VOTER GUIDE

ADVOCATES FOR BRYAN CITIZENS

A nonpartisan voter guide to candidates appearing on
the November 2020 General Election Ballot

- Every candidate, in a contested race, affecting Bryan residents, was invited to prepare and submit responses to the same questions in each race. These candidates responded. This is intended to inform the voter. ABC does not endorse candidates. Statements provided by the candidates have not been altered or checked for accuracy.

UNITED STATES CONGRESS DISTRICT 17

Rick Kennedy

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What actions should Congress take to address the consequential damages caused by the pandemic?

The pandemic has shown that safety nets are necessary to keep American families and small business whole in times of trouble. I will fight for a living wage for workers on the lower end of the pay scale who were overnight recognized as "essential" to our economy. I'll also fight to make sure safety nets remain in place but will also fight against tax increases on the working and middle classes to pay for these services.

In light of the ongoing pandemic, how would you address the issue of healthcare and insurance?

The coronavirus pandemic shows how desperately America needs health care reform. I support creating a public option to enroll in Medicare for every American who wants it.A public option will:

- Achieve universal coverage – especially important in rural areas where the uninsured rate is high.
- Address uncompensated care for hospitals, a significant contributor to rural hospital closures.
- NOT eliminate private insurance. If you are happy with your employer sponsored insurance, you won't be forced to give it up
- Preserve the protections for those with preexisting conditions achieved under the ACA
- Provide relief from the threat of medical bill-induced bankruptcy – the leading cause of personal bankruptcy in the US.
- Empower Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices.

- A public option is a practical, achievable next step that will address many of the issues with our health care system.

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Do you support or oppose the Electoral College? Please discuss your reasons.

I believe it is time to eliminate the electoral college. In its current state, the electoral college

- Disenfranchises millions of Americans whose are not in the dominant party in "solid red" and "solid blue" states
- Discourages voter participation through said disenfranchisement.
- Allows presidential candidates to focus on and campaign in just a few "battleground" states.
- Gives lower population density states a disproportionate impact on the presidential election

By eliminating the electoral college and electing the president based on popular vote, we would

- Encourage voter participation – every vote counts.
- Force presidential candidates to campaign nationally
- Eliminate the disproportionate impact of low population density states in electing the president
- Maintain the disproportionate representation of low population density states in the Senate – important to assure the high population density states don't overrun lower density states legislatively.

What is your proposal for immigration reform?

The last time Congress addressed our immigration laws, Ronald Reagan was in the White House. The world has changed dramatically in the last 33 years, our immigration policies have not. It's time to stop exploiting this issue for political gain and implement a comprehensive revision of our immigration system that both meets our economic and security needs and reflects our values as a society. The pillars of such a plan would be:

- Treat all asylum seekers with basic human dignity and respect and process their claims in a timely manner
- Secure our borders and ports of entry with a portfolio of technology and human resource-based solutions
- Emphasize interior enforcement through mandatory pre-hiring E-Verify checks and prosecution of employers who fail to comply
- A path to citizenship for many of our 10.5 million undocumented residents who have lived among us for more than a decade, that focuses on security and brings them fully into the fold of our communities
- A comprehensive plan to address the security and economic issues across our hemisphere that are driving migration
- It is time to elect responsible leaders willing to make the hard choices necessary to resolve our immigration issue.

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What is your proposal to address climate change?

The time to argue over the validity of climate change predictions is over. The time to act is now.
As your Congressman I would support a carbon dividend and fee policy similar to the one proposed by the Climate Leadership Council. Such a plan would provide market incentives to businesses and individuals to reduce carbon emissions and provide funding for research into clean energy alternatives – research that will lead to technology improvements that would make utility scale clean energy production more economically feasible right here in Central Texas.

The challenge is massive in scale and complexity. It will require multiple solutions. We must research and be prepared to implement other technology solutions like large scale carbon sequestration as well as explore the potential role nuclear energy might play as a bridge to an all-renewable future.

Name one issue facing Texans that could be favorably resolved by compromise from your own party, in Congress.

