to race, ethnicity, country of origin, income, being LGBT, religion, or otherwise. I would be honored to have your support. Yes, I have a history of supporting LGBTQIA+ candidates and causes. I've attended pride parades and LGBTQ Bar events, CLEs and diversity trainings, and have worked with survivors of crime who are members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

David Wahlberg

I seek Stonewall's endorsement because I believe in equal treatment for all and wish to openly demonstrate my beliefs. I have proudly supported LGBTQ positions, most notably by signing the order that resulted in the first Texas marriage between two women.

200th District

Maggie Ellis

As a gay candidate in a county that has elected very few openly LGBTQIA+ people, I want to be recognized as someone who supports, represents, and advocates for our LGBTQIA+ rights and causes. -My work with LGBTQIA+ issues has largely been centered around awareness, support, and protection of LGBTQIA+ youth in our community. I have advocated for the rights and services of LGBTQIA+ youth in the CPS and juvenile systems, including appropriate housing based on gender identity, education and training, and destigmatization. The most important work I have done has been with LGBTQIA+ youth who are in crisis, through collaborations with OutYouth and other community champions. My wife and I were proud to be among the first gay couples married in Travis County on "Obergefell Day" and featured on news outlets around Austin.

Jessica Mangrum

I want the support of Stonewall because it is an active group of Democrats committed to civil rights for all. This organization also does an amazing job of bringing awareness to all of the issues in the LGBTQIA community, as well as keeping members engaged in the democratic process. I marched in the Austin Pride Parade earlier this year with Stonewall Democrats. I've gone to the parade many times as a spectator, but was very proud to join as a candidate this year. I even met Mayor Pete Buttigieg and his husband, Chasten! I also attended the City of Austin's first Intersex Awareness Day earlier this year!

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353rd District

Tim Sulak

Stonewall has a well-deserved reputation for advocacy and advancement of equal rights and due process—cornerstones of our democracy and our judicial system. LGBT individuals and groups have been subjected to discrimination and exclusion from opportunities. Until fairly recently, in family-law matters, they have been deprived of the basic recognition of rights and responsibilities involving parental rights, inheritance rights, medical and retirement benefits, and the like. In employment matters, they have been denied or terminated from employment for reasons unrelated to qualifications and performance. As a judge, I have ruled without adverse considerations of gender and sexual orientation or preferences.

390th District

Albert Amado

The endorsement of stonewall would be an honor. I am running to give voters a progressive and diverse choice, and your endorsement will really help inform voters. I am gay, Hispanic, and an active advocate for LGBTQ issues. One of the areas I've chosen to focus on is LGBTQ youth homelessness. These kids are at a heightened risk of experiencing familial abuse pushing them to homelessness. It's exactly the kind of situation that ends up trapping kids into the revolving door of the criminal justice system, and is just one example of a problem where we, as a community, can do more for people in general and LGBTQ people specifically. In 2015, I founded and still help manage a drop-in center for homeless LGBTQ youth called Tony's Place in Houston, TX. We are open to teach life skills and provide food, hygiene, school supplies, and mail service 7 days a week. I also support OutYouth and PFLAG.

Julie Kocurek

As a judge, I am elected to represent every person in Travis County. My history and connection with LGBT issues is why I am a Democrat today. In 2003, my sister, to whom I have a very close relationship, came out to my family that she identified as a lesbian and that she had a partner. I was proud of the way my parents and seven siblings made my sister Ann and her partner Pam feel loved, included and accepted. Like my sister, I believe every single person should be treated with respect, love, and acceptance regardless of their whom they love or identify as. I have always publicly supported LGBT issues, and will continue to support equal rights for everyone.

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460th District

Selena Alvarenga

The Stonewall Dems have fought for my rights as a Gay woman. There is no question how important it is for us and our allies to protect all the progress that has been made and to keep working until all historically marginalized groups achieve their equal rights. LGBTQ+ people still face violence and discrimination, and can be vulnerable to parental abandonment, homelessness, and mistreatment within the criminal justice system. One example I have a lot of first-hand experience with is the difficulties faced by incarcerated Trans individuals which often results in them being victims of violence, segregation, and denial of identity and medical needs. I am also proud to serve as a board member of the LGBTQ section of the Austin Bar Association where I get to promote the advancement of LGBTQ causes within the justice system and beyond.

Amy Meredith

I have a long history of supporting LGBTQIA+ issues and candidates. As early as the 90's, I volunteered and helped my mother, who was the Development Director of AIDS Services of Austin, with issues that were important to the LGBTQIA+ community. I saw first hand how our community was torn apart and struggled to not only battle the actual illness, but also the prejudice associated with AIDS. Throughout my career, I have fought for victims that were targeted for who they love, who they were, or how they identified themselves. I proudly supported and was the second motion to add the LGBT section to the Austin Bar Association as a board member. I have worked in our community and the democratic party when advocating for issues like marriage equality. I am proud to say that I have many LGBTQIA+ community leaders supporting me.

**County Court at
Law 4**

Tanisa Jeffers

Yes, I do. My first paralegal was a gay man, Vincent Vu. He worked for our office for 12 years. I had three children in those 12 years and he loved and cared for them as if they were his own. In the 12 years he worked for our office, I divorced hundreds of clients, but he and his partner David formed as strong a bond as any heterosexual couple I knew. He and David later adopted his nephew Adam, as a young child, raising him as their own and sending him to college. In 2013, he went on to work for a larger 4-person family law firm, but we are still close today. My perception regarding the institution of marriage changed greatly through my friendship and work relationship with Vincent, because of it I strongly supported the Marriage Equality Act.

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Margaret Chen Kircher	County Court at Law #4 handles domestic and family violence cases. It is important for the Judge of this court to be welcoming and accepting of the LGBTQ community they serve, understanding of the nuances and factors that impact their families' lives, and working towards making justice accessible for every person in our community. I would be honored to have your support and work toward these goals together. This endorsement is important to me because I have always been an ally, personally and professionally. Some specific examples from my professional life include representing clients, including a family member, who have been targeted by law enforcement because of their sexual orientation. When I was a staff attorney in Phoenix Court - a specialty court which seeks to assist those who are forced into sex work - I helped a transgender woman find a safe and sober residence so that she could concentrate on her treatment, find employment, and get her case dismissed.
Dimple Malhotra	Currently, as Judge of Court 4 (the domestic violence court in Travis County), I handle intimate partner violence cases involving the LGBTQIA+ community. There was a time when cases involving LGBTQIA+ relationships were not prioritized or viewed through the same lens as other cases. Transgendered victims were particularly marginalized and their access to resources was often denied. I do everything in my power to ensure that my court is inclusive and sensitive to domestic violence issues that impact the LGBTQIA+ community. Additionally, I oversee the Phoenix Court, a diversion court for individuals arrested for prostitution. This court addresses issues which make these individuals vulnerable to this form of human trafficking. The court has transgendered participants who are particularly vulnerable to being violently victimized. As an ally, my priority is to ensure that ALL participants are treated equally, are properly identified by their preferred pronouns, and most importantly that our diversion programs are inclusive.

Question 4 Why are you seeking this public office?	
Chief Justice, Supreme Ct Amy Meachum	I am in my third term and very happy with my current job that the people of Travis County elected me to serve. That said, I want to make sure that if the Blue Wave hits, we have an experienced judge with progressive values elected to this important role of Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court. "If not me, who? If not now, when?" I am concerned daily that the rule of law and the Constitution are at risk in this country and state – and that certain persons are being trampled on by his government. I feel compelled to do my part in 2020 to stand up for the rule of law and our Democracy. In addition, we desperately need a Texas Supreme Court that is more balanced, looks like the people it serves and addresses the barriers that prevent women, persons of color and working families from attaining justice.

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Jerry Zimmerer	While I believe I hold more law degrees than any other judge in the state of Texas, including a JD, and two LL.M degrees (Health Law and International Law), completed my internship at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, am credentialed by the AA White Institute in both domestic and international commercial arbitration; it is not the education or credentials but the broad legal and life experiences (please see attached brochure) that set me apart as the most qualified.
Supreme Ct, PL 6	
Kathy Cheng	For almost a quarter of a century, the Texas Supreme Court has had a panel of nine justices lacking diversity. That lack of diversity is of the mindset. After all, the law is not always black or white, but there are areas of greyness, which only a well rounded individual can see those areas of greyness. As an individual who have traveled, lived and embraced people of diverse backgrounds, I am that well rounded individual who can see those areas of greyness. In addition, it is not only seeing those areas of greyness that is crucial but being able to speak out and stand firm in seeing those greyness even when such stance may not be the community standard is equally important.
Larry Praeger	I believe, with my experience and independence, I bring the perspective of someone who has practiced law over 30 years representing individuals. I understand the hardship of litigation and the mechanics of trial. I also believe that, with my extensive family law background, I understand the needs not only of the LGBT community, but of all citizens.
Supreme Ct, PL 7	
Brandy Voss	I believe in our civil jury system and our system of checks and balances. Being under one-party rule for over twenty years, however, has created a group-think mentality at the Texas Supreme Court. I do not believe robust debate is occurring at the Court, given that 7 of the 9 justices were initially appointed by Republican Texas Governors. This has resulted in a Court that reflects the Governors' political ideologies rather than representing the people of our state. I am running to change that. When the Democrats finally take back their seats at the table, we need qualified candidates that know how to do this job and who will make Texas proud.
Staci Williams	I am seeking this office because I believe we need an experienced jurist who will carefully examine the evidence, facts, and precedents, when it comes to appeals before the Texas Supreme Court. I have an extensive legal background of more than 27 years as a practicing attorney and judge. I am in my second term as a state district court judge. I believe that the combination of civil experience in both the private and public sectors as well as my service on the district court bench is the type of experience the people of Texas need in a jurist on the Texas Supreme Court.

