

People's Alliance PAC 2021 Questionnaire for North Carolina District Court Judicial Candidates

Please return this completed form along with a resume or biographical statement describing your education, work history, community service, and prior political experience as soon as possible, but by August 27, 2021 at the latest. Please note that following this deadline, the Durham People's Alliance PAC may publish your responses to this questionnaire and your resume.

Please e-mail your responses to Nana Asante-Smith at asante.nana49@gmail.com

Thank you for completing this questionnaire and your willingness to serve the people of North Carolina.

Candidate's name: David T. Robinson

Judicial Seat sought: The 16th Judicial seat soon to be vacated by the Honorable Brian Wilks

Address: 3471 Balfour West Durham, NC 27713

E-mail address: dtrob82@aol.com (personal)

Phone: 919-638-5669

When answering this questionnaire, please repeat the questions in your response document with each question numbered and organized as it appears here. Type your responses in italics, bold, or a different font to distinguish your responses from the questions. Please do not use colors. Please respond to questions using your own words and cite outside sources when applicable. You may explain your answer to every question, but please be concise. Please limit your answer to each question to 400 words. Please do not feel obligated to use the full word allowance if it is not necessary.

Judges and judicial candidates in North Carolina are allowed substantial freedom of political speech. PA PAC believes that every question in this questionnaire may be answered fully within the scope of the applicable rules. For more information on the scope of permitted political speech for judicial candidates, we refer you to the January 2, 2020 memorandum of the Judicial Standards Commission on Permitted Political Conduct. You may find it at:

<https://www.nccourts.gov/assets/inline-files/2020-Political-Conduct-Memo.pdf?lqEnTi0CGRseARDEGD.mXt60PMdBDGef>

About you:

1. How do you characterize yourself politically? What values, policies, or platforms have influenced your decision to vote for one candidate over another?

I am a democrat and a progressive. I learned my values from my grandparents who raised me. They taught me to look for the good in people and be positive whenever possible. Therefore, I look for candidates that are more inclined to do what is right for the most people and not just a particular subset.

2. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense (other than a minor traffic or minor drug offense)? If the answer is yes, please describe the circumstances and the outcome.
No I have not been convicted of a criminal offense.

3. Have you personally ever been a party in a civil legal proceeding? If the answer is yes, please explain the circumstances and the outcome of the case.

I don't recall ever being a party in a civil proceeding.

About your practice of law:

4. Please describe your practice as a lawyer. Describe the areas of your practice and your specialties. Describe the diversity of your client base as a part of your answer.

I have had a general practice since beginning of my practice of law. I have helped many different clients in many different areas of practice including but not limited to criminal, traffic, personal injury, family and estates. I have also done Wills, (power of attorney) POA's and health care POA's. I was on the Court appointed list from 2003 until I believe 2014 or 2016.

5. Have you ever been publicly or privately disciplined by the North Carolina State Bar or any other professional or occupational licensing authority in North Carolina or any other state? "Disciplined" should be read to include reprimands, censures, and warnings in addition to license suspension, surrender, revocation, and disbarment. Is the State Bar or any governmental authority considering a complaint against you at the present time? Have you ever been found in contempt of court? For each "yes" answer, please tell us what happened and describe the outcome of the matter.

I was asked to make sure I added "Trust Account" to checks I had distributed to and for clients.

6. Please describe the nature and extent of any pro bono work you have done. Is there a pro bono matter to which you have contributed that best illustrates your values?

I have done work for clients regardless of whether they paid me or not. I never sued a client to recoup payment. I have done things. I have helped people that were on the court appointed long after their case was concluded. Helping them get their license restored is one act that I can remember.

Concerning law and policy:

7. North Carolina incarcerates an extraordinary number of people, including persons convicted of non-violent crimes. Those who are incarcerated are disproportionately people of color. What if anything should the legislature and our courts do to address the issues of mass incarceration and racial bias in the administration of justice?

The legislature should not incarcerate people because they can not afford fines and or fees. For nonviolent cases bond should be waived.

8. Should the North Carolina General Assembly abolish the death penalty?

I believe the death penalty should be abolished. We are constantly finding people, with the help of modern technology, who were innocent all along. If the death penalty had been imposed on any of these people, they would have been unnecessarily killed.

9. What, if anything, should be done to improve access to justice for people with limited financial means or who mistrust the system? How should courts handle requests to waive court costs, fines, failure to appear fees, probation supervision fees and attorney's fees in criminal court, prayers for judgment continued, and similar requests?

There should greater awareness made of the fact that if you can not afford to file paperwork (for instance expunctions) that there is a process to allow the indigent to not pay fees. I think the judge should have

unlimited discretion to waive court cost, fines fees, probation supervision fees and use whatever tools are available to that judge to help people.

10. What is your position on bail? What, if any, changes need to be made to the current bond schedule?

Bail should be waived in nonviolent cases.

11. What can be done to improve language access for parties, victims, and witnesses during court proceedings?

There should be more funding to these services so that one interpreter doesn't have to cover the entire courthouse and first appearance.

12. Do courts have the authority to shorten prison sentences and release prisoners in the interests of justice and in response to emergencies like the current pandemic?

I think the current process is that lawyer file motions and work with the DA's Office and then bring the person back in front of a Judge to be resentenced and released.

13. What does racial equity mean to you and how will racial equity inform your work as a superior court judge? Have you any special training in issues related to racial disparities and equities?

Racial equity means to me that regardless of the race people, in similar circumstances, that they are treated the same. People of color have been sentenced more harshly than European people. As a Judge in Superior or District Court I would work to make sure all get a fair sentence.

I took a CLE on racial equity that went in depth on why there is racial inequity. The CLE went back to the beginning of slavery and iniquity through modern day.

14. What are your thoughts on Durham's current diversion programs? If you believe these programs should be changed in any way please describe how and why.

I think some of the diversion programs in Durham are under used especially Drug Court. I think attorneys prosecutors and Judges should look at ways to help more people to get into Drug Court as opposed to just sentencing. I think there should be a Mental Health Court. However, these Courts would need more funding.

15. What population, if any, is currently underserved, and what remedies can be implemented?

I believe people with mental health issues are a hugely underserved. The jail should not be used to as a mental holding area. The community needs better places to help those with mental health issues. For those who do enter the criminal system we need a court designed to deal with their specific issues.

16. What should the court do when both the defense and prosecution agree upon a bond request or agree on a lawful plea?

If all sides agree then I think the Judge strongly consider granting the bond request or plea. If the plea is lawful and agreed upon then I believe the Judge should grant that request.

Again, Thank you. **Please do not forget to provide us with your resume or biographical statement.**