

## **2022 BLM Btown Primary Questionnaire Questions and Answers from All Candidates.**

All answers are in italics while the questions are in regular print.

ISAK ASARE - US Representative 9th District

D. LIAM DORRIS - US Representative 9th District

MATTHEW FYFE - US Representative 9th District

PENNY GITHENS -State Representative, District 062

ALLISON M. CHOPRA -Judge of the Monroe Circuit Court, 10TH Judicial Circuit, NO. 7

EMILY A. SALZMANN -Judge of the Monroe Circuit Court, 10TH Judicial Circuit, NO. 7

APRIL ANN WILSON - Judge of the Monroe Circuit Court, 10TH Judicial Circuit, NO. 7

KAREN ELISE WRENBECK -Judge of the Monroe Circuit Court, 10TH Judicial Circuit, NO. 7

RUBEN D MARTE - Monroe County Sheriff

ANGIE PURDIE - Monroe County Sheriff

JOANI STALCUP - Monroe County Sheriff

DOMINIC THOMPSON - Monroe County Commissioner

PETER J IVERSEN - Monroe County Council, District 1

KATE WILTZ - Monroe County Council, District 2

JENNIFER CROSSLEY - Monroe County Council, District 4

NICOLE BROWNE - Monroe County Clerk

ISAK ASARE -US Representative 9th District

1. How do you define Anti-Racism? Please try to use your own words and do not quote from a book or online resources. Additionally, how as an elected official would you apply anti-racism? Give specific examples in either your current policies as a seated official or in your candidate platform.

*Systemic racism infiltrates every aspect of our society and the way it functions. Most racism is so covert and pervasive that people don't see 1) how the system disproportionately discriminates against and harms Black people or 2) how those people benefit from it. Further, they're usually blind to their own unconscious biases and how many of their daily actions uphold white supremacy and racism. I see antiracism as calling out racism for what it is every time I see it, every day. It's on each of us to be antiracist and identify racism on all levels. We each have to do this in our individual lives, but as a US Congressperson, I will have an opportunity to work toward changing the system. The difference between individual racism and systemic racism is that systemic racism doesn't require there to be a direct perpetrator. It only requires systems that uphold unequal outcomes along racial lines to be unchallenged and quietly acquiesced to. I am running because of my desire to work to see systems of injustice changed.*

*As for specific positions in my platform:*

*I support cash transfer programs: including making the child tax credit permanent and establishing a negative income tax or universal basic income. Toward the end of his life, Dr. King came to the conclusion that establishing a Universal basic income was the most effective and necessary means by which we could address systemic racism and oppression in the USA.*

*I advocate for a single-payer universal healthcare system that would cover everyone from birth to the grave as a matter of right and not privilege. We know that black and brown people have suffered disproportionately at the hands of our cruel healthcare system. As an example, this is seen in the dramatic disproportionate incidence of maternal mortality of black mothers.*

*I advocate for transformative climate action and climate justice that will create new jobs and save this planet because studies have shown that climate change is disproportionately affecting communities of color.*

*I advocate for a digital bill of rights to stop the ongoing algorithmic oppression being caused by emerging technologies like artificial intelligence that are being used to segregate our people from the digital economy.*

*I advocate for Democracy Reform, including passing voting rights legislation, publicly funded elections, rank choice voting, and ending Citizens United. Here we see that our political system and its incentives have been specifically geared toward limiting the political rights of black folks. We need to upset the setup and fix this.*

2. How do you define privilege? How has privilege impacted decisions you have made as an elected official, or if you are running for the first time, as an engaged community member? If you are elected, how will you use your privilege to assist BIPOC communities?

*Privilege is when you get advantages and opportunities that you didn't earn simply because you belong to a certain group or class of people. Nearly all of us have some level of privilege. It can be race, gender identity, ability, sexuality, age, socioeconomic status, education, religion, color, and more. I am a Black, first-generation American living with leukemia, but I am also cisgender, heterosexual, and have light skin. I have a graduate education, a job with benefits, and am a Christian and an educator.*

*I suffer disadvantages in this life but also benefit from being part of a number of social identities that give me a leg up. I believe my privileges have made it easier for me to run for this office by making me more "palatable" to certain voters than if I had darker skin, a different gender identity, or practiced a different religion. Racist policies and laws are harming BIPOC communities, of which I am a part. I want to take an antiracist agenda to Congress and work with like-minded representatives to be a force for change.*

3. Given the history of the BLM Movement and the surge of support in 2020 after George Floyd was brutally murdered by police, the promised police and law enforcement reform that ultimately has not happened; as well as the backlash against the BLM Movement we are currently seeing in media and politics; are you as a candidate or a current elected official a supporter of the BLM Movement & if so please articulate what that means in your own words? Give specific examples in your policy work or in your candidate platform.