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Supreme Ct, PL 8

Peter Kelly

I am running not to put a feather in my cap, but to continue to protect the economic rights of hardworking Texas families. My training and experience make me uniquely qualified to be the Democratic candidate for this seat. My over two decades' experience and training as an appellate advocate uniquely qualify me for the Texas Supreme Court (see my online CV for list of private practice accomplishments). On a nine-person court of discretionary review, simply voting in dissent does not advance the cause of fairness for all. A justice must be able to persuade the other justices to join a position, and I have a lengthy track record of being able to persuade the sitting justices on the court to rule in my clients' favor. I will bring those skills to the bench.

Gisela Triana

I am running to bring much needed balance and diversity of thought to the Texas Supreme Court. Currently, all of the Justices on the Texas Supreme Court are Republican. 7 of the 9 were political appointments by Rick Perry or Greg Abbott. We have a Court that acts as an extension of the Republican Party, instead of an independent judiciary. Texans deserve to have a level playing field, where all people are treated fairly regardless of their race, religion, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, disability or income status.

CCA, PL 3

William Demond

I no longer trust our federal judiciary to protect the People's constitutional rights, have witnessed our courts repeatedly ignore said rights to the People's detriment, and believe Texans deserve more than 26 years of a statewide Republican judiciary incapable of honoring our growing diversity. This particular court has repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to forego meaningful review of death penalty cases despite reversals from the U.S. Supreme Court, shifting public opinion concerning the death penalty, and a verifiably disparate application of the death penalty based on defendants' skin color. I also believe I am the most qualified candidate to counter Republican and federalist strategies concerning the People's courts.

Elizabeth Frizell

I am running for Court of Criminal Appeals, Place 3 because over the 20 years that I have been a Judge and during the hundreds of cases that I have tried. I have experienced far too many defendants who receive the death penalty for cases that should be life sentences or less. I have also seen defendants wrongfully convicted and receive trials where the law was not properly applied but higher court determined the errors were not reversible.

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Dan Wood	I have prepared for the office of Judge on the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals my entire legal career. I am a board certified specialist in Criminal Appellate law and I am passionate about legal research and analysis. I believe as a Democrat that all people must be treated fairly regardless of background, race, or religion. It is a challenge that faces the Court now that all disadvantaged persons receive the same treatment as those who can afford legal representation. I also believe Democrats need to be part of the conversation in court decisions on the statewide level. For too long, one party has dominated the statewide court, and Texans deserve a diversity of judicial philosophy on the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.
CCA, PL4	
Tina Clinton	I believe that this court can do more. I believe the court can review more cases and give Texans more access to this court. I believe that the judges can and should work with the legislature on bail reform laws. I believe that the court can do more with its grand funding capabilities to further education on issues like actual innocence, indigent defense, technology and mental health for judges, lawyers and law enforcement throughout the state.
CCA, PL 9	
Brandon Birmingham	Dallas County leads the nation in exonerations. We learned a great deal about the root causes of those exonerations, and as a chief felony prosecutor and chief of the cold case unit in Dallas, I was on the front lines. I didn't just read about those cases in transcripts or briefs - I prepared them, interviewed witnesses and law enforcement officers, spoke with family members and victims, and tried them to jurors. I also learned a great deal from some of the men who were exonerated. Those lessons forged the way I view the criminal justice system, and temper the way I'll handle cases once elected to the CCA.
Chief Justice, 3rd CCA	
Darlene Byrne	I have served this community for 19 years on the trial court bench and I believe it is a time for leadership change in the Third Court of Appeals. The highest priority of the Court is to dispense justice efficiently, consistent with the law, and cognizant of the human beings whose rights and lives are affected by the case. I will bring the same work ethic and compassion to this position that I have brought to bear for my 19 years on the trial court bench. I love this work and have learned that justice is urgent. I self-impose aggressive deadlines on myself to insure that people's lives are not suspended while they await a decision that impacts their daily lives or affects their future.

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Keith Hampton	For 30 years, I have been reviewing district court records, conducting independent research of the law and writing about the law. I am the only candidate who is twice board certified, including in appellate law; appeared in all 14 Texas courts of appeals; the Texas Supreme Court, Court of Criminal Appeals; and all federal district courts in Texas, the Fifth Circuit and the U.S. Supreme Court. I am seeking this office because I am the best qualified candidate for this position. We need lawyers who have spent their careers representing real people and not institutions, private or public. The federal judiciary is now dominated with lifetime appointments from Presidents Bush and Trump. In light of this takeover by ideologues, state courts will become the bulwark for civil rights in the future.
53rd District	
Maria Cantu Hexsel	Civil courts matter, from fighting for systemic change to protecting children, to businesses, big and small, in contract disputes. But to overcome obstacles of both time and money that prevent many from seeking justice, we need engaged judges who are informed, accessible, and establish clear pre-trial processes. It is vital we elect judges with experience who reflect the communities they serve. I am running for District Judge to combine my experience in the law with my passion for community service.
Kennon Wooten	My overarching goal is to keep the bench strong in Travis County. I would not run to be a judge here if I did not think I could further that goal with the background, qualifications, mindset, and compassion that I would bring to the bench. I am seeking a district-court position specifically for a few reasons: (1) I love people and want to be among people regularly while serving as a judge; (2) for the past eight years, I have practiced primarily in Travis County's civil district courts and, for that reason, I have an in-depth understanding of how these courts operate; and (3) serving for several years at the district-court level in Texas will provide useful experience for the higher-court positions that I ultimately intend to seek in Texas.
167th District	
Dayna Blazey	Over my 30 plus year career practicing law exclusively in courts like the 167th I've handled thousands of felony cases, building a reputation as a fair and honest attorney who is open and accessible. I have a proven track record of working with advocates, community groups, and nonprofits to improve our criminal justice system in ways that work for real people. As judge I would continue that work by expanding evidence-based best practices to divert low-level, non-violent offenders to treatment or social and mental health services instead of jail, improving indigent defense, and personally reviewing personal recognizance bonds that have been denied. I am committed to proactively seeking out ways to improve this court, and our criminal justice system as a whole, as well as being active in the community.

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David Wahlberg	I have served Travis County as the District Judge of the 167th District Court for 7 years. I want to continue to provide experience (43 years as a lawyer and judge), knowledge (board certified in criminal law since 1988) and a progressive outlook to the cases that come before me and to the general issues confronting the criminal justice system. I believe we should continue to seek community based treatment and supervision for those convicted of crime because this approach is more humane, effective and economical than incarceration. I believe we should continue to ensure that victims are heard and receive justice. I believe we should minimize the financial impact of the system.
200th District	
Maggie Ellis	I am seeking this office because I believe we need judges with significant courtroom and relevant life experience. I believe that Travis County deserves a judge who brings diversity and a lived understanding of the community being served. I will bring my experience, diversity, community service, compassion and commitment to justice to this position. I believe that our benches should reflect our population, and if I'm chosen for this position, I will be proud to serve as the first open, married LGBTQI+ judge in Travis County.
Jessica Mangrum	I am running for judge to make sure the citizens of Travis County have (1) access to justice, (2) capable decision making, and (3) an efficiently run court. I want to make sure all cases are given the attention they need and that all sides get their day in court. Many people are unaware of the free and low-cost legal services available for civil and family law matters and I will ensure that people in my court know the resources available to them. I have the legal experience to do this job and do it well.
353rd District	
Tim Sulak	I have been privileged to serve as Judge of the 353rd District Court for nine years. I have gained experience, knowledge and a reputation for fairness, having recently been selected by my colleagues as Travis County Local Administrative Judge. As a beneficiary of considerable assistance and guidance in my life, I want to continue to serve the public as repayment of those things. Numerous U.S. Supreme Court decisions have recognized the right to privacy in multiple contexts, and I agree with those opinions, their reasoning, and their precedential value.
390th District	
Albert Amado	Progressive change requires a progressive vision, and I believe that change can start on the local level. I would advocate for people who have been marginalized by the current system including LGBTQ+ persons, people of color, and those with few financial resources. Too often, the criminal justice system and our elected officials are not held accountable to make sure our courts are playing their part to address these challenges, and I have a plan to increase transparency and fight historical injustices. I've done criminal defense, human trafficking investigation, transparency and ethics teaching, and restorative justice program building. I'm excited to contribute my experience and run a fair and effective court.