The hyperbolic rhetoric of "defund the police" and the corresponding "when you call 911, nobody will answer" warnings are symptomatic of our hyper-partisan and fragmented media markets and political atmosphere. This rhetoric drowns out the more thoughtful voices who wish to acknowledge the problem and develop solutions in an effective way.

The quality of policing in our communities may very well be improved by shifting some funding towards other community services such as mental health. But we need to determine the root causes of the issues, be they systemic racism, over-militarization of police forces, the need for guidelines and training on de-escalation and use of force, or many other possibilities, and apply corrections systematically, while assuring that we maintain the safety and security of our communities.

Everything must be exposed to bright sunlight. Marginalized & traumatized communities must be listened to. I believe we can turn this moment of social upheaval into a giant step forward, but we must be thoughtful in our approach.

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What actions should Congress take to address the consequential damages caused by the pandemic?

People can protect themselves from COVID if given accurate information. Much of the economic and social trauma we are experiencing is from government-imposed lockdowns, business closures, and arbitrary decrees. Most of this has happened at the state and local level and must be reversed. I believe in personal freedom and economic freedom. There are no pandemic exceptions to the Constitution. We have to be sure our freedoms aren't taken away for good. Executive emergency powers must be severely restricted from here forward and be valid only for a week or two for major events like natural disasters. Some government assistance has actually gone to individuals and small businesses that have been harmed by the pandemic, but too much has gone to major corporations to the tune of $1 trillion stolen from taxpayers. As is usual, big contributors get plenty of favors from Congress. But these levels of spending and debt ($26 trillion national debt) are not sustainable and will notably damage our economy for years to come. I advocate major cuts in federal spending and regulation across the board in every department, program, and agency.

In light of the ongoing pandemic, how would you address the issue of healthcare and insurance?

Government bureaucracies and regulations have slowed down COVID testing, mask availability, and health care availability from the beginning. Universal testing is needed so people will know how best to protect themselves. Let's use tests from other countries. Let's allow foreign doctors and nurses to practice in the U. S. so there won't be a shortage of healthcare workers. With a contagious disease, we have to be sure anyone who is infected can be treated, so as not to spread the disease further. In general, though, there is too much government involvement in health care, which has driven up the cost and limited consumer choice. People should be able to buy health insurance across state lines; and buy prescription drugs from foreign countries if they are less expensive. Health Savings Accounts (HSA) should be expanded, so that people can put aside money tax-free for future medical expenses. We need free-market solutions, not government solutions.

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Do you support or oppose the Electoral College? Please discuss your reasons.

The U. S. is a Constitutional republic, not a democracy, so the Electoral College makes sense. We should be sure a president has broader support than in just the most densely populated areas. But that doesn't mean the states have to award their electors winner-take-all. They could split them depending on who wins each congressional district (like Maine and Nebraska do) or apportion them based on the percentage of popular vote.

What is your proposal for immigration reform?

I am a strong supporter of immigrants, whom I believe are an asset to this country. Both of my grandfathers were immigrants. It needs to be easier to come to the U. S. legally, rather than jumping through the insane hoops put up by the federal government. The young people in the DACA program (the "Dreamers") should be granted immediate citizenship. They have grown up here and are as American as anyone. We need a guest worker program, so people can come here to work for short periods of time and go back and forth easily between countries. Finally, the H1B visa program for high-tech workers should not have a numerical limit. Businesses should be able to hire talented employees from anywhere in the world, without worrying about immigration status.

What is your proposal to address climate change?

Climate is always changing for natural reasons and now by human activity as well. The question is what to do about it. Most of the proposals presented by so-called experts would seriously damage modern industrial economies and still not do much to lower emissions and keep temperatures from rising. Certainly using alternative forms of energy would help. Nuclear power is often passed over in these discussions, but it has been used all over the world for decades and is a relatively clean energy without damaging emissions. There just must be care and caution dealing with nuclear waste. I do favor a free market in energy. The problem is that government seeks to give too much help to some energy types and tries to hinder other energy types. We would be better off keeping government out of the energy field altogether. It is worth noting, however, that energy independence is a national security issue, so we must be sure of having adequate energy sources of whatever type.