*I support the Black Lives Matter movement and the work it does in communities across the country and around the world to end police brutality and the disproportionate state-sanctioned violence against Black people. My platform focuses on creating equity across healthcare, our environment, the workforce, the education system, voters rights, standard of living, and childcare.*

4. Given the American legacy of slavery, tyranny and discrimination against Black people, Indigenous people and other people of color notably Asians & Latino/Latine people; do you believe that White Supremacy exists today in the US within the populus, our system of government, schools & education, etc... or in everyday life? IF so, please give as many examples as you think are necessary to elucidate that belief and if NOT please tell us why.

*Like systemic racism, white supremacy infects every part of our society and our everyday lives. You see it at work with the way the world ignores the genocide against Black transgender women; when Black women are penalized as unprofessional for wearing their natural hair; locally in Monroe County's racially segregated public school system; the city-sponsored Farmer's Market and the lack of support for BIPOC farmers; in the confirmation hearings of Justices Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett versus that for Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson; in the world's humanitarian response to the crisis in Ukraine versus its indifference to crises in the Middle East and Africa. It is everywhere all the time.*

5. To the best of your knowledge, describe why people of color are disproportionately targeted and arrested by the criminal justice system. What ideas do you have to make the justice system more equitable and impartial? What concerns do you have about the militarization of our police force? Name a specific issue in our community relating to the militarization of the police and how you have or would respond to it.

*All roads lead back to white supremacy and systemic racism. The criminal justice system has been weaponized against Black people since the slave patrols of the 1800s and the intentionally discriminatory laws like the Black Codes that were enacted during the Reconstruction era. It continued with Jim Crow, COINTELPRO, the War on Drugs, "super predators," three strikes, racial profiling, and so on. I do not have all the answers for criminal justice reform but believe we can make a better system by increasing funding for social services; finding alternatives to incarceration; ending the criminalization of*

*gender and sexuality, mental health issues, and poverty; requiring equitable sentencing; integrating formerly incarcerated persons back into society without penalties; and retraining police to focus on de-escalation.*

*I disagree with the militarization of any police force, which goes back nearly three decades. Militarization does not make communities safer or reduce crime. Instead, they make communities—particularly BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ persons—feel as if there is a war on them.*

*In 2018, the local police department purchased a heavily armored vehicle despite community outrage. I agreed with the community response. Were I in office when this occurred, I would have spoken out with my objections and support for community activists.*

6. What does restorative justice look like to you? What programs focused on restorative justice do you support or would you support as an elected official? How, give details?

*The criminal justice system is dehumanizing to victims and survivors but also the person who harmed them. I see restorative justice as a way of making sure that we're taking care of the needs of victims and survivors and giving the people who harm them a chance to make amends to them and the community at large. I am most familiar with and support Mariame Kaba's work to end youth incarceration through her organization Project NIA and her advocacy work. As Congressman, my best opportunity to support this and other programs would be through fighting for effective criminal justice reform legislation.*

7. Would you support establishing a 311 number that connected people to emergency services and local organizations trained in handling crisis situations rather than the police? What should be done with individuals who make false reports to the police based on racial profiling or prejudice?

*Yes, I support the creation of a 311 number for this purpose. Indiana already has laws against false reporting in the aggregate but not specific to racial profiling or prejudice. I believe this specificity should exist and individuals should face repercussions such as a misdemeanor charge and heavy fines.*

8. Describe a society in which there are no prisons. How does that justice system differ from ours? What other aspects of culture would be different in a society without prisons?

*I don't think a world without prisons and mass incarceration is possible without dismantling white supremacy and our society then committing to restorative justice as the method for addressing harms in the community. Our culture would be more community minded and focused on keeping people from committing acts that land them in any sort of justice system. That would mean we had a culture where: we had*

*accessible, affordable healthcare for all; people aren't criminalized for enduring physical and mental health issues and homelessness; no one experienced environmental racism; and all Americans can contribute to the workforce and make a living wage.*

9. Given that the Food insecurity rate for Monroe County is 14.4% which is 32.1% higher \* than the national average what plans or ideas do you have for food justice in our community? Do you support land redistribution for the purpose of growing food? Do you support community based food programs that bring locally grown nutrient dense food to those in need? If so please detail those programs here.