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Julie Kocurek	I am seeking re-election as Judge of the 390th Criminal District Court because of my deep commitment to the criminal justice system in Travis County. This work is my passion because it presents opportunities every day to help people get their lives back on course. While Travis County is leading the state in progressive policies, there is still more work to do, and I wish for the opportunity to continue doing this work.
460th District	
Selena Alvarenga	It is important for me to give back and serve my community. I know that with my background and experience I can make a difference. As an immigrant to the US when I was a teenager, I learned the importance of giving back to the country that has given me so much. Being a criminal defense attorney for the indigent, serving on the Austin Public Safety Commission, and my other public service have been good ways for me to give back. I've seen how a majority of my clients don't need to be locked up, but instead need help in addressing problems that have been unresolved for a long time and lead them into destructive cycles. I know that I can serve well as a Judge and run a court that is balanced and progressive.
Amy Meredith	I have spent my entire career fighting for justice and equality both inside the courtroom and in our community. I will continue to make that a priority in my courtroom. I am running to ensure that defendants, victims and their families are also a priority in the courtroom by making sure that they have their voices heard and that violent offenses in our community are the priority in this court.
County Court at Law 4	
Tanisa Jeffers	County Court 4 needs a judge who will continue to 1.) focus on Domestic Violence issues; 2) seek to rehabilitate offenders who suffer from addiction, mental health issues and any other underlying issue that may have caused them to enter the system by establishing a diversion court for first-time offenders, siblings, roommates, parent-child cases, first time offenders, cases involving drugs and alcohol as an underlying issue and those cases involving a mental illness; and 3). who will provide much-needed perspective as the only African American judicial candidate. Though, the African American population is only 7% in Travis County, African Americans are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system as they account for more than 33% of all misdemeanor cases filed in Travis County, yet there are no African American criminal judges at the misdemeanor level.

Candidate Questionnaire Responses
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Margaret Chen Kircher	I am seeking this office because I am committed to providing equal justice to everyone that comes before the court. That's why I've dedicated the last decade of my career to breaking the cycle of incarceration and ensuring my clients, many of whom cannot afford a lawyer on their own, receive equal access to justice. As the daughter of immigrants and an attorney for indigent clients, I understand the barriers that exist in the justice system and the need for systemic change. I've demonstrated a commitment to justice through my work as a criminal defense attorney and by volunteering to help refugees in detention centers. County court judges deal with misdemeanor offenders, who often need treatment and services rather than incarceration. I am also seeking this office because representation matters. There has never been a Chinese American woman elected to a judicial office in Travis County. Asian Americans are the largest growing minority group in Central Texas.
Dimple Malhotra	Domestic violence is a personal issue for me. For many immigrant families it can be an unspoken part of the culture. Nationally, domestic violence is a public health crisis that affects our entire community. I knew at a young age that I wanted to serve the community by helping people affected by this issue. When the Travis County Commissioners appointed me to Court 4, it was because I was the only candidate with experience in this field. I am running to keep my seat because the community deserves a judge who understands the complexities of this issue and can make decisions that keep the community and the victims safe. Additionally, it is imperative that our judiciary reflect the diversity in our community. I am the first and only Asian American female judge in Travis County.

Question 5	Is there implicit or explicit "right to privacy" in the Constitution of the United States and/or of the State of Texas a guaranteed to all its citizens?
Chief Justice, Supreme Ct Amy Meachum	Yes, it is abundantly clear under relevant US Supreme Court precedent from <i>Griswold v. Connecticut</i> to <i>Lawrence v. Texas</i> even through <i>Obergefell</i> that there is a Right to Privacy protected under the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution. In addition, Texas law recognizes a common law right to privacy. It is not the same concept as a "fundamental right" but the legal precept is there.
Jerry Zimmerer	Although the Constitution does not explicitly include the right to privacy, the US Supreme Court has found that the Constitution implicitly grants a right to privacy against governmental intrusion from the First Amendment, Third Amendment, Fourth Amendment, and the Fifth Amendment.

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Supreme Ct, PL 6	
Kathy Cheng	The 4th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and Article 1, Section 19 of the Texas Constitution implicitly afford all its citizens the right to privacy, which essentially implies, "right to be left alone" as stated by former Justice Brandeis.
Larry Praeger	There is an implicit right to privacy in the United States Constitution, which is applicable to the State of Texas. Interestingly, a family law case, <u>Griswold v. Connecticut</u> , dealt with a case prohibiting the sale of contraceptives. The U.S. Supreme Court stated that there is a right to privacy, although not specifically enumerated in the Constitution. This right is applicable to the States as well.
Supreme Ct, PL 7	
Brandy Voss	The United States Supreme Court has recognized an implicit right to privacy in the United States Constitution. The Texas Supreme Court has similarly recognized an implicit right to privacy.
Staci Williams	Because I am a sitting judge, I am limited in how I may reply to this question under the canons of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct. However, the U.S. Supreme Court has found that there is a right to privacy inherent in the Constitution, although it is not specifically enumerated in any particular amendment.
Supreme Ct, PL 8	
Peter Kelly	Yes.
Gisela Triana	Yes.
CCA, PL 3	
William Demond	Yes.
Elizabeth Frizell	Yes.
Dan Wood	There is an implicit right to privacy as outlined in <i>Roe v. Wade</i> and its progeny. That right is just as viable and enforceable as though the words "right of privacy" were explicitly written in our State and U.S. constitutions. That right of privacy is guaranteed to all Texans and must be protected.
CCA, PL4	
Tina Clinton	In my reading of the cases and laws of the United States and State of Texas, yes.
CCA, PL 9	
Brandon Birmingham	Yes. I have always believed that.

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Chief Justice, 3rd CCA	
Darlene Byrne	In light of these issues not presently being fully clarified in the law, a judicial candidate should not opine on matters of the law that are likely to come before them in the future, otherwise they may be required to recuse themselves from the opportunity to rule on these important constitutional matters related to the right to be left alone, especially in the area of personal matters.
Keith Hampton	This right, though not explicitly bestowed, emanates from the express rights in both state and federal constitutions. This right applies not only to citizens, but to everyone. It is older than the Bill of Rights. It is universal. It is necessary to psychological harmony, wholeness and human intimacy. It is famously stated as "the right to be let alone," and it is fundamental to democracy and our constitutional system.
53rd District	
Maria Cantu Hexsel	There is an implicit "right to privacy" in the Constitution of the United States guaranteed to all citizens and supported by caselaw, particularly <i>Lawrence v. Texas</i> , 539 U.S. 448 (2003) and <i>Obergefell v. Hodges</i> , 576 U.S. ____ (2015) which set precedence for protecting the rights of all human beings. A strong and qualified judiciary helps to ensure the protection of these essential rights.
Kennon Wooten	Due to ethical restrictions applicable to judicial candidates in the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct, I am unable to answer this particular question. My apologies.
167th District	
Dayna Blazey	Without speaking to any issue that may appear before me, I recognize the "right to privacy" in the U.S. Constitution as upheld and expanded by cases such as <i>Lawrence v. Texas</i> and <i>Obergefell v. Hodges</i> .
David Wahlberg	There is no explicit right to privacy in the Constitution but such a right is implicit in our basic constitutional principles such as the 4th Amendment right to be free from unreasonable searches. As Justice Kennedy said, Due Process protects against government interference in "the most private of human conduct, sexual behavior." Justice Blackmun spoke of the fundamental right to be left alone.
200th District	
Maggie Ellis	The right to privacy is a vehicle to protect individuals from intrusion by the federal and state government. Its protections were originally very limited and have slowly expanded in civil and criminal arenas. It is imperative that we elect candidates who have a history of protecting these rights and will champion them in the future. Otherwise, many of our rights could disappear.

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Jessica Mangrum	As a judicial candidate, I cannot comment on issues that may come in front of the 200th District Court. The law must be applied without regard to race, creed, gender, or gender orientation. As judge, I will follow the law, including Obergefell v. Hodges (right to marry is fundamental and protected by the due process and equal protection clauses). I will be fair and impartial in each case that comes before me.
353rd District	
Tim Sulak	Numerous U.S. Supreme Court decisions have recognized the right to privacy in multiple contexts, and I agree with those opinions, their reasoning, and their precedential value.
390th District	
Albert Amado	A "right to privacy" is not explicit in the U.S. or State Constitution. But in my opinion it is implied in several amendments: privacy of beliefs; privacy of the home from quartering troops; privacy from unreasonable searches and seizures; privacy from self incrimination (and therefore information privacy); due process. The corollary provision in the Texas Constitution imply similar protections.
Julie Kocurek	Yes, the "right to privacy" or the "right to be left alone" is guaranteed by the Fourth, Fifth, Ninth, and Fourteenth Amendments, and is guaranteed to every person. I am a firm believer that intimate relationships are personal and should be left up to the individual without governmental intrusion because at the end of the day, love is love.
460th District	
Selena Alvarenga	There is no explicit right to privacy in either the U.S. or Texas Constitution. However, the US Supreme Court has found an implicit right through the 1st, 4th, 5th and 14th amendments. The Court has relied on those amendments in its findings which granted same-sex couples the right to marry, and in its findings which found Art. 21.06 of the Texas Penal Code, Homosexual Conduct, to be unconstitutional.
Amy Meredith	Although I cannot speak to an issue that may come before me, I recognize the importance of the fundamental rights to privacy and equal protection articulated by the US Supreme Court in cases like Lawrence and Obergerfell and have worked towards protecting those rights for our community.

