



Questions for Candidates for Court of Criminal Appeals Conservative Coalition of Harris County

This questionnaire will be posted onto the Conservative Coalition of Harris County website for public voter viewing.

Candidate Name	Position for which Candidate is Running
Thomas Smith	Court of Criminal Appeals, Place 3

Please give your answer to each of the following questions and please include your rationale with each answer. Please be concise & clear.

1.

1.	Please describe the qualifications and experience that make you the best candidate for the office for which you are running. What differentiates you from your opponent (s)?
	Answer: I have the broadest base of experience of anyone running for this Court. I have served as a law clerk for the Chief Justice of a state supreme court (Ohio), where we worked on both civil and criminal matters. I have done civil practice. I have written legislation. I have served for a decade at the most conservative law firm in Texas, the Texas Attorney General's office, where for the last 5 years I have served as a Special Assistant Attorney General for Criminal Justice. This court needs someone with a perspective broader than simply serving as an assistant DA or staff lawyer, and that is why my experience will benefit this court.

2.

2.	Please describe what you believe are the most significant issues in this race and why.
	Answer: This court has embarrassed itself, endangered our electoral process, and endangered kids in recent years with its decisions. The Stephens election fraud decision put our elections in jeopardy, something that unfortunately Harris County understands all too well. I agree with the dissent in that case. This court has also stubbornly clung to 12 years of bad precedent in the Ex Parte Lo case, which declared our law prohibiting online solicitation of minors to be unconstitutional. Since then, the court has granted relief to about 90 sex offenders, and very few Texans know that. This court should have 9 solid constitutional conservatives on it, and it does not even have 5. It is badly in need of change.

3. Do you have judicial experience? To what extent have you practiced in the area of Criminal law? List the state(s) in which you are or have been licensed to practice law, and the date(s) you received such licenses.
- Answer:** I have not served as a judge. During my time as a law clerk as previously mentioned, I worked on dozens of criminal matters including death penalty cases. I have written legislation that is now part of the penal code, including the new online solicitation law that replaced the old one that this court threw out. While it's common for candidates for this court to have criminal law experience, it is not a prerequisite. The presiding judge of this court has far more civil experience than criminal law experience.
4. What carries the greatest influence in your rulings: criminal case law, the Constitution, state statutes, or other?
- Answer:** The Constitution is my first guidepost. Case law and statutes are subject to its interpretation, always.
5. How will technological advancements (such as AI, digital Court Hearings, etc.) impact the criminal court system over the next few years? What issues should the public be aware of?
- Answer:** I hope that technology enables greater efficiency over the next few years, as this court has a backlog that badly needs addressed. If there is a role that technology can play in that, then it should be considered. As is the case with many things regarding AI, the public should be concerned about the presence of AI related matters in cases as some things involving AI are not real and therefore not truthful. That has the potential to impact the outcome of cases, which could be very damaging for our legal system.

BY RETURNING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, THE CANDIDATE ASSUMES FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL ANSWERS TO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. THE ANSWERS ON THE FOREGOING REFLECT THE CANDIDATE'S BEST EFFORTS TO ANSWER THIS QUESTIONNAIRE HONESTLY AND DIRECTLY.

PLEASE SAVE YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO YOUR LOCAL MACHINE IN THE EVENT THAT THERE ARE ANY TECHNICAL PROBLEMS WHEN YOU ATTEMPT TO EMAIL IT BACK.

Once this questionnaire has been completed, please email it to:

alex@cchc-pac.org

* **Please note:** You **must** return your questionnaire from the email address to which it was sent. Questionnaires returned from any other email address will be considered fraudulent and will **not** be recorded and no answers will be published in the voter's guide. CCHC-PAC deems a return from the proper email address as authentication of the correct respondent.

ENDORSEMENTS

Please show your support by providing an endorsement for the candidacy of Thomas Smith for Texas Court of Criminal Appeals
- Place 3.