Name one issue facing Texans that could be favorably resolved by compromise from your own party, in Congress.

The question assumes that Democrats and Republicans fail to work together, which is true, unless of course it is to appropriate obscene amounts of money for various programs at taxpayer expense. However, as a Libertarian, I believe I can work with Democrats on some issues and Republicans on others. There is one Libertarian in Congress now, Rep. Justin Amash of Michigan. He has proposed a bill to end qualified immunity for police officers so they can be sued for their misdeeds, and it has been co-sponsored by both Democrats and Republicans. However, Speaker Nancy Pelosi won't allow it to be voted on. As for me, I will work with anyone to promote personal freedom, economic freedom, limited government, and anti-war policies. Sadly, there are not very many members of Congress who believe in the same principles that I do. But one must work with what is available.

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BRAZOS COUNTY ATTORNEY

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In light of Covid-19, what is your position regarding release of low-level prisoners, and ticketing in lieu of arrest? Please explain.

The decision as to releasing prisoners must be made on a case by case basis. The most important determining factor should be the defendant's (prisoner's) potential risk to the community. Crimes of violence require higher bonds and conditions of release which ensure the safety of our citizens. Assaultive cases must include a "no-contact" with the victim clause. Serious DWI offenses should include conditions requiring the defendant to submit to urinalysis testing to ensure that the defendant is not continuing to drink and drive. The Judicial system and law enforcement have limited resources. We must prioritize such resources toward the dangerous offenders in our community. In certain cases, low-risk offenders may be granted a PR (Personal recognizance) bond freeing up space in our jails for the violent offenders. Law enforcement must also deal with limited resources. Cite & release policies should be used in very limited situations where the officer believes that the offender poses no threat to the community.

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What practices in the County Attorney's office need improvement, and what is your proposal?

Each and every criminal case requires a number of court settings. Court settings provide an opportunity for the prosecutor and defense attorney to discuss the case in an effort to reach a disposition. Each court setting requires the attendance of numerous individuals within the justice system. Court settings are necessary but also costly. Numerous court settings result in higher overall costs to the county. My goal is to reduce the number of court settings in an effort to reduce such high costs to the county.

Discuss what is best about the Brazos County Attorney's office that you will continue and improve.

We are fortunate to have a County Attorney's Office comprised of hard working and dedicated prosecutors and staff. As with most government entities, we have limited resources at the County Attorney's Office. Limited resources necessitate that we continually seek to improve upon how efficient we are in every aspect of the office. We must prioritize which cases get the most attention. Cases that effect the safety of the community must always be a priority. DWI's, Assaults and Family Violence cases must be dealt with first and foremost. These cases must be handled in a way that the criminal behavior does not repeat itself. I bring to the office decades of experience.

Over the last 21+ years, I have prosecuted and defended a variety of cases ranging from DWI to Capital Murder. Such experience gives me a unique perspective as to how both sides view and analyze criminal cases.

The County Attorney's office must have a leader who possesses such vast experience. No matter how good a prosecutor's office may be, there is always room for improvement. I hope to improve upon what is already great. I will continue to seek improvement in every aspect of the office.

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BRAZOS COUNTY SHERIFF

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Discuss what is best about the Brazos County Sheriff's Office, that you will continue and improve.

The Brazos County Sheriff's Office is recognized as a leader in law enforcement and corrections both statewide and nationally. The recognition is the result of innovation made possible by strong leadership based on integrity, commitment, and professionalism. We will continue to promote a culture of service to guide our work and to protect the community. We will embrace innovation to make our operations more efficient and our community safer.

In light of Covid-19, what is your position regarding release of low-level prisoners, and ticketing in lieu of arrest? Please explain.

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the criminal justice system. Officers responding to calls for service must assess each citizen contact to determine if COVID-19 is a factor. The jail must screen each arrestee and every employee as the first step in an effort to maintain a safe environment. The courts transitioned to conducting more hearings using video. Our criminal justice system and community as a whole made changes in response to the pandemic.