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County Court at Law 4	
Tanisa Jeffers	The US Constitution does not give us an explicit 'right to privacy,' but I would say that citizens are guaranteed an implied "right to privacy" in the Constitution from the First Amendment (the right to freedom of religion, speech, press and right to assemble); Third Amendment (forbidding the housing of soldiers in private homes without consent of the home owner); Fourth Amendment (protection against unlawful searches and seizures without probable cause or a warrant); and Fifth Amendments (you can not be held for committing a crime without due process of the law). As a judicial candidate, I can not comment on issues that may come before Court 4, but I will commit to following the law without regard to race, creed, gender or sexual orientation and I commit to being fair and impartial in all cases before the court.
Margaret Chen Kircher	Yes, there is a right to privacy in the U.S. Constitution and the Texas Constitution, which should be guaranteed to all its citizens or residents. Notably, the right of privacy was upheld in <i>Lawrence v. Texas</i> , by explicitly overruling <i>Bowers v. Hardwick</i> .
Dimple Malhotra	Although there is no explicit right to privacy in the Constitution, the U.S. Supreme Court's interpretation suggests an implicit right to privacy in several different areas, including marriage, procreation, medical treatment, and consensual sexual activity between adults. This was highlighted in <i>Lawrence v. State</i> , which extended the right to privacy to the LGBTQ community through substantive due process. As judicial leaders it is our obligation to protect this right to privacy to ensure that we retain the dignity as free individuals.

Question 6	What does the term "equal protection of the law" mean to you?
Chief Justice, Supreme Ct	
Amy Meachum	Justice Stevens said the clause "requires every State to govern impartially. It does not direct the Courts to apply one standard of review in some cases and a different standard in other cases." <i>Craig v. Boren</i> (Stevens, concurring). In short, Stevens believed facts mattered. So do I. The Equal Protection Clause should be applied contextually and on a case by case basis.
Jerry Zimmerer	The term "equal protection of the law" means that the law is applied equally to all people. This does not mean that we do not take into consideration their condition but rather that we treat similarly situated persons similarly using the same framework for decision making.

Candidate Questionnaire Responses
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Supreme Ct, PL 6	
Kathy Cheng	Equal protection of the law means all citizens shall be afforded the same rights, privileges and protection under the U.S. Constitution and the Texas Constitution. However, having those protection written does not guaranty it will be carried out by the community majority. It is up to the community at large to stand and speak up for those who are not so fortunate to attain that protection.
Larry Praeger	Everyone in our society should enjoy the same rights, duties, and protections of a citizen, without regard to race, sex, sexual orientation, etc.
Supreme Ct, PL 7	
Brandy Voss	The Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause is the bedrock of our society—it has provided the basis for protecting our voting rights, desegregating our schools, ensuring citizens receive a jury of their peers, and allowing citizens to marry who they love. As for its specific meaning in particular contexts, I am unable to provide an opinion, as that would violate the Code of Judicial Conduct.
Staci Williams	Because I am a sitting judge, I am limited in how I may reply to this question under the canons of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct. However, I believe this term, in its broadest sense, means that all people, regardless of income or social, racial, religious, or any other status, must be protected by the law—at all levels—equally.
Supreme Ct, PL 8	
Peter Kelly	That all persons—not just citizens—within the United States shall enjoy, without public or private interference, the privileges and immunities afforded to any other person, regardless of any classification or social construct imposed or defined by any other group, including the government.
Gisela Triana	The Constitution requires that the government guarantee the same rights, privileges and protections to all people. All people are protected under due process of law equally regardless of their race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or disability.
CCA, PL 3	
William Demond	That all who are under the law (<i>i.e.</i> , all of us) are protected equally.
Elizabeth Frizell	Everyone should be treated equally and fairly and the law should be applied to protect everyone equally and fairly.
Dan Wood	To apply the law equally to all regardless of background, whether wealthy or not, citizen or non-citizen, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other difference one could define among us who are found within the jurisdiction of the U.S. Equal protection means same sex marriage be respected and treated the same as other marriages. An employee must not be fired for getting married over the weekend.

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<p>CCA, PL4 Tina Clinton</p>	The laws that apply to one, applies to all.
<p>CCA, PL 9 Brandon Birmingham</p>	That the law should not discriminate based on race, gender, nationality, gender identity, or sexual orientation.
<p>Chief Justice, 3rd CCA Darlene Byrne</p>	Found in the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments, the equal protection is intended to prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender, religion and disability. Many believe it should also prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation as well. In light of these issues not presently being fully clarified in the law, a judicial candidate should not opine on matters of the law that are likely to come before them in the future, otherwise they may be required to recuse themselves from the opportunity to rule on these important constitutional matters.
<p>Keith Hampton</p>	Equality of rights is guaranteed under both state and federal constitutions. It means that no one can be denied the benefit of the laws. Rights are equally protected. Beyond these observations, I cannot further comment in accordance with the canons of judicial conduct.
<p>53rd District Maria Cantu Hexsel</p>	"Equal protection of the law" under the 14th Amendment is the restriction on state and federal governments to enact policies that unintentionally lead to disparate impact. To me, "equal protection" serves as one of the tools keeping state and federal government accountable so that they do not discriminate or craft policy that results in a disparities among its citizens.
<p>Kennon Wooten</p>	Due to ethical restrictions applicable to judicial candidates in the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct, I am unable to answer this particular question. However, I can say this: If I am elected to serve as the next judge of the 53rd District Court, I will comply with my ethical obligations to be impartial and to dispose of matters fairly.
<p>167th District Dayna Blazey</p>	Without speaking to any issue that may appear before me, I believe everyone should expect to receive equal protection under law and should not be denied education, jobs, housing, healthcare, or other rights based on their race, country of origin, LGBTQIA+ status, immigration status, religious beliefs, or anything else that is an innate trait of their humanity.
<p>David Wahlberg</p>	At a minimum, this means our laws should be blind to race, religion,sex, gender identification, national origin, physical disability or other category. At our best, it means we should not only guarantee that our laws are applied evenly but we should recognize the long-term effects of prior discrimination and take appropriate steps to provide redress.

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200th District	
Maggie Ellis	It should mean that everyone is treated equally regardless of their race, sex, age, nationality, religion, and other protected classes. However, this protection is not guaranteed based on a person's sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. Therefore, in most communities LGBTQI+ people can be discriminated against because of who they are. The law must change-this protection is our right.
Jessica Mangrum	As a judicial candidate, I cannot comment on issues that may come in front of the 200th District Court. The law must be applied without regard to race, creed, gender, or gender orientation. As judge, I will follow the law, including Obergefell v. Hodges (right to marry is fundamental and protected by the due process and equal protection clauses). I will be fair and impartial in each case that comes before me.
353rd District	
Tim Sulak	All persons, regardless of age, race, gender, national origin, disability, and sexual orientation are entitled to non-discriminatory access to the rights and opportunities of others.
390th District	
Albert Amado	I interpret it as broadly as possible to mean that all persons are to receive equal treatment under the law regardless of their personal characteristics and circumstances.
Julie Kocurek	The Equal Protection Clause is contained within the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. It guarantees ALL persons, regardless of race or gender equal protection under the law. It means that ALL people are created equal and shall be treated the same under the law and guaranteed the same rights and freedoms.
460th District	
Selena Alvarenga	It means that every single person is a human being, and should not be judged based on race, identity, orientation, or other such characteristics. Our justice system must be blind to those in order to guarantee equal protection of the law, but right now that is not possible because the 'playing field' is not level. Impartiality is not enough, we need to be proactive; identify and solve the inequalities that exist.
Amy Meredith	Although I cannot speak to an issue that may come before me, I recognize the importance of the fundamental rights to privacy and equal protection articulated by the US Supreme Court in cases like Lawrence and Obergefell and have worked towards protecting those rights for our community.

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County Court at Law 4	
Tanisa Jeffers	"Equal protection of the law" means that we guarantee the same rights, privileges and protections to <u>all</u> our citizens, no matter their race, gender, religion or sexual orientation and that we do not inadvertently pass or enforce laws that discriminate against anyone due to the above. Providing 'equal protection of the law' means we do not draw distinctions between our citizens based on irrelevant differences. In my court, all citizens of Travis county will be treated equally, regardless of race, sexual identification, mental illness, or socio-economic background. I can not comment on issues that may come before Court 4, but I will commit to following the law without regard to race, creed, gender or sexual orientation and I commit to being fair and impartial in all cases before the court.
Margaret Chen Kircher	I believe "equal protection of the law" means there are rights, privileges, and protections afforded to every person, no matter the individual's sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion, natural origin, immigration status, age, disability, or other discriminatory classification.
Dimple Malhotra	Equal protection of the law means no person shall be denied their constitutional rights based on their gender, race, religion, sexual identity or orientation, or gender identity.