EndorseThomas

Elected officials:

- ✓ State Senator Angela Paxton
- ✓ State Rep. Mitch Little
- ✓ State Rep. Katrina Pierson
- ✓ State Rep. Nate Schatzline
- ✓ State Rep. Brent Money
- ✓ State Rep. Andy Hopper
- ✓ State Rep. Keresa Richardson
- ✓ Tarrant County Commissioner Matt Krause
- ✓ Collin County Commissioner Susan Fletcher
- ✓ Frisco City Councilman John Keating
- ✓ State Rep. Briscoe Cain
- ✓ State Rep. Tony Tinderholt
- ✓ State Rep. Shelley Luther
- ✓ State Rep Matt Morgan
- ✓ State Rep Mike Olcott
- ✓ Collin County Judge Chris Hill
- ✓ State Senator Tan Parker
- ✓ State Rep. Valoree Swanson
- ✓ Tarrant County Judge Tim O'Hare
- ✓ Collin County Constable Sammy Knapp

Conservative Leaders:

- ✓ Tami Brown Rodriguez, Vice Chair, Dallas GOP
- ✓ Tony Dale, Former State Representative
- ✓ Scott Sanford, Former State Representative
- ✓ Sara Gonzales
- ✓ Chad Prather
- ✓ American Jewish Conservatives
- ✓ Matthew Marsden
- ✓ SREC Member David Wylie
- ✓ SREC Member Christin Bentley
- ✓ Kyle Sims
- ✓ Jackie Wakin
- ✓ John Carona, Former State Senator
- ✓ Ally Raskin, Dallas County Precinct Chair
- ✓ Cindi Castilla, President, Texas Eagle Forum
- ✓ SREC Member Jim Pikel
- ✓ Vince and Mona Puente
- ✓ SREC Member Rachel Horton
- ✓ SREC Member Jim Pikel
- ✓ Ann and Del Harris
- ✓ South Texas Alliance of Republicans
- ✓ Conservative Republicans of Texas
- ✓ Dr. Steven Hotze
- ✓ Montgomery County Tea Party

Veterans Leadership Team:

- ✓ JC Pennington, Bell County (Vietnam)
- ✓ Tony Dale, Williamson County
- ✓ Mont Smith, Williamson County
- ✓ John Keating, Collin County
- ✓ Gary Poplin, Dallas County
- ✓ Orly Sims, Nueces County
- ✓ Benito Trevino, Starr County (Vietnam)

Hispanic Leadership Team:

- ✓ Carlos Amaral, Collin County (Co Founder of the Conservative Hispanic Society)
- ✓ Sara Gonzales, Denton County (Host of Come and Take It & Sara Gonzales Unfiltered)
- ✓ Orly Sims, Nueces County
- ✓ Benito Trevino, Starr County
- ✓ Hector Cabildo, El Paso County
- ✓ Monty Montanez, Dallas County

Statewide Organizations

- ✓ Texas Eagle Forum
- ✓ True Texas Project

Want to Endorse Thomas Smith for Texas Court of Criminal Appeals - Place 3.

Join the above citizens, organizations and respected leaders in supporting Thomas by providing your endorsement below!

Unless otherwise indicated in your submission, we will consider your endorsement as permission to use on this website, literature, and newspaper articles.

This is a * ▼

First Name:*

Last Name:*

Email:*

Phone:*

Endorsement Quote:*

To help prevent spam, please answer this math question:

5+1?

Submit Form



On March 3, 2026, vote for Thomas Smith for Judge

Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, Place 3

COUNTING DOWN TO

Republican Primary

27 days, 10 hrs, 18 min, 26 sec

Support the Campaign

By submitting in your phone number, you are opting in to receive text alerts, updates, and news messages via SMS/MMS from the Texans for Thomas Smith. Donations may be solicited. Additional message and data rates may apply. Text "STOP" to opt-out. Text HELP for assistance or call 972-742-8684. Message frequency may vary. SMS opt-in data or phone numbers will not be sold, rented, or shared with third parties. Click here to view the [Privacy Policy](#). Click here to view [Terms of Use/Terms and Conditions](#).

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