\*Statistics from Feeding America Org 2019. These stats have only gotten worse during the global pandemic, though new numbers have not been compiled in this form yet.

*I believe strongly in food justice and the need for BIPOC farmers to not only have support from the local community but also the ability to acquire land to grow food. The People's Market leads the way in bringing nutritious food grown by BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ farmers to those in need. Bloomington Community Orchard, Community Kitchen, Mother Hubbard's Cupboard, and Backpack Blessings also do admirable food justice work in the Bloomington community. Though this may seem to be more strictly within the purview of local government, as with all systemic injustice, responses are required at all levels of government to create systemic change. At a federal level, there are bills like the Stop Child Hunger Act that focus on food justice. Likewise, Congress can and should lean on the USDA to create policies that break up oligopolistic and monopolistic food industrialists, as one example.*

10. In what ways does food justice fit within wider social issues, ie economic, environmental or racial justice? Do you support allowing white supremacists in our local food/farmer's market? If so, why? If not, how do you propose to remove them?

*Land and food have, like so many other things, been weaponized throughout the history of the United States (we celebrate this every year at Thanksgiving, for example). Since the entire system was built upon the backs of the oppressed, particularly indigenous, Chinese, and Africans people, then we cannot separate food justice from racial justice. If we are to rebuild the system, we must build it with racial equity in mind. BIPOC communities have always been the most impacted by food injustice. They suffer from hunger, live in food deserts with poor access to nutrient-dense food, and are most likely to have heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and other related illnesses and disabilities. Food injustice is an outcome of racial, environmental, and economic injustice, which are all outcomes of white supremacy.*

*The White supremacists at the Bloomington farmers' market were not only racists but were violently so. Their very presence made the market unsafe for our communities. The city's willingness to allow them to stay there was silence that upheld and enabled a system of violence and oppression. Market forces are limited in dealing with such issues. Namely, it is not enough for us to expect consumers to make choices of vendors and in so doing lock such vendors out of the market. This is where the government must step in to regulate and create just outcomes.*

11. Bloomington & Monroe County finds itself in an affordable housing crisis. How will you ensure more affordable housing in spite of the local government's defacto mandate to maintain higher housing prices for tax revenue? Do you support density housing with priority given to people of color, people making under \$30,000 a year, families with dependents, and people with disabilities? Specifically, please discuss non-student housing.

*I am very concerned about the Monroe County housing crisis. I support housing as a fundamental human right. We have federal mechanisms to combat housing insecurity and homelessness. Though the direct issue brought up here is asked through a local lens, the federal government can incentivize the construction of housing and can provide rental assistance to people living in this community. This overlaps with other policy positions such as cash transfer programs to lift millions of Americans out of poverty. I also think we need to increase funding for people of color to gain home ownership.*

12. Young students of color in particular Black students in Bloomington experience disproportionate rates of detention, suspension, and expulsion\*. To the best of your knowledge, how does this problem contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline? Given that the Indiana Coalition for Public Education has released a report detailing the need for desegregation in Monroe County and a plan for creating greater equity, what are your thoughts on school desegregation in 2022 and what are your plans to help this process?

\* According to the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, "black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students. On average, 5% of white students are suspended, compared to 16% of black students." (<https://ocrdata.ed.gov/downloads/crdc-school-discipline-snapshot.pdf>)

*Black students face implicit bias at every stage of their lives, and strict, zero-tolerance discipline impacts many as early as pre-kindergarten—with no heed given to mental health care, home situations, or alternatives to punishment. These children not only begin to feel that school is not a safe or welcoming space, but their classmates may, following a teacher's lead, begin seeing them as "troublemakers." They become the students who are constantly observed by teachers and administrators looking for them to misbehave. In-school detention escalates to out-of-school, which escalates into expulsion. As part of this progression, they are referred to law enforcement, which frequently has a presence within the schools. Soon enough, the punitive culture of educational spaces leads to the punitive culture of society at large and they are in "the system."*

*I support the continued desegregation of our schools, which has been ongoing since Brown v. Board of Education. I also support the removal of law enforcement officers from our schools and new approaches to discipline such as restorative justice and counseling. Both contribute heavily to the school-to-prison pipeline. As Congressman, I will be vocal about my support for this in the local community and across the country.*

*I am deeply concerned about the push in Indiana toward school choice, which will strip public schools of resources, segregate schools, and—worst of all—leave students of color*

worse off. At a federal level we need to raise funding for local schools and work with states to reconsider their funding formulas.