Question 7	What does the term "family" mean to you?
Chief Justice, Supreme Ct	
Amy Meachum	Family means the people who make up our closest loved ones. It can look and feel (differently to different people, and family comes in many sizes and forms. For me, it's my husband Kurt and our three kids, but I certainly recognize and respect that Other families are different – and I respect those differences daily as a family court judge.
Jerry Zimmerer Supreme Ct, PL 6	Family is what you make it and family is also who you make it with.
Kathy Cheng	Family consists of individuals who care about each other not just because those individuals are related by blood but because of love. If one is a true patriotic American, one will realize we are all family by the love of this country and as family, we shall never allow any person or group divide and conquer us by our ethnic group, sexual orientation, gender, age, faith, etc.

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Larry Praeger	In addition to those persons who are legally married and relatives by blood, family can include people whose relationship is such that they exhibit care, love, and compassion for one another. As a family law specialist, I frequently encounter this in cases where a child has lived with a friend, neighbor, or other person with whom that child has no legal or blood relationship. The law recognizes that because of the emotional attachment, the adult taking care of the child has legal standing to pursue custody. What this means is that there is no set statutory definition of family. It depends on the relationship of the parties.
Supreme Ct, PL 7 Brandy Voss	Family, in my life, has meant not only mine and my spouse's physical and adopted relatives, but also my friends and my community. I believe family is defined differently in many ways for different people. But for me, it really comes down to love and who we include in our lives.
Staci Williams	Because I am a sitting judge, I regret that I cannot respond to this question under multiple canons of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct.
Supreme Ct, PL 8 Peter Kelly	"Family" is a social construct, and every culture or society has a different definition or usage of the term. To me, it can mean anything from a group of non-biologically related adults who elect to form a group for mutual support, to a group of individuals (including children) biologically related to each other within on degree of consanguinity. I favor an inclusive definition.
Gisela Triana	Family are the people we love and that we consider to be our family.
CCA, PL 3 William Demond	Family (to me) is generally a close-knit bond between people, generally (but not always) created or facilitated by marriage or consanguinity.
Elizabeth Frizell	People who love and care for each other and are united.
Dan Wood	Family is made up of those who love each other and want to live as a family. There is no definition that would require a so called straight couple or individual to be the head of a family and there is no definition that would prohibit an LGBT couple or individual to raise children.
CCA, PL4 Tina Clinton	Family means two or more people that make a comment to one another (can be by birth, adoption, marriage, civil ceremony, or by merely committing in public/common law).
CCA, PL 9 Brandon Birmingham	People bound together by blood, adoption, circumstance or common cause. I believe all adults should be able to be parents, and raise their children as they see fit.

Candidate Questionnaire Responses
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**Chief Justice, 3rd
CCA**

Darlene Byrne As a judge that has presided over thousands of families involved in the child welfare docket, the juvenile justice docket and the family law docket of Travis County, I have seen every type of “family” array. Family is a place of safety, support, unconditional love, nurturance, connection, shared culture, shared language, sometimes shared beliefs, sometimes shared spirituality, and sometimes shared politics. It comes in all shapes, sizes, colors, genders and identities. There is no one size fits all.

Keith Hampton I do not regard “family” as limited to some particular social model such as wife, husband and children. I think it encompasses more than a description of agreements about how life within a household should operate or how it should be supported. While I can’t define it, I think it includes the pronoun “we” and necessarily includes a genuine and deep bond.

53rd District

Maria Cantu Hexsel Any grouping of people united in love, trust and purpose.

Kennon Wooten To me, the term "family" is broad and can encompass any two or more people who have long-term commitments to one another and often reside together (though that certainly is not always the case). My concept of my own "family" is broad and includes not only my relatives, but also friends who feel like family members to me.

167th District

Dayna Blazey Family, although a simple concept, does not have a single or simple definition. For me, a family is a group of people who choose to love, care, and support each other because of bonds created by life, genetic, choice, or law. My own family consists of many people that I am not directly related to, but we’ve loved and supported each other our whole lives.

David Wahlberg “Family” for me refers not only those to whom I am related by accident of blood or marriage but, more importantly, those with whom I choose to be related at that close and supportive level.

200th District

Maggie Ellis I was abandoned by my mother when I was eleven years old, so I don't consider her part of what a family means to me. For me, family means the people who love and support you for who you are and walk with you through the happiest and saddest moments in your life. Family looks different for everyone, but the feeling of love and acceptance should be universal.

Jessica Mangrum To me, family are those people in my life who are close to me and are related by blood or marriage. But it also extends to those we have choosen as family, such as longtime friends.

Candidate Questionnaire Responses
Judicial

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353rd District	
Tim Sulak	Family is a group of persons who provide love, assistance, guidance, and nurturance to each other, in good times and in bad.
390th District	
Albert Amado	A group of relatives or partners sharing a commonality of identity, beliefs, values, interests, culture and love for one another.
Julie Kocurek	To me a "family" is two or more people that form a relationship based upon unconditional love, trust, and support.
460th District	
Selena Alvarenga	Everything. My mother died when I was young and my father took me into the U.S. when I was 13 after we fled the civil war in El Salvador. I would not be where I am today without their hard work and the loving acceptance my dad and the rest of my LGBTQ+ "family" showed me after I came out. Family is part of my inspiration to represent juvenile defendants who frequently come from difficult family lives.
Amy Meredith	Family can be defined in countless ways. Frankly, it is a definition that is as personal as a fingerprint. I come from a complicated background including multiple divorces on both sides of my family. My Stepdad was my Dad in every sense of the word. I have friends for over 30 years that are like brothers and sisters to me. We all have 2 families - the ones that we are born with and the ones we get to choose. Family to me is anyone who loves and accepts me and I love for who we are.
County Court at Law 4	
Tanisa Jeffers	Family is definitely more than biology. It is not blood alone, but includes those people who stand beside you when no one else will. Being part of a family means you love and support one another even when it is not easy to do so. With family, you have someone to love you unconditionally, despite any perceived shortcomings. My work in CPS cases has shown me that families are now more diverse than ever, as we now have transracial, multicultural, same-sex and single parent families all committed to raising healthy, happy children, if any.
Margaret Chen Kircher	Two or more people who support, love, care, and trust each other.
Dimple Malhotra	The word "family" should always be subjectively defined. Families are not just defined biologically, but socially as well. To ensure equal treatment under the law for all, it is imperative that we recognize the complexity and variation amongst families.

Candidate Questionnaire Responses
Judicial

January 8, 2020

Question 8	What does the term “community standards” mean to you and who, if anyone, sets these standards?
Chief Justice, Supreme Ct	
Amy Meachum	I'm not sure what the question is seeking here. "Contemporary Community Standards" is a term of art in criminal law when it comes to obscenity laws, but I think you are asking it more in the vernacular. So, our "community standards" in Austin are progressive and inclusive -- a community constantly challenging itself to be more equitable and fair. I try to set this standard for myself.
Jerry Zimmerer	The term contemporary community standards is a standard used to test descriptions or depictions of sexual matters, which was first adopted by the United States Supreme Court in 1957 in Roth v. United States, 354 U.S. 476 community standards may be utilized without reference to a precise geographical area.
Supreme Ct, PL 6	
Kathy Cheng	Community standards are the standards the majority of the community deems appropriate or acceptable yet may not necessarily be the just standards. For example, it was deemed appropriate/legal to forbid women the right to vote at one point in history, but such community standard was not just, thus leading to the women's suffrage movement and eventually giving women the right to vote.
Larry Praeger	Community standards are the collection of beliefs exhibited by a judge or a jury. In a custody case, if you have a suit between two parents, their "lifestyle" can be considered by the jury. However, community standards must comport with the laws of the State of Texas. An example of this would be, in our family code, we have a law against "the tender years" doctrine, which prohibits the award of custody simply because of the age of a child and the gender of the parent.
Supreme Ct, PL 7	
Brandy Voss	Community standards are the benchmark by which conduct is judged as socially acceptable or unacceptable. We, as a community, set the standards. The primary method that we set those standards is through our using voice at the ballot box to elect leaders that reflect our values. It is time for Texans to speak out against inequality, which has become the norm in Texas because of our elected leaders.
Staci Williams	Because I am a sitting judge, I regret that I cannot respond to this question under multiple canons of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct.
Supreme Ct, PL 8	
Peter Kelly	In a pure tort context, community standards (reasonable standards for workplace safety, say) are determined by the jury of 12, sitting at trial. But in a broader context, "community standards" should not be the petticoat behind which bigotry and hatred hide; community standards should be lax enough to extend to that which is constitutionally permissive.