In an effort to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19, the Sheriff's Office worked closely with judges and prosecutors to implement the use of personal bonds for low-level offenders. We also made a request to local law enforcement agencies to use alternatives to arrest when possible to help reduce the jail population and potential exposures. These efforts reduced the jail population and provided staff with the ability to create cohort groups at admission and effectively quarantine inmates with possible exposures. I believe these measures are an important element in our response to COVID-19.

In light of allegations of law enforcement profiling, brutality and discriminatory practices across the state and country, what steps, if any, do you propose for Brazos County?

I believe our local law enforcement agencies have a good relationship with the community. These relationships are built on trust and rely on open communication with a common goal that every citizen must be treated fairly and respectfully without bias or discrimination. Citizen complaints are investigated and taken seriously. Every relationship requires work and commitment to grow.

I believe we can take some steps that will continue to grow the relationship with the community. The Brazos County Sheriff's Office has been and will continue to be committed to providing officer education and working to identify best practices. We are proud of our culture of service to the community and will work to maintain that philosophy. I believe it is important to engage our community at times other than when taking law enforcement action. Working with citizens and community leaders regularly to resolve issues and concerns will maintain trust and understanding. These relationships will promote understanding when we are faced with extraordinary challenges.

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In light of Covid-19, what is your position regarding release of low-level prisoners, and ticketing in lieu of arrest? Please explain.

Yes, do "release low-level prisoners." But do not release them just because of Covid-19. Release all prisoners that were arrested for non-violent offences, such as marijuana possession. Exception, those who have missed three court appearances, can be arrested and jailed to ensure they attend their next court date. Also note, any Sheriff who believes federal drug laws are unconstitutional (and they are) should refuse to arrest anyone who breaks an unconstitutional law. Unfortunately, almost all Sheriffs believe they are subservient to federal officials, when, in fact, it is federal officials who are subservient to them. Federal Agents have to get the Sheriff's permission to do any lawful police business in their county.

In light of allegations of law enforcement profiling, brutality and discriminatory practices across the state and country, what steps, if any, do you propose for Brazos County?

"Allegations of law enforcement profiling, brutality and discriminatory practices across the state and county" would have no effect on my policies as Sheriff. My policy would be to ensure any deputy (including myself) is "thoroughly" investigated, if they cause physical harm to anyone, which covers "brutality." "Profiling" is a necessary requirement for limiting the the pool of suspects. "Discriminatory practices" is a crime and will be investigated. If I catch any deputy withholding, distorting, lying, planting false evidence &/or destroying evidence, I would do everything I can to make their career short, with jail time. If law enforcement is allowed to break the law, there is no law, just tyranny.

Discuss what is best about the Brazos County Sheriff's Office, that you will continue and improve.

"What is best about the Brazos County Sheriffs Office," is their custom of promoting from within, usually with their deputies starting as jailers. I suspect this is why the Sheriff's Department has less turnover even though their deputies get paid less than policeman. I probably would not be able to "improve" on this. Of course, having well trained officers is important and I would look at that carefully, while lowering the Sheriffs budget. I would be able to lower the budget by using legal ways not to arrest or jail most non-violent offenders.

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BRAZOS COUNTY
COUNTY COMMISSIONER PRECINCT 2

Russ Ford
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Do you believe that Brazos County has appropriately handled the pandemic.
I believe the County and County Officials have responded in good faith during the pandemic. While hindsight is always 20/20 they have made every efforts to do the right thing I feel now, in hindsight, that the decision to open bars was a mistake and I would have liked to see the directive on masks to come out sooner. Fauci initially stated that masks were not effective and then reversed that. I feel that we are blessed to live here, I refer to Brazos Co as the "land of opportunity". We have had a lower number of cases per capita of covid-19 than other regions of the state. While I think we should have been more pro-active, I think we have communicated well on the number of cases and our hospitals have not been overwhelmed. My overall grade is B+

