

Response to PA-PAC Questionnaire

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Only the responses are set forth below.

1. Of all of the issues facing us, the fundamental issue is maintaining the proper balance between the power of government and the rights of citizens, as set out in the US and North Carolina Constitutions. We face a time when there is constant pressure to allow the state (or federal or local) government to exercise more power than is appropriate. This is a matter that legislative bodies must constantly defend against. Second, but related, is the importance of maintaining a healthy North Carolina, economically. The Republican legislature has been quite adept improving our economy. It is the reason that Forbes rates us as the best state to do business. When we have a strong business climate, particularly when supported by lower tax rates, it is a better place for our citizens, because we offer better jobs.
2. Philosophically I support the idea. Unfortunately, it never works out that way, as we see in California. Non-partisan commissions don't exist, but unsurprisingly evidence the political biases of those that appoint. This state has enacted a balanced bi-partisan elections board that could be the beginning of a workable solution on redistricting, though the appointment process will need to be tinkered with. Remember that the Republicans proposed a commission in 2000, but it was soundly rejected by the Democrats. There have been many years of Democratic gerrymandering in this state that are now being unwrapped.
3. It is conceivable that it would be appropriate to have standards which exceed federal standards, but only with very careful study due to the economic effects that inevitably rest upon a few citizens. Such regulations should be approved by the General Assembly, to insure the basis for the regulations is clear and necessary.
4. It appears that the legislature has put a process in place that provides regulation of fracking, and will evaluate data as use of this technology moves forward. As in all new technologies we must be vigilant about studying the environmental impacts of the technology to insure that there are not unacceptable adverse impacts.
5. A series of tools have been provided by the legislature over the last several years to rectify the lack of adequate supervision by prior administrations (prior to 2012) of these issues. As with the foregoing question, we have many federal and state regulations and mechanisms in place for studying water quality. Obviously, it is an area, just like air, where we must be vigilant in protecting natural resources. We must insure that we do so in a way that makes sense.
6. Education is always enhanced by quality teachers. The Republican legislature has been steadily increasing the compensation for teachers over a number of years now. That helps. Parent choice also helps, as do scholarships, and charter schools that can cater to the needs of specific students.

I am the product of public education, through high school. I think education is the key to success for our children and grand-children. We must also be assured that they are being taught the fundamentals that form the foundation of our society.

7. I recognize that our healthcare system we have seems to be extraordinarily expensive, and to focus on putting substances into our bodies. Never the less, we have exceptional health care resources in Durham County. We need transparency in pricing, and to support creative research to find new ways to address health concerns. We also must continue to work on the cost of insurance, the cost effectiveness of all care, and the quality of life for seniors.
8. It appears that our current taxing system is working very well, and has helped the economy of the State to surge past many of our neighboring states. It is not perfect. The nuances of the economic considerations, and the impact of taxes on our population are not policy areas I have studied closely in the past. I will be interested to look further at this area as the election process moves forward.
9. These incentives can be troubling, as they can have adverse impacts on some of our citizens. There may be a necessary evil in order to compete with other states who employ these measures. We must also be careful to have claw back provisions for credits given (allowing us to recover unearned credits), and we must resist calls for cash incentives, offering tax credits instead. It is essential that we do not allow tax credits to enrich promoters for a business relocation, without establishing a long term enhancement to the State's economy.
10. We should be treating all people equally, without creating preferences for specific individuals. It is ironic that we create preferred classes to remedy charges of discrimination. It is not a wise, long term policy to create more protected classes of citizens. We must deal with each other on an individual basis, rather than sticking everyone in a category.
11. We must prosecute those who violate our laws. We must punish those who demonstrate a disregard for the sanctity of life. Simple minded responses will not change the society we live in, and will likely result in additional dangers. We must deal with mental illness; we need to investigate why persons with mental illness seem inclined to commit atrocities. We must examine our policies constantly to understand the unintended consequences of measures that are put in place to remedy these evils.
12. We must cooperate with US law enforcement. To do otherwise greatly increases the danger of our society. We must absolutely cooperate in enforcement measures against those illegally here who are violent and dangerous offenders.
13. Courts should always be able to examine the specific circumstances of any defendant, but we must also have some consistency in punishment. Judges are the officials that are in the position to address these issues.
14. Our constitution provides for an elected judiciary. We have talked in recent years about a merit system. It takes some particular effort to insure that you have a system based truly on merit, rather than cronyism. A hybrid system may well be the best. That is the approach that has been discussed in the recent period.
15. a. Yes. We present identification to drive, for medical care, to cash a check, and to fly, to mention a few. It is ludicrous that we risk voter fraud in order to avoid checking a simple ID, particularly when the state has made the ID free for those who do not drive.
b. Yes. We could pull funding from those organizations which push towards extreme responses in order to support those who need support in pregnancy.