Candidate Questionnaire Responses
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<p>Gisela Triana</p> <p>CCA, PL 3</p> <p>William Demond</p> <p>Elizabeth Frizell</p> <p>Dan Wood</p> <p>CCA, PL4</p> <p>Tina Clinton</p> <p>CCA, PL 9</p> <p>Brandon Birmingham</p> <p>Chief Justice, 3rd CCA</p> <p>Darlene Byrne</p> <p>Keith Hampton</p> <p>53rd District</p> <p>Maria Cantu Hexsel</p> <p>Kennon Wooten</p>	<p>In determining whether something is obscene, you must apply the contemporary community standards of the region. This is a local decision that should be determined locally, especially by juries.</p> <p>In the legal context, I generally associate "community standards" with the test for obscenity set forth by the U.S. Supreme Court in <i>Miller v. California</i>. Here, the fact-finder (generally a jury) determines whether the "average" person (sometimes aided by expert testimony) would find certain speech offensive. The Court did not contemplate the Internet or jurisdictional complications created thereby.</p> <p>Community Standards are opinions of the community. Each individual should set their own standard.</p> <p>This question may be referring to healthcare practices for the LGBT Community. I support community standard of healthcare to encourage the gay community, and the transgender community in particular, to seek medical and preventative healthcare. If referring to on-line "community standards" such as Facebook, I support LGBT input in those standards. Can clarify in the interview if necessary.</p> <p>"Community standards" is very broad and can be inclusive of all.</p> <p>Community standards are a set of values that apply to everyone. They are set by leaders in the community, and elected officials.</p> <p>I am unclear how to answer this question and certainly unclear on "who sets these standards." I would be happy to discuss this matter further if given the opportunity to receive further clarity.</p> <p>The legal meaning of "community standards" is likely to arise before the judicial office I am seeking. I therefore believe I am precluded from answering this question.</p> <p>"Community standards" are whatever a community decides are appropriate norms and acceptable conduct, and the manner in which these decided norms are enforced. As a community, we must continue to fight for equality for every person, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, or status.</p> <p>Due to ethical restrictions applicable to judicial candidates in the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct, I am unable to answer this particular question. My apologies.</p>
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Candidate Questionnaire Responses
Judicial

January 8, 2020

167th District	
Dayna Blazey	Community standards are what we collectively as a community have decided is acceptable and allowable in terms of behavior and action by individuals, organizations, and otherwise. Because this is an issue that is likely to come before me as a criminal court judge, I am precluded from commenting further by Canon 5 of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct.
David Wahlberg	“Community standards” is an essentially meaningless term utilized by some as the basis for discriminating against those who are seen as “different” and implies some moral judgment concerning behaviour, art or a host of other characteristics. It is a standard without any standards invented by those who seek to claim some basis for their discrimination.
200th District	
Maggie Ellis	Community standards are the moral measurement of a group of people to determine whether or not something is pornographic, obscene, or unacceptable. It is a marker that has been used historically across the United States to vilify and criminalize members of the LGBTQI+ community.
Jessica Mangrum	As a judicial candidate, I cannot comment on issues that may come in front of the 200th District Court. The law must be applied without regard to race, creed, gender, or gender orientation. As judge, I will follow the law, including Obergefell v. Hodges (right to marry is fundamental and protected by the due process and equal protection clauses). I will be fair and impartial in each case that comes before me.
353rd District	
Tim Sulak	The term “community standards” has been misused in litigation to attempt to deprive persons of their equality at law.
390th District	
Albert Amado	Norms of acceptable conduct within a culture, social group or community (a collective group). The standards are determined by the members of the collective group and should reflect the collective values of the group.
Julie Kocurek	“Community Standards” are a vague metric that are typically invoked to repress, restrain, or ignore minority interests; judges are not arbiters of these vague standards but can decide explicitly written laws that have well defined precedents.
460th District	
Selena Alvarenga	The members of the community itself are the only ones who can create the kind of place they want to live in. It is up to the people, not just their leaders. I'm so proud to be part of a civically active community that has accepted me as an immigrant and, amongst many other achievements, fought for policies like being a sanctuary city in the face of constant opposition from the state level.

Candidate Questionnaire Responses
Judicial

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Amy Meredith	Although I cannot speak to an issue that may come before me, I recognize the importance of the fundamental rights to privacy and equal protection articulated by the US Supreme Court in cases like Lawrence and Obergerfell and have worked towards protecting those rights for our community.
County Court at Law 4	
Tanisa Jeffers	To me “community standards” are the local rules that define what acceptable conduct is here in Travis County. I am proud that Travis county community standards are different than other surrounding counties. Travis county does not round up our Mexican citizens for deportation or criminalize homelessness. Travis county allows defendants to bond out with the assistance of an attorney and grants personal bonds to the indigent. Jurors, i.e. ordinary citizens are the judges of contemporary community standards, based upon their knowledge of the norms of the community in which they reside. I can not comment on issues that may come before Court 4, but I will commit to following the law without regard to race, creed, gender or sexual orientation and I commit to being fair and impartial in all cases that come before me.
Margaret Chen Kircher	Community standards are shaped by the shared norms and values of the people who live in our community. Our standards reflect who we are as a community and what we deem important. Until equality is achieved for every person in our community, we must continue to push for change. Voting is one of the most powerful ways to voice what our community standards should be.
Dimple Malhotra	Community standards are the social contract we all agree to as a society. They go beyond the laws to make sure our community is represented as it should be. These standards layout guidelines on how we treat each other. As leaders, we influence and challenge community standards. We fight to make standards more inclusive and welcoming to ensure a more equitable society. This is especially true for judicial leaders because we analyze community standards through the eyes of the law and set new standards with each judicial decision.

Question 9	What does the term “homosexual panic” mean to you?
Chief Justice, Supreme Ct Amy Meachum	Again, I am not sure if you want me to comment on this increasingly disfavored legal theory, which has been used as a defense in the criminal law. The American Bar Association passed a resolution in 2013 to urge jurisdictions to take legislative action to curtail this defense. Many states have, Texas has not. Judicial candidates cannot take positions on pending legislation likely to come before court

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Judicial

January 8, 2020

<p>Jerry Zimmerer</p> <p>Supreme Ct, PL 6</p> <p>Kathy Cheng</p> <p>Larry Praeger</p> <p>Supreme Ct, PL 7</p> <p>Brandy Voss</p> <p>Staci Williams</p> <p>Supreme Ct, PL 8</p> <p>Peter Kelly</p> <p>Gisela Triana</p> <p>CCA, PL 3</p> <p>William Demond</p> <p>Elizabeth Frizell</p> <p>Dan Wood</p> <p>CCA, PL4</p> <p>Tina Clinton</p> <p>CCA, PL 9</p> <p>Brandon Birmingham</p>	<p>Had to look this up: Homosexual panic is a term coined by psychiatrist Edward J. Kempf in 1920 for a condition of "panic due to the pressure of uncontrollable perverse sexual cravings". Kempf classified this condition as an acute pernicious dissociative disorder, meaning that it involved a disruption in typical perception and memory functions of an individual. It is no longer recognized by the DSM.</p> <p>A condition to which arises when one individual spends too much time with another individual of the same sex in a confined space for an extended period of time.</p> <p>Irrational homophobia.</p> <p>The "homosexual panic" defense involves a criminal defendant's attempt to justify assaultive/murderous behavior against a LGBTQIA victim by blaming the crime on a reaction to the victim's LGBTQIA status or expression. "Homosexual panic" is too restrictive of a term for the defense, however, as this prejudicial excuse is being used in cases to demean and harm LGBTQIA, not just homosexual, victims.</p> <p>Because I am a sitting judge, I regret that I cannot respond to this question under multiple canons of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct.</p> <p>The severe anxiety felt by homophobes in the presence of perceived homosexuals or homosexuality. Usually a result of being closeted, too.</p> <p>It is a bogus excuse for hate crimes.</p> <p>Originally (but no longer) a recognized medical condition, this is a legal defense usually used where a victim of a crime allegedly makes purportedly undesired sexual advances upon a person of the same sex; some people believe this is a viable defense to violent conduct. Texas (like many other states and the federal government) has introduced a bill proposing to ban the use of the defense in courts.</p> <p>Fear of same sex relationships</p> <p>This question may be referring to a mitigating legal defense used in criminal cases of assault upon people in the LGBTQIA community - it is not a viable legal defense and should not be entertained by the Court.</p> <p>It means we have more work to do!!</p> <p>Homosexual panic is a term used by some to justify their own aggressive behavior in a criminal setting. It is not a valid legal defense, and one I believe rooted in prejudice.</p>
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Candidate Questionnaire Responses
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Chief Justice, 3rd CCA	
Darlene Byrne	I do not know. I can only speculate that many LGBTQ individuals have suffered a great deal of trauma in their lives and I would assume that some of this childhood and adult trauma may result in "homosexual panic."
Keith Hampton	It is a common tactic of the right wing to create code words and clever phrases to disguise and cover its true purposes. "Homosexual panic" is one of those unsubtle inventions, and is a debunked justification for violence against gay men. It is not a defense in Texas.
53rd District	
Maria Cantu Hexsel	"Homosexual panic" is an outdated defense which allows for violence and discrimination to be perpetrated against LGBTQIA members of our community. Although the American Bar Association passed a resolution in 2013 banning this defense, the State of Texas has not passed a ban. There is still work to do to ensure our courts remove all implicit bias from its system.
Kennon Wooten	Due to ethical restrictions applicable to judicial candidates in the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct, I am unable to answer this particular question. My apologies.
167th District	
Dayna Blazey	This is something that has been used as a legal defense under Texas law to reduce a sentence against a person convicted of murder when the victim is LGBTQIA+. Some states have disallowed this as a defense. Because this is an issue that is likely to come before me as a criminal court judge, I am precluded from commenting further by Canon 5 of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct.
David Wahlberg	This is a term sometimes used to describe an extra-legal defense ("I shot him because I was afraid he was going to make a pass at me"). Generally, this is a term used by bigoted individuals to attempt to justify their behavior.
200th District	
Maggie Ellis	It was a terrible period of time characterizing homosexuality as a mental disorder. The gay panic defense, which is a "temporary insanity" defense for assaulting or killing a person who is a member of the LGBTQI+ community has taken its place. It is not only harmful to LGBTQI+ individuals, but it also condones continued discrimination through an attempt to legitimize hateful practices and beliefs.
Jessica Mangrum	As a judicial candidate, I cannot comment on issues that may come in front of the 200th District Court. The law must be applied without regard to race, creed, gender, or gender orientation. As judge, I will follow the law, including Obergefell v. Hodges (right to marry is fundamental and protected by the due process and equal protection clauses). I will be fair and impartial in each case that comes before me.