#### D. LIAM DORRIS -US Representative 9th District

1. How do you define Anti-Racism? Please try to use your own words and do not quote from a book or online resources. Additionally, how as an elected official would you apply anti-racism? Give specific examples in either your current policies as a seated official or in your candidate platform.

*Racism is baked into the system. Racism is often built into policy and position by elected officials. Anti-Racism is the awareness that it exists, and significant efforts to recognize and remove that racism that is baked into the system. Many of my positions promote economic justice, whether it's Medicare For All, Tuition Free Public College, Legalization of Cannabis (and for that matter, using the word Cannabis instead of Marijuana in vernacular) – every little bit helps in this cause and journey. Some things shouldn't be privileges for those who have money, many things – like healthcare or education – should be a human right.*

2. How do you define privilege? How has privilege impacted decisions you have made as an elected official, or if you are running for the first time, as an engaged community member? If you are elected, how will you use your privilege to assist BIPOC communities?

*Privilege is the advantage built into the system that a person didn't earn or choose. It's related to the above question because the system does have build in bias that prioritizes certain groups over others. While race is a clear example of this, there is also gender, sexual orientation, class, religion, and ability.*

*I experience quite a bit of privilege, and I am always conscious of that; I see the abuse of or the absence of consideration of privilege on nearly a daily basis. It's important to realize this as I will be charged with writing and voting for policy and position that can alter, change, create or destroy privilege. Once again, a focus on economic justice is a compelling way to address the issues of race, sex, sexuality, class, religion, and ability.*

3. Given the history of the BLM Movement and the surge of support in 2020 after George Floyd was brutally murdered by police, the promised police and law enforcement reformed that ultimately has not happened; as well as the backlash against the BLM Movement we are currently seeing in media and politics; are you as a candidate or a current elected official a supporter of the BLM Movement & if so please articulate what that means in your own words? Give specific examples in your policy work or in your candidate platform.

*I support, have supported, and will continue to support BLM. I support the demilitarization of police, and I think that the education standards for police officers should be raised. I feel like one thing that's not readily thought about is that Law Enforcement are supposed to be first responders, they should not facilitate the need for first responders. Selling weapons of war to local law enforcement doesn't make sense to me, and law enforcement shouldn't see the public as 'opposing forces'.*

*I just want to throw in here that Bloomington Police, or any police department, doesn't need a BearCat.*

4. Given the American legacy of slavery, tyranny and discrimination against Black people Indigenous people and other people of color notably Asians & Latinos; do you believe that White Supremacy exists today in the US within the populous, our system of government, schools & education, etc... or in everyday life? IF so, please give as many examples as you think are necessary to elucidate that belief and if NOT please tell us why.

*It exists, and anyone who thinks that it doesn't is living in a bubble. It's probably deeper than most people can imagine, and I have zero doubt that it exists on every level, including and especially government and media.*

*I hope you, the reader, don't mind me not listing (the countless) examples of where people, whether consciously or coerced, are participating in or supporting white supremacy.*

5. To the best of your knowledge, describe why people of color are disproportionately targeted and arrested by the criminal justice system. What ideas do you have to make the justice system more equitable and impartial? What concerns do you have about the militarization of our police force? Name a specific issue in our community relating to the militarization of the police and how you have or would respond to it.

*Look, it comes down to wealth and income inequality and injustice. When people aren't being paid what they are worth, when every day is a struggle to survive for half or more of this nation, the nation becomes tribal, and when that happens, larger tribes push out the smaller tribes who are seen as a threat to their own survival. This isn't an accident; this is by design. When the wealthy promote tribal warfare and culture wars, people don't focus on the ruling class who built a system of inequality so that they can exploit and take advantage of the working class while the working class is weakened and fighting each other.*

6. What does restorative justice look like to you? What programs focused on restorative justice do you support or would you support as an elected official? How, give details?

*Restorative justice is having safe conversations (and remediation) over harm that's been done, accountability of those involved, and meeting the needs of those involved and the community. It's less about punitive measures, and more about finding the root causes of the problem and actually addressing them, for victims, offenders and the community.*

7. Would you support establishing a 311 number that connected people to emergency services and local organizations trained in handling crisis situations rather than the police? What should be done with individuals who make false reports to the police based on racial profiling or prejudice?