c. No. Most firms that can afford sick leave already provide it. The unintended consequence of forcing it on businesses that can't, is that they employ less people, or use part time employees.

d. No. A grant program is far more likely to be effective in addressing the affordable housing issue. Programs which force developers to build affordable housing units likely don't really address the issue over time. As time passes, the market impacts will erase the intended outcomes, undermining the intent of governing bodies.

e. No. This is another measure that is unlikely to have the desired effect.

f. No. An elected council will certainly notice the response of neighbors who file a protest. Providing a supermajority requirement will provide a tool that sometimes will help, but is just as likely to be abused and to cause bizarre outcomes, or allow competitors to torpedo a project. As long as the process is done in the light of day, political forces should be able to address the issues.

g. Not a yes or no question.

h. Yes. We should have a system that allows a government official to avoid a crises of conscience to some reasonable degree. Typically, that would take the form of the official stepping aside to allow another to address the issue, but this is a case by case determination best left to the courts if an obvious solution does not present.

i. No, at least not without a serious debate, perhaps at the constitutional level. While inordinately expensive, it is an important deterrent to the most evil members of society.

j. No. Some of the rules provide a benefit and hopefully let other communities share the burden of keeping our water clean. Some of the rules, like the limitation of the number of livestock on a farm, seem particularly intrusive. Again, water quality is something that requires constant study. Southern Durham County has already paid an enormous sum to comply with these measures, which tend to fall disproportionately on new development.

16. This question is pretty over the top, but the answer is no.

17. This question also is inappropriate, but I have supported the Republican candidate for President in those elections, Mr. Romney and Mr. Trump.

THOMAS H. STARK

Personal:

Born: Durham, North Carolina, Married to Roxanne Bragg
Son of Methodist Pastor Rufus H. Stark and Betty Lou Stark
Proud Father of Michael and Jonathan Stark, Grandfather of Oliver and Eleanor
(Michael)

Education:

College: AB degree, Duke University (Trinity College) -1977
Law School: JD, Duke Law School, Duke University – 1981

Practice:

Durham, North Carolina – Principal of Stark Law Group, PLLC, Real Estate, State/Fed.
Litigation, Complex business transactions, Construction, Copyright/Entertainment

Community and State:

Durham County Republican Party – member of Executive Board, **Vice Chair** 2008-2010,
Chair August 31, 2010 to 2011, Legal Counsel 2011 to present.
Fourth Congressional District Republican Ex. Board, 2008-2018; L.C. 2011-2018.
State Republican Party, Executive Committee 2008-2011, 2014-Present; **General
Counsel** 2016 – present.
Delegate, Republican National Convention, 2012, 2016 (Rules Committee)
Republican Candidate for Durham County Commissioner – 2000.
Candidate for Durham City Council – 1995
Friends of Durham – Current Member of Steering Committee
Parents for Better Schools – Counsel
Durham Open Space and Trails Commission, Member to present, **Chair** 4 terms
Chamber of Commerce – Member, **Chair** of Crime prevention Committee
Durham City/County Merger Task Force – **Co-Chair** of Fire and Law Enforcement
Durham Crime Cabinet – Member
Durham Jaycees – Member of Board
North Carolina Sportsmens' Alliance – Board Member, **President**

Church:

Member Duke Memorial United Methodist Church – Member of Council on Ministries,
Administrative Board, **Vice Chair** and **Chair** of Administrative Board, Member
of Trustees, and **Lay Delegate** to Annual Conference
NC United Methodist Camp and Retreat Ministries, Inc – **Member of Board and
Executive Board, Corporate Secretary**
North Carolina Annual Conference, United Methodist Church, Board of Institutions –
Member and **Chair**, Current Member of Audit Committee

Scouting:

Eagle Scout, Assistant Scoutmaster and Troop Committee **Chairman**, Troop 492
Durham, Assistant Scoutmaster Troop 451, Durham, **Chairman Mawat
(Durham) District**, Occaneechee Council Board

Recreational:

Avid Hunter, Big game (Elk, Deer, Turkey), small, game and waterfowl
Competitive Shooter - Local, State, Regional and National Matches, Invitational Tactical
Matches, SASS matches, Life Member NRA
Music (Organ, Keyboards), Horses, Woodworking