Candidate Questionnaire Responses
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353rd District	
Tim Sulak	"Homosexual panic" had been listed as a psychiatric disorder before it was removed by the medical community. It has more recently come to describe a non-legal defense to crimes committed against LGBT victims, as a temporary loss of self-control allegedly in reaction to perceived sexual advances.
390th District	
Albert Amado	This is a defense tactic - not a standalone defense - that has been used as an attempt to justify violent actions taken by a defendant against a victim, including murder. This tactic has been denounced by the American Bar Association and many states as victim blaming and an expression that LGBTQ+ lives matter less than other lives.
Julie Kocurek	"Homosexual panic" in some jurisdictions is a legal defense to justify violence against an individual who identifies as LGBTQ+. This defense is offensive to me because it suggests that a person's gender or sexual orientation makes them a threat to society or a person's safety. I also feel as though it can lead to increased hate crimes against the LGBTQ community.
460th District	
Selena Alvarenga	Fearmongering. Powerful people have always stoked hatred and fear of things they do not understand in order to advance their own agendas. This in turn can lead to people using that "fear" as an excuse to engage in acts of violence against our community.
Amy Meredith	Unfortunately this is an issue that often times gets raised in criminal cases. Although it is not a qualified defense, I believe as a judicial candidate I cannot answer this question. As a part of my job as legislative liaison for the DA's office, I worked closely with Representative Hinojosa's office on legislation that was filed regarding this issue. HB 3281 but it was unfortunately left in committee this past session.
County Court at Law 4	
Tanisa Jeffers	"Homosexual panic" references the mental diagnosis given to homosexual people in the past when attitudes regarding homosexuality were much more archaic and discriminatory. This term is no longer in use because I believe that changing perceptions regarding LGBT+ individuals has led to society being more accepting of the LGBT+ community. I can not comment on issues that may come before Court 4, but I will commit to following the law without regard to race, creed, gender or sexual orientation and I commit to being fair and impartial in all cases that come before me.
Margaret Chen Kircher	Homosexual panic is an antiquated, dog whistle used in the past as a defense for individuals who discriminated and conducted violence against individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+. This defense should have no bearing in modern court proceedings.

Candidate Questionnaire Responses
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Dimple Malhotra	"Homosexual panic" has been used in the legal world as a defense or justification to the commission of violent offenses including homicides against members of the LGBTQ community. This defense is rooted in homophobia and is not valid in any circumstance.
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Question 10	If elected, how would you stay informed of the concerns and interest of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex citizens?
Chief Justice, Supreme Ct	
Amy Meachum	I think that best way to do this on the bench is to continue to attend events with and continue to collaborate with LGBT+ groups, especially those that focus on areas in he law: LGBT Law Section of the State Bar of Texas, LGBT section of the Austin Bar, Equality Texas, the newly formed Texas House LGBTQ Caucus, etc.
Jerry Zimmerer	I am and will continue to be a member of LGBTQ organizations. I try to stay abreast of current events and follow articles that involve LGBTQ issues.
Supreme Ct, PL 6	
Kathy Cheng	I believe community engagement and outreach are integral to understanding the concerns and needs of the citizens of our community. As such, I will continue to engage my LGBTQ constituents and also make it known that my office door is always open to all citizens of our community with their concerns.
Larry Praeger	I would try to meet with representatives of all groups. Although I am prohibited by the code of judicial ethics from discussing pending litigation, there is no prohibition from attending meetings or listening to the concerns of the community.
Supreme Ct, PL 7	
Brandy Voss	I would seek out and communicate with LGBTQIA leaders regularly, and I would attend club meetings when possible.
Staci Williams	While I cannot discuss specific cases as a sitting judge, I intend to communicate regularly with the LGBTQIA community and other stakeholders. Additionally, I will continue to participate in annual Pride Parades and Pride events, and attend and participate in LAMBDA Legal events to the extent allowed by the canons of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct.
Supreme Ct, PL 8	
Peter Kelly	I already am in regular contact with good friends who are leaders in that community in Houston; of course I will continue those friendships and listen to their concerns. Will also work with LGBTQIA bar groups to hear their issues and concerns.
Gisela Triana	Through Glen Maxey, Rich Bailey, and other LGBTQ leaders throughout the state.

Candidate Questionnaire Responses
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CCA, PL 3	
William Demond	I would remain open to hearing from any respected community representatives on any relevant issue and would seek advice or counsel where appropriate. By way of example, I believe transgendered people could foreseeably face unique issues concerning their conditions of confinement and have reached out to TransTexas for an education in this respect; I expect to receive same in January 2020.
Elizabeth Frizell	Stay connected to Stonewall and other LBGQT organizations active in the community.
Dan Wood	I would continue to engage with people of the LGBTQIA community and attend events and meetings to stay informed, as well as be open to meetings when in office.
CCA, PL4	
Tina Clinton	I have friends, organizations (i.e. Stonewall, Lambda Legal, Resouce Center, GLBT Chamber of Commerce, and more), the Voice, and the LGBT Bar Association to whom I look to for informed conversation.
CCA, PL 9	
Brandon Birmingham	I attend SDD meetings, and follow various groups on social media. I also believe in being accessible to all groups and routinely share my personal cell phone with anyone who wants it (214-995-8520). I also have an open door policy in my Court.
Chief Justice, 3rd CCA	
Darlene Byrne	I would remain connected by staying connected to organizations like the Stonewall Democrats, by reading about the issues and by staying in tune and in touch with my friends who are members of the LGBTQ community.
Keith Hampton	I would be more than informed. I would be vigilant in my review of court decisions that impact historically marginalized, criminalized and disadvantaged minorities. I consider judicial attention to these matters as part of the job description of a Justice of the Third Court of Appeals.
53rd District	
Maria Cantu Hexsel	I will to stay up-to-date on all legal decisions related to the due process clause, equal protection, right to privacy, and how these decisions affect issues for the LGBTQIA community. I would implement an open door policy to continue having conversations with community members, close friends, and family who are part of the LGBTQIA community.
Kennon Wooten	I would (1) stay involved with the Stonewall Democrats of Austin; (2) continue to attend events coordinated by the LGBT Law Section of the Austin Bar Association, Equality Texas, and the LGBT Chamber of Commerce; (3) continue to read about, and listen to, the concerns and interests of these citizens; and (4) maintain my friendships with lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, pansexual, and intersex citizens.

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167th District	
Dayna Blazey	I have a proven track record of working with activists, community groups, and nonprofits throughout my career and as judge I would work with folks in the LGBTQIA+ community to ensure we are removing disparities and barriers to justice as relates to them. This would include attending LGBTQ Bar functions and CLEs on this topic, meeting with stakeholders, and participating in community events.
David Wahlberg	I will continue to be informed through my friendships and associations with members of the LGBTQ community and by meeting with representative groups.
200th District	
Maggie Ellis	I would continue to attend celebrations, conferences, seminars, and meetings related to LGBTQI+ issues. I would also continue working with LGBTQI+ youth and supporting organizations that champion LGBTQI+ rights.
Jessica Mangrum	I would stay involved in this group, Equality Texas, Human Rights Campaign, the LGBT Section of the Austin Bar Association, and other LGBTQIA groups that are promoting awareness and education. As a candidate, I have formed personal relationships with many people who are LGBTQIA and will continue to listen and learn about the issues facing the community.
353rd District	
Tim Sulak	My LGBT friends and relatives are a source of perspective and knowledge as are the media outlets that provide unbiased reporting.
390th District	
Albert Amado	Continuing to stay abreast of news related to the LGBTQ+ community and attending LGBTQ+ events locally, statewide and nationally.
Julie Kocurek	If re-elected, I will stay informed about the concerns and interests of LBGQTQIA by reading and researching precedents set in local, state, and federal court. I would also stay informed by talking to friends of mine that are a part of this important community. If invited to events by LGBTQIA interest groups, I try to attend as my schedule permits.
460th District	
Selena Alvarenga	I can't do it alone. I will continue to follow and participate with the people and groups fighting for the interests of LGBTQ+ people from the national to the grassroots levels.
Amy Meredith	I am lucky to call several LGBTQIA+ leaders my friends so that is first and foremost. But staying involved in community organizations, being available as an elected official when my expertise would be needed but mainly continuing to have a presence in our community that I have always been involved with.