During a pandemic, the Brazos County Health Dept. was forced to make cuts, due to a budget shortfall. How should this be addressed by Commissioners Court?
One of the cities cut funding to the Health Dept because of budget shortfalls due to Covid-19. This resulted in a layoff of 5% of staff. The County used Cares Act funding to give those employees until the end of 2020 to find other employment. If elected, I would propose a "rainy day fund" for essential services during a pandemic. Emergency planning in the future should consider a pandemic and keep the Health Dept fully funded. I do believe that any organization, even the county has about 5% that could be cut from the budget without effecting service. These efficiencies should be identified and addressed to keep our tax rates low and the quality of life the same.

Most governmental entities are facing fiscal difficulties, even though the pandemic has been known at least six months. What actions would you take to resolve the health and financial crisis upon taking office?
As one voting member if the Commissioner's Court, my first action would be to look at the departments and determine if there are any economies to be realized. Secondly, I would work to develop a management approach that rewarded departments which returned unused dollars at the end of each fiscal year. Lastly, I would work with purchasing to streamline bidding of the county's work to help the county get the maximum value for each dollar spent. The pandemic has proven the need for a rainy-day fund just as the state of Texas has for unexpected occurrences.

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BRYAN CITY COUNCIL
SINGLE MEMBER DISTRICT 4

Since the reopening of schools, the pandemic positivity rates have increased
again. What is the role of local government to address the issue?

It is the responsibility of the local government to set up a plan to follow when a catastrophic medical event such as Covid 19 occurs. The plan must follow guidelines established by experts such as BISD, CDC, local medical resources, fire departments and police departments. The plan should include response to
the needs of the students during the pandemic and recovery from the pandemic.

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Is it fiscally responsible for local government to spend monies on nonessential services and projects during the pandemic? Why or why not?
It is not fiscally responsible for local government to spend monies on non-essential services. We have learned, during this pandemic, the economic devastation created when people stay home to avoid exposure to Covid 19 and the spread of the virus. Money spent on non-essential services should be used to support businesses and citizens by helping to keep business doors open and citizens safe in their homes.

What is your position regarding the Gibbons Creek Coal Plant?
The coal plant should not be reopened. The site should be redeveloped as a revenue generating project. To that end, I have already joined an effort to renew the initiative of an alternative use for the now closed Gibbons Creek power plant in the form of the development of a state park on that site.

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Do you support expanding internet capabilities through BTU? Why or why not?

Internet service is no longer a luxury, but now a necessity. Public and private school systems now provide on-line courses. Students in rural areas do not have internet service. I have concerns about using BTU for internet services. BTU does not have the best interest of consumers in regard to electric service, so I don't believe BTU will have the best interest of customers in mind in regard to internet use. There must be a plan where all customers, regardless of ability to pay, have access to internet service through a joint effort between public and private school systems and BTU. Business owners should be a part of the plan.

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Since the reopening of schools, the pandemic positivity rates have increased again. What is the role of local government to address the issue.

The schools, particularly in Bryan ISD, have been doing a good job in their response to COVID-19. The spike in rates has been more closely related to the 18-24 year old range, which include mostly college students who have come to our community from across the state, country, and nation. Here locally, the ISDs, which have responsibility over K-12 students, and have provided options for in-person and distant learning, allowing parents to consider these options and choose what is best for their children and family, which is a good thing. In the schools, the recommended precautions seem to be in place and enforced, which is why the 5-17 year old age range has not had a significant increase in cases since school has reopened. Congratulations to our local ISDs for allowing education to continue while protecting students and staff. Finally, I appreciate the approach that the City of Bryan has taken in general. Bryan police officers have responded to COVID-19 ordinance complaints, and they have used those opportunities to educate the individuals involved.

Is it fiscally responsible for local government to spend monies on non-essential services and projects during the pandemic? Why or why not?