*Yes, and I think it would be worth it to do. Ideally, I would like to help address all the problems with law enforcement and the system, but the reality is that it'll take a long time to set things right, even if we started right now. This is a good idea for -at least- the interim, and I can imagine how this could continue to be a good thing, and even age well.*

8. Describe a society in which there are no prisons. How does that justice system differ from ours? What other aspects of culture would be different in a society without prisons?

*I struggle to imagine it, there will almost certainly always be violent offenders in society, and I don't believe in the death penalty. Let's just imagine a world where prisons only exist for violent offenders.*

*It certainly would be more peaceful and understanding, and society would build people up rather than tear them down. Justice could thrive and communities would strengthen. Justice wouldn't just be a right for those with money; it would be for all, and a lot of the root causes to non-violent crimes can be addressed rather than a person who was put into a position to commit the non-violent crime.*

9. Given that the Food insecurity rate for Monroe County is 14.4% which is 32.1% higher \* than the national average what plans or ideas do you have for food justice in our community? Do you support land redistribution for the purpose of growing food? Do you support community based food programs that bring locally grown nutrient dense food to those in need? If so please detail those programs here.

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*I support all these measures, especially community-based food programs. I am also, personally, an advocate of mutual aid.*

10. In what ways does food justice fit within wider social issues, ie economic, environmental or racial justice? Do you support allowing white supremacists in our local food/farmer's market? If so, why? If not, how do you propose to remove them?

*Food justice is directly tied to and is a cornerstone to economic justice. When people are food insecure, it leads to crimes of desperation that could have been and should be avoidable.*

11. Bloomington & Monroe County finds itself in an affordable housing crisis. How will you ensure more affordable housing in spite of the local government's defacto mandate to maintain higher housing prices for tax revenue? Do you support density housing with priority given to people of color, people making under \$30,000 a year, families with dependents, and people with disabilities? Specifically, please discuss non-student housing.

*I think that there should be the equivalent of dorms for people who are without homes. These dorms should be rent free, and no litmus tests should be applied. I think that there'd need to be an initial and ongoing investment in these facilities, and over a long enough timeline the savings will outpace the cost, especially looking at it from a local economy standpoint.*

12. Young students of color in particular Black students in Bloomington experience disproportionate rates of detention, suspension, and expulsion\*. To the best of your knowledge, how does this problem contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline? Given that the Indiana Coalition for Public Education has released a report detailing the need for desegregation in Monroe County and a plan for creating greater equity, what are your thoughts on school desegregation in 2022 and what are your plans to help this process?

*\* According to the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, "black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students. On average, 5% of white students are suspended, compared to 16% of black students."*

*(<https://ocrdata.ed.gov/downloads/crdc-school-discipline-snapshot.pdf>)*

*To the best of my knowledge, while a problem in and of itself, this is a symptom of the problem, not the entirety of problem. This goes back to question 1. This is a symptom of a much larger systemic problem where racism, specifically, is baked into the system, and we must find the solutions that are required while keeping Anti-Racism in the forefront of our minds when it comes to decision making, specially as it pertains to local, state, and federal legislation.*

MATTHEW FYFE -US Representative 9th District

1. How do you define Anti-Racism? Please try to use your own words and do not quote from a book or online resources. Additionally, how as an elected official would you apply anti-racism? Give specific examples in either your current policies as a seated official or in your candidate platform.

*Anti-racism is working toward dismantling policies and systems that spread bias and injustice due to race. As an elected official, I can work towards anti-racism by advocating for policies that positively impact communities of color as well as continuing to learn about my own biases and encouraging the public to do the same. I believe the top priorities of this campaign are all anti-racist policies: For example, advocating for labor unions and community labor agreements helps provide quality jobs for all, but disproportionately and positively impacts communities of color due to strong wages and collective bargaining. Black and Brown women are often paid far less than their white counterparts for the same labor - that needs to change.*

*Our campaign is also a fierce advocate for public education. We believe it is the bedrock of a good democracy. Attacks on public education (including defunding or privatization, testing and accountability, or zero-tolerance policies) have disproportionately and negatively impacted children of color. Our policy priorities, which aim to create pipelines for better leadership (including leadership that better reflects the differences in our schools), fully fund schools, and improve the classroom environment are all ways we can uplift Black and Brown communities.*

2. How do you define privilege? How has privilege impacted decisions you have made as an elected official, or if you are running for the first time, as an engaged community member? If you are elected, how will you use your privilege to assist BIPOC communities?

