



Questions for Justice of the Peace Judicial Courts Candidates 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
Adrianna Higginbotham	Harris County Justice of the Peace – Precinct 5, Place 1

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

1.

1.	Please describe the qualifications and experience that make you the best candidate for the office for which you are running.
	Answer: I am the only candidate that is a licensed attorney and I have been practicing landlord/tenant law, real estate law, family law, bankruptcy law, and labor and employment law since the beginning of my legal career. I am currently working for Fulton Strahan Law Group, PLLC where I continue to hone my skills and bring excellent customer service to my clients. It is my intention to translate that same expertise to the court and constituents of Precinct 5.

2.

2.	Please describe what you believe are the most significant issues in this race and why.
	Answer: The most important issue of this race is to make sure this court is effective and functioning at the capacity needed to service the residents of Harris County. Currently, the court is operating at minimum capacity: the docket is moving slow, the court is not user friendly, and the court is disorganized in totality. With the jurisdictional limits of this court increasing in September it is imperative the we have a judge with conservative values who is able to handle the influx of cases that are soon to come and possesses the ability to follow the law as it is written as opposed to legislating from the bench.

3.

3.	Please list the undergraduate colleges or universities, law schools and any other graduate schools that you attended, the years you attended, the degrees you received and the years of any and all graduations.
	Answer: Louisiana State University – August 2008 to December 2012 – BA in Sociology with a concentration in criminology and a minor in Biological Sciences; Southern University Law Center – August 2013 to May 2016 – Juris Doctorate

4. Should JPs need to have law degrees? Why or why not?
- Answer:** Yes, in urban areas where the population is over one million in capacity, JPs should be required to have a law degree. In urban areas, JPs are required to handle many different areas of law including but not limited to evictions, debt, criminal, and small claim suits just to name a few. These are completely different areas of law that require an in-depth understanding and the ability to connect these issues when applicable. You also must have the ability to distinguish between these areas of law with extreme attention to detail. When JPs do not have law degrees the courts do not operate as effectively as they should due to a lack of understanding the law and the ramifications that result for any deviation from the law.
5. What will carry the greatest influence in your rulings: criminal and/or civil case law, the Constitution, state statutes, or other?
- Answer:** The constitution has laid the foundation for the state statutes and will take precedent over the state statutes. With that being said, the Constitution comes first. Thereafter, I would follow the statutes as they are written and further rely on the interpretation of the courts through case law to make sure my rulings are consistent with the intent of the legislators as they were creating the statutes.
6. Please identify what changes can be made to the county JP court system to make it more efficient from your point of view.
- Answer:** The county JP court system should be brought up to speed with the District Court system. There have been advancements in the last year which allows for electronic filing in the JP courts. This has vastly changed the way the system moves currently. However, the system used to track cases is outdated at best. Creating a new system for the JP courts which is consistent with the system for the district courts during Chris Daniel's term would provide the advancements needed to make the systems more user-friendly. An improvement in the system would ultimately save taxpayer dollars.
7. Please describe the changes you will make to improve the efficiency of your court (the ideal workload balance for your court in hours-per-week allocated to court sessions, case review in the office, training, collaboration, etc.).
- Answer:** While there are many changes that can be made, the most important issues to address are (1) wasted time; (2) making the court more user-friendly; (3) providing an organized structure for the court as a whole. I would work to decrease the amount of time it takes to get through the daily docket. The current docket is staggered in 30 minute increments which causes a lot of overlap. I would create attorney dockets so that those individuals are moved out of court quickly, this saves time because attorney cases take less time and allows the Judge to focus of the pro-se cases with attention and detail. Eviction dockets should take no more than one to one and a half hours depending on the case load for that day. Since those are simple cases, they should be done first. This allows for more time for the more complex cases to be heard without rushing. I would additionally focus on updating the system to allow for faster time in lines and in person filings with the clerks. This would require additional training of the court staff but it will be beneficial in the end by saving tax payer dollars.

8. Please explain your view of recidivism and how it affects the sentences you give (traffic court-DUI, etc.).
- Answer:** Protection for the community comes first and is paramount concerning criminal activity. However, it is my belief that some mistakes happen one time and some individuals learn from their experiences. Those type of people will never return to your court. On the other hand, there are repeat offenders, these repeat offenders should be given a punishment that is equivalent to the offenses they continuously commit. The number of offenses should be considered when it comes to sentencing. Failure to comply shows a complete disregard for the laws of this state and the constitutional rights given to other citizens as well.
9. Please explain why you do, or do not, support applying term limits to JP court judges.
- Answer:** I do not support applying term limits to JP court judges. I believe if you are a effective judge you should be allowed to remain in that position as long as you are able to perform your duties as the JP and uphold the laws as they are written.
10. Do you believe that voluntary professional and community service is a necessary commitment for persons holding public office? What forms of voluntary professional and community service have you been involved with in the past? Currently?
- Answer:** Yes, giving back to the community and being active should be necessary. I personally handle pro-bono cases which I have been appointed to at the County Courts of Harris County. Additionally, I give time back to the community through my sorority, Sigma Gamma Rho, where we focus on community. The last activity I was involved with was through operation backpack sponsored by my sorority. I am also active in the community through church, I participate in Street Beat which is when we minister to the community through outreach. My church also gives back to the community by giving school supplies to the children of the community every year when school starts. I was born and raised in the church so giving back to the community has been instilled in me since before my memory begins.
11. How would you prepare yourself to handle cases involving unfamiliar areas of the law?
- Answer:** I would study that particular area of law or if there was a course where I could learn more about that area through CLEs I would most definitely take that course as well. I would lastly reach out to colleagues/experts in that area of law for insight if I have any questions. I believe you must continue to learn in order to be competent as an attorney and that this should translate to your matriculation as a judge as well.
12. Is it appropriate to impose more restrictions on what cases go to trial? Is there a need for more mandatory mediation and settlement efforts? What specifically do you propose to do about this, if elected?
- Answer:** I believe that mandatory mediation is helpful in some cases but I do not believe this is applicable in all cases. Most parties will agree to mediate on their own and if the parties come before the judge with minute issues which can be mediated the judge can recommend mediation to the parties. Forcing parties to mediate and have settlement discussions could be problematic. I believe it should be based on the facts and circumstances surrounding the case and the repour of the parties as well. Ultimately, it should be left up to the judge's discretion but not a requirement of the courts.

13. When and if would you consider alternative sentences for non-violent offenders?
Answer: It would depend on what the non-violent offense is and the number of offenses committed by that individual.

14. As a voter, should the election of judges be changed in any way (schedule, appointment, term, term-limited, non-partisan, etc.)?
Answer: As of now, I am excited about the legislators' removal of straight ticket voting. This change should improve the election of Judges results in the near future.

Questions 15-16 relate to your viewpoints from a VOTER's point of view only.
(They may have or not have any relation to your judicial philosophy and judgement.)

15. As a voter, what are the main social conservative values that you look for when voting for federal congressional candidates (House and Senate races)?
Answer: Pro-God, Pro-Life, Pro-Family

16. As a voter, what are the main fiscal conservative values that you look for when voting for federal congressional candidates (House and Senate races)?
Answer: Qualifications, Experience, Results

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.