Fiscal responsibility is necessary for expenditures of taxpayer dollars on any services or projects whether we are experiencing a pandemic or not, and local governments cannot ignore our post-pandemic future by reducing expenditures today on what some may see as non-essential. Whether or not a service or project is essential is in the viewpoint of the individual. For instance, some think spending taxpayer dollars on parks is not as essential as spending money on first responders and infrastructure. That may seem logical, but during this pandemic, parks have played a vital role for many in the community, allowing residents of all ages desperately needed opportunities for exercise and recreation. As a result, it shows that our recent City Councils have done a good job of spending on essential programs and services, ensuring that our first responders, roads and other infrastructure, and parks and other quality of life amenities are as good as the budget allows without wasting taxpayer dollars.

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What is your position regarding the Gibbons Creek Coal Plant?

As the current chair of the BTU Board of Directors, I cannot comment directly on the Gibbons Creek Coal Plant, or TMPA, as it is a competitive matter. I will offer the following – there are sound reasons why the four city-owners of TMPA, including Bryan, decided to discontinue operating the TMPA plant. The goal of BTU is to provide the most reliable electricity to our customers at the lowest possible rates, and the continued operation of the TMPA plant was obviously no longer compatible with that goal. During my eight years as a BTU Board member, we have converted to providing electricity to our customers produced mainly by using natural gas, with solar and wind also in the mix. Finally, if the TMPA plant and property were to ever be sold to new ownership, it would be up to the new owners to decide what they would do with the plant.

Do you support expanding internet capabilities through BTU? Why or why not?

I have used Suddenlink internet services all the way back to when it was called TCA. It has its flaws just as any service providers do, and some are much more disappointed with their service than I am. That being said, the City of Bryan has recently funded a study to see if the City offering internet is feasible, and if so, what existing or new City entity should manage that service. It is prudent to wait for the results of the study before deciding whether or not the City should offer internet capabilities and if BTU or a different or new City entity should take the lead.

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BRYAN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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What is your proposal for safe education in the time of COVID-19?

My plan is as follows: listen to doctors, not demagogues. BISD must continue policies of restricting campus access only to staff and students, deep cleaning of school facilities, requiring kids on campus to wear masks to prevent the spread of COVID 19. I love that BISD is giving parents the option to keep their kids at home with online classes or keep them in classrooms with traditional learning. I am allowing my son to go back to school the second six weeks period because he learns better face to face than online. We need to support parents' decisions on how their families proceed in these troubled times but social distancing and masks are our reality until a vaccine is available.

What is your position regarding Secretary DeVos' charter school proposals, including private schools with religious affiliations?

Charter schools are unaccountable, often corrupt, and frequently inefficient private companies that drain public funds from local public schools, typically for private profit. Texas should never have legalized them. Private schools, including religious schools, should be eligible for tax exemptions if they maintain 501(c)3 non-profit status with the IRS but should never receive public funding. I oppose many gadfly policies floated by Secretary DeVos since 2017, among them 'Education Freedom Scholarships' to launder tax deductible contributions to private schools and subsidizing creation of charter schools in low income 'Opportunity Zones'. These ideologically driven distractions would destabilize public funding for accountable public schools by draining students into sub-par, corporate-owned charters. I do, however, support her plan to terminate the federal Charter Schools Program (CSP). This boondoggle has channeled over three billion taxpayer dollars into private charter schools since the 1990s, often with corruption scandals emerging before the first student ever set foot in the building. I oppose her parallel proposal to lump that funding with most other federal education programs into a block grant program for states. Funds for vulnerable groups, like homeless students, must not be diverted to other ends.

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Are there any policies or programs currently in effect in the school district, or state education, which you would like to see changed, and why?

The school to prison pipeline must be removed from Bryan ISD public schools. I will work to redirect School Resource Officer funding towards programs bringing school staff and parents together in restoring community-based discipline in our schools. Children who are not reading on level by third grade are more likely to end up in prison, according to research. Expanding Bryan ISD's programs to partner with parents to get all children up to the proper reading level by third grade will be one of my top priorities. Making sure all campuses in the district have the resources needed to offer all students a top-notch education is an on-going priority I will work to address as Trustee. The Legislature will meet soon after the election and I will work with community members to engage our Legislative delegation in advocating legislative bills to end the school to prison pipeline and increase funding.

