



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
John Messinger	Court of Criminal Appeals, Place 9

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 spent my entire career as an appellate prosecutor. For the last 15 years, I have been an Assistant State Prosecuting Attorney. Our job is to represent Texas in the Court of Criminal Appeals (CCA). In that time, I've represented the State in that court more than anyone practicing law today. Combined with my experience at the McLennan County DA's office, I've done over 125 petitions for discretionary review, about 100 briefs, and 26 oral arguments just in the CCA. My opponent has done 0, 0, and 0. I've also handled well over 150 cases in the lower courts of appeals.

2.

2.	Please describe what you believe are the most significant issues in this race and why.
	Answer: In the last four to five years, the CCA failed Texas on two fronts. The first is substantive. In too many cases, a majority ruled in a way that diminished the will of the people expressed in our laws, the work of law enforcement, the rights of victims, and to a far lesser extent the rights of defendants. The last point leads to the second fundamental failure: unjustified delay. In 2024, it took an average of over 500 days for the CCA to review a case and issue an opinion. It used to be under 200. Imagine being a victim waiting an extra year to see if she will have to face her attacker again at a second trial. Imagine being in prison an extra year because it took too long to reverse your conviction. Both are unacceptable.

3.

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: No. I am a career prosecutor of over 18 years, exclusively in Texas. Licensed in 2006.

4. What carries the greatest influence in your rulings: criminal case law, the Constitution, state statutes, or other?
- Answer:** Constitution and statutes control over decisions. Decisions are necessary to interpret both but Texas law cannot depend on which side issues an opinion first.
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:** The biggest thing we're seeing is lawyers offloading their research and writing to AI. We know this is happening because AI is not good enough to replace a solid advocate yet and the signs are obvious, like non-existent case quotations. AI can be a valuable tool—nearly all research today uses it—but lawyers have to be ultimately responsible for their representation.

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.