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County Court at Law 4	
Tanisa Jeffers	I would also attend the Stonewall Democrats meetings, stay abreast of meetings and happenings at Austin Black Pride and of course keep in contact with my gay and lesbian friends here in Austin and all over the state of Texas. The Austin Chronicle's LGBT Column is also interesting reading.
Margaret Chen Kircher	If elected Judge, I will stay up to date on all legal precedents involving local, state and federal cases. I plan to have an open line of communication and be available for meetings with any LGBTQIA+ community members.
Dimple Malhotra	If elected, I have a duty to stay informed and knowledgeable about the concerns and interests of the LGBTQIA+ community. It is important that all judges work with other stakeholders in the community to ensure that cases involving members of the LGBTQIA+ community are treated with the same sensitivity and diligence as any other case.

Question 11	Have you attended other events in the LGBTQIA community? Which events?
Chief Justice, Supreme Ct	
Amy Meachum	Yes . Over the years, I have attended the OutYouth Glitz Gala, the AIDS Walk of Austin, Equality Texas fundraisers and events, LBGT Bar events, and I have proudly presided over some prominent weddings for local same-sex couples both in court and in local establishments, and I have presided over numerous same-sex adoption ceremonies, as well.
Jerry Zimmerer	Many in the Houston LGBTQ Community: Houston GLBT Caucus Gay Pride Parade and Float Gay Veterans Association
Supreme Ct, PL 6	
Kathy Cheng	Yes. Pride Parades, LGBTQ meetings, parties and endorsement events.
Larry Praeger	Yes. Gay Pride Parade. When I was running in 2010, I appeared at several Stonewall-sponsored events, after receiving their endorsement.
Supreme Ct, PL 7	
Brandy Voss	I live in McAllen, Texas, and unfortunately, there are not many LGBTQIA events in my local area. I have attended several pride celebrations around the country, including in New York and Rhode Island, and I have attended a Stonewall Democrats meeting in Dallas.

Candidate Questionnaire Responses
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Staci Williams	I have attended the annual Dallas Pride Parade for a number of years, as well as other pride events. I have had my own entry in the Dallas Pride Parade for as long as I have served as a state district court judge. I have attended many events hosted or sponsored by the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas County, LAMBDA Legal, and other similar organizations.
Supreme Ct, PL 8	
Peter Kelly	Yes, in Houston I have been to a number of event in that community--as noted above, are number of my friends are active.
Gisela Triana	Yes. I have attended and supported several HRC events and Austin LGBT Bar Association functions.
CCA, PL 3	
William Demond	I have (pre-candidacy) attended several Houston GLBT Caucus endorsement meetings. Although not technically an event, I was also a voter protection attorney during the 2018 election and received information that a Precinct Judge was preventing voters from bringing the Caucus's endorsement cards into the polling place. I promptly went to that location and the problem was resolved.
Elizabeth Frizell	I attend Dallas Stonewall Democrats meetings and events. The most recent event was the Dallas Stonewall Democrat's Christmas Party.
Dan Wood	I attended the Gay Pride Parade in Dallas. I have attended meetings of the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas. I attended the LGBT caucus after party at the Democratic State Convention. I have attended events at the private homes of gay and lesbian couples.
CCA, PL4	
Tina Clinton	Yes. Most Stonewall meetings and events including the Democratic State Convention events held every two years, Lambda Legal galas and events, Pride parades, Lambda Weekly (radio) and Halloween events.
CCA, PL 9	
Brandon Birmingham	I have attended numerous SDD meetings over the years, and am currently a member. I have done block walking and phone banking with SDD, too. I was honored to participate in a panel discussion on Same Sex Intimate Partner Domestic Violence at the Cathedral of Hope Church in Dallas in 2017. I am a usual participant and sponsor of the Pride Parade in Dallas.
Chief Justice, 3rd CCA	
Darlene Byrne	Yes. I have attended Stonewall Democratic club meetings, numerous Gay Pride parades, weddings for friends in the community, LGBTQIA festivals, and Dragoween events.

Candidate Questionnaire Responses
Judicial

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<p>Keith Hampton</p>	<p>I enjoyed many Stonewall Democrat events all over Texas as a state candidate for an office no Democrat could win. More recently, I attended the Texas State Bar LGBT Committee seminar featuring speakers recounting their experiences as transgender lawyers and judges, and had a great time at the post-seminar party on June 22, 2018.</p>
<p>53rd District Maria Cantu Hexsel</p>	<p>Yes, I have attended the Austin PRIDE parade, Intersex Awareness Day at Austin City Hall, a number of meetings hosted by the Stonewall Democrats of Austin, and other organized events for progressive causes and organizations that promote equality and protections such as the Texas Freedom Network, Planned Parenthood and Annie's List.</p>
<p>Kennon Wooten</p>	<p>Yes, I have attended (1) Pride festivals, parades, and parties; (2) LGBT Law Section events; (3) a wedding between friends; (4) drag shows; (5) the first Intersex Awareness Day gathering in Austin; (6) the Equality Texas & Circle Brewing PRIDE Can Release party in Austin; and (7) an LGBT Chamber of Commerce event featuring legislators within the LGBTQIA+ community.</p>
<p>167th District Dayna Blazey</p>	<p>Yes. I have attended past pride parades in Austin and Vancouver, LGBTQ Bar events, CLEs involving hate crimes and other relevant topics, and diversity trainings.</p>
<p>David Wahlberg</p>	<p>Yes. In addition to Stonewall and LGBTQ Bar Association meetings i have marched in the pride parade and attended various social events.</p>
<p>200th District Maggie Ellis</p>	<p>Yes, I have attended LGBT Continuing Legal Education classes and Austin Pride Parade as well as events and galas hosted by: LGBT Chamber of Commerce, OutYouth, Equality Texas, HRC Federal Leaders appreciation, HRC Women LEAD, and Queer Women in Leadership. I also had a fundraiser at Oil Can Harry's with activist Drag Queens interested in supporting LGBTQI+ candidates.</p>
<p>Jessica Mangrum</p>	<p>I have attended a number of events by the LGBT Section of the Austin Bar Association. I attended the City's first ever Intersex Awareness Day at City Hall. I plan to continue to be involved in Stonewall Democrats and to join in the annual Pride Parade and to remain connected to the LBGT Section of the Austin Bar Association.</p>
<p>353rd District Tim Sulak</p>	<p>I have always found the LGBT Bar Association Awards/Grants Event to be uplifting and worthy of support.</p>
<p>390th District Albert Amado</p>	<p>Yes. The Austin LGBT Chamber of Commerce, OutYouth, Lambda Legal, LGBT Law Section of the State Bar of Texas and the LGBTQ+ law groups at South Texas College of Law Houston and The University of Texas School of Law.</p>

Candidate Questionnaire Responses
Judicial

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460th District	Julie Kocurek	Unfortunately, I have never attended a LGBTQIA event, however, I hope to attend more of them in the near future.
	Selena Alvarenga	Pride parades and other celebrations. Contributed to organizations like HRC, Equality Texas and the Austin LGBT Chamber.
	Amy Meredith	I was proud to 2nd the Motion with the Austin Bar Association to have the LGBT section added to the Austin Bar Association. I have attended several of those meetings/events and had a great time at the Gay Pride Parade. I am a proud Stonewall member and I also stay very active with friends and community leaders that are LGBTIA+.
County Court at Law 4	Tanisa Jeffers	Yes, I have attended the Austin Pride Fest once and the Austin Black Pride Fest once. I have also referred several clients to the Austin Black Pride Facebook Group and webpage. In my 20 years of practice, I had had several African American parents, as well as adults new to Austin, contact me for information regarding the black Austin LGBT+ community. I have been proud to refer them to this group. The African American church, a common social gathering place for African Americans, was not so accepting of black gay and lesbian people in the past. I am grateful to say that has changed a lot in recent years, especially here in Austin.
	Margaret Chen Kircher	I have attended the Austin Pride parade throughout the years. In addition, I have joined many other non-political, LGBT+ events that my close friends have invited me to participate in.
	Dimple Malhotra	I attended the inaugural meeting of the LGBT law section of the Austin Bar Association in the fall of 2019. Due to my advocacy and support of the LGBTQIA+ community, I was asked to officiate the wedding ceremony of two incredible women last year. It was an honor to be a part of the ceremony and a memory that I cherish. I have also attended PRIDE parades in San Francisco and Amsterdam.