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What is your proposal for safe education in the time of COVID-19?
Nothing is more important than maintaining the safety of our students, teachers, and staff in Bryan ISD. I am thankful for the leadership of a wonderful superintendent who has gracefully navigated the many changes in guidance from our state in the opening of schools. As a board, our goal is to support the recommendations of our district leaders, while being accountable to our community. The district has implemented a thorough and comprehensive Return to Learn plan which has resulted in a successful start to our school year. We will continue to respond and adjust as needed to changes in our schools and the community to ensure the safety of all.

What is your position regarding Secretary DeVos' charter school proposals, including private schools with religious affiliations?
The success of our public schools across the nation is the success of America as a whole. Our children are our future. I am in favor of funding our public schools in robust ways as we serve ALL children in ALL ways. Our public school districts around the nation work incredibly hard to ensure student success by transporting, feeding, educating, and nurturing children from every economic, social, and religious background. I am not in favor of supporting private schools that serve a small segment of students and are not held accountable to the high bar of state and federal school accountability systems.

Are there any policies or programs currently in effect in the school district, or state education, which you would like to see changed, and why?

There are a number of state policies that I would love to see changed. I will focus on two. First is the school accountability system. In this system, over 80% of our district score is based on one test, on one day, in the school year. Though testing is important, the high stakes nature of our current testing system is harmful to children and the school district, while being very expensive to implement. I would favor a more comprehensive and simplified accountability system that allows districts to focus on those criteria most important for long term student success as contributing citizens of the community. The second policy I would change is our complex school funding system. The current system lacks transparency and relies heavily upon local taxpayers for support.

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What is your proposal for safe education in the time of COVID-19?
Because educational needs for students vary, I believe that our school district should make every effort to provide the specific engagement according to the student's requirements. In this age of COVID-19, where strong restrictions have been placed on normal everyday activities, we must make sure that we still provide quality education while keeping students safe in the process. Remember, student's safety is just as important as their education. Therefore, because education must go on, school districts should develop options for learning that promotes safety while continuing their education. School districts should make every effort to prevent/ reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and follow the instructions of local health departments and federal government health agencies. So, if that means wearing a mask, standing six feet apart, and limiting contact, then so be it. We must take care of one another! Also, should the school become fully inaccessible during the pandemic, the district must be prepared to continue educational activities without having the students or teachers skip a beat. One way this can be overcome is by providing every student and teacher with the necessary equipment and access to technology so that education may continue even during a pandemic.

What is your position regarding Secretary DeVos' charter school proposals, including private schools with religious affiliations?
"Education is the great equalizer—it should be used to level the playing field, not to grow inequality". This was an excellent statement made by 2009-2015 U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. The U.S. Secretary of Educations' position should be to manage funding provisions so that ALL SCHOOLS will have access to quality educational resources for ALL STUDENTS. This can come by way of adequate funding. Presently, the U.S. secretary Betty DeVos desires to funnel millions of dollars away from public schools into private religious schools. This is an unfortunate action if fulfilled. Any action that takes funding away from certain schools contributes to widening the educational gap which perpetuates the susceptibility of [already] underserved schools with reduced educational resources.

Are there any policies or programs currently in effect in the school district, or state education, which you would like to see changed, and why?
One thing I would like to see improved/increased is student's financial literacy instruction. With the growing number of programs our students are becoming exposed to during high school, before they venture out into the real world, I believe they should also be equipped with real knowledge about the use of money. Money is a tool, and if not effectively used there could cause great damage that will take years to repair. I know there is an option or two regarding personal finance, and students can take the course as an elective, but money is a tool that EVERYONE will use and therefore I think there should be greater effort towards making financial literacy a requirement for ALL students and not just as an elective. For instance, developing a course dedicated to the practical process of opening a banking account, credit attainment and management, managing money in the digital age, investments, savings, stocks, bill pay, among other things should be priority. As the school district introduces more opportunities to reach our spectrum of students, we should make sure students are adequately prepared for the financial management that will be needed as they take their skills from high school into adulthood.

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What is your proposal for safe education in the time of COVID-19?

Parents and students should be given a choice, if possible, to have classes in person or online. I have supported that goal in Bryan, and it is going well. We also have a hybrid option for older students, which is a little of both.

Masks are required, as well as much social distancing as is practical. I support limits on visitors and use of block scheduling to reduce hallway traffic. Many other strategies have been discussed and approved by the board involving bus safety, how meals are served, and what the protocols are when a student or teacher tests positive for the virus. I believe the value of in person instruction, especially in light of the limitations on internet availability for many families, requires that we provide that option and do it as safely as possible.

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What is your position regarding Secretary DeVos' charter school proposals, including private schools with religious affiliations?

I must start by saying that I have been on the Bryan board for over 30 years because I believe strong public schools have been the most important factor in creating the wonderful nation we have today. If it were possible for any private school to serve all types of students, regardless of disabilities, language barriers, lack of parental support, lack of transportation, behavioral issues, and many other challenges, I would be in support of diverting educational funds from public schools to such a private school. But it simply is not possible. Furthermore, private school are not, and do not want to be, held to the same accountability standards as public schools. I can, however, support the provision of federal food assistance, technology, and other services that will assist private schools in providing educational services in the same manner as they are provided to public schools.

I agree that no child should have to go to poorly-performing school. But we should do everything in our power to strengthen struggling public schools, rather than letting them fail.

Are there any policies or programs currently in effect in the school district, or state education, which you would like to see changed, and why?

Every child in Texas should have chance for a great education. Since public schools are often the only ones willing to take on that responsibility, there must be funding equity. I served eight years on the Texas Association of School Boards Legislative Advisory Committee where I advocated for a level playing field for school districts, so every child would have a chance to attend a well-funded school. The last legislature greatly improved on school finance, but more work is needed.

There also continues to be too much standardized testing which fails to accurately measure true learning, and which can mislead the public about the quality of a particular district or school. Accountability is essential, but the measurement and recognition of quality is a very complex issue. With an obligation to educate every child, no excuses, it often takes a great amount of dedication and compassion to accomplish the smallest baby steps of success. The current system does not adequately measure and recognize these successes.

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WHEN DO I VOTE? WHERE DO I VOTE?

- EARLY VOTING
- October 13-17 (Tuesday – Sat) between 8 am and 5 pm
- October 19-23 (M-F) between 8 am and 5 pm
- October 24 (Sat) between 7 am and 7 pm
- October 25 (Sun) between 10 am and 3 pm
- October 26-30 (M-F) between 7 am and 7 pm
- ----------
- Brazos County Administration Building
- Arena Hall
- Galilee Baptist Church
- College Station Utilities Meeting and Training Facility
- Memorial Student Center on the Texas A&M campus

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ELECTION DAY
NOVEMBER 3, 2020
7 AM UNTIL 7 PM
YOU MAY VOTE AT ANY VOTE CENTER IN THE COUNTY, REGARDLESS OF YOUR PRECINCT

1 Millican Community Center
2 College Station Meeting/Training Facility
3 Galilee Baptist Church
4 Zion Church of Kurten
5 Parkway Baptist Church
6 College Heights Assembly of God Church
7 First Baptist Church, Bryan
8 Beacon Baptist Church
9 Bryan Ballroom
10 Brazos County Admin Bldg.
11 Rudder Tower Exhibit Hall
12 GW Williams Tabernacle
13 Texas A&M College of Medicine
14 Lincoln Center
15 CS City Hall
16 CS ISD Admin. Bldg.
17 Fellowship Freewill Baptist Church
18 Castle Heights Baptist Church
20 A&M Church of Christ
21 Christ United Methodist Church
22 Arena Hall
23 Brazos Center
24 Wellborn Community Ctr, Wellborn Road
25 Living Hope Baptist Church
26 Church of the Nazarene

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