*Privilege is when certain groups in our society have fewer barriers to success, whether based on skin color, sexuality, race, class and more. As a straight, white man, I've had the privilege of not wondering if our Supreme Court will outlaw my marriage or being worried about a routine traffic stop going wrong. When elected, I will continue to advocate for representation of all communities - this includes hiring, listening, and learning from those in the BIPOC community.*

3. **Given the history of the BLM Movement and the surge of support in 2020 after George Floyd was brutally murdered by police, the promised police and law enforcement reformed that ultimately has not happened; as well as the backlash against the BLM Movement we are currently seeing in media and politics; are you as a candidate or a current elected official a supporter of the BLM Movement & if so please articulate what that means in your own words? Give specific examples in your policy work or in your candidate platform.**

*I support the Black Lives Matter movement. Although the movement was originally born after the acquittal of George Zimmerman, it has transformed into addressing and pushing past our country's long history of racism. It is absolutely shameful that it might be seen as controversial to support the success of Black communities. It's also important to support my words with actions, which is why I support a broad set of policies to tackle these issues. I want to fully fund schools (which so often disproportionately leaves out Black and Brown students), focus on responsive teaching practices and classroom programming instead of standardized tests, ensure Black and Brown students have*

*teachers who come from similar backgrounds, and end the school to prison pipeline. Healthcare, especially mental health, is also immensely important. I want to focus on issues that are hurting folks right now, like lowering the maternal and infant mortality rates. Far too often, Black women and children are dying because of a lack of access to comprehensive and quality healthcare. We also are turning to police, jails, and prisons to solve mental health issues, rather than investing in accessible and affordable counseling for everyone. I also believe in economic justice as a means to support Black and Brown communities. We should support workers rights and provide support to Black-owned businesses through grants and loans. Lastly, I support community oriented policing. We can promote continued de-escalation and bias training, so that law enforcement trusts and looks more like the communities they serve.*

- 4. Given the American legacy of slavery, tyranny and discrimination against Black people Indiginouse people and other people of color notably Asians & Latino/Latine people; do you believe that White Supremacy exists today in the US within the populus, our system of government, schools & education, etc... or in everyday life? IF so, please give as many examples as you think are necessary to elucidate that belief and if NOT please tell us why.**

*White supremacy unfortunately still exists in our society. Seeing federal representatives and candidates, including some running in the Indiana Ninth District Republican Primary, buy into harmful culture wars is just one example of identities being weaponized. In the past year, we've seen a wave bills in our state legislatures where Republicans have hid behind anti-CRT language instead of letting teachers teach our country's history.*

- 5. To the best of your knowledge, describe why people of color are disproportionately targeted and arrested by the criminal justice system. What ideas do you have to make the justice system more equitable and impartial? What concerns do you have about the militarization of our police force? Name a specific issue in our community relating to the militarization of the police and how you have or would respond to it.**

*Reforming criminal justice to be a more equitable and impartial system is important, especially considering how it has been used to oppress communities of color due to a long history of racism. There are many ways to tackle this issue on a federal level, whether through legislation or changes in how the Department of Justice runs. I support legalizing marijuana and expunging the records of those with marijuana-related charges. I also support other criminal justice reforms that focus on keeping people out of prisons and prioritize rehabilitative programming, like what was seen in the bipartisan First Step Act of 2018.*

*I am also concerned about law enforcement that increasingly looks like our military, rather than our communities. I support community-oriented policing where law enforcement can develop strong, long-lasting relationships with individuals, so police are seen as an aid and not something to fear.*

- 6. What does restorative justice look like to you? What programs focused on restorative justice do you support or would you support as an elected official? How, give details?**

*Restorative justice means focusing on rehabilitation, not punishment. It also means working at the roots of issues instead of focusing on outcomes after the fact.*

- 7. Would you support establishing a 311 number that connected people to emergency services and local organizations trained in handling crisis situations rather than the police? What should be done with individuals who make false reports to the police based on racial profiling or prejudice?**

*Yes, I support establishing a 311 number. Currently, police officers are asked to solve far too many issues in our community. If an individual is having a mental health crisis, they need a trained counselor to help them, not law enforcement.*

- 8. Describe a society in which there are no prisons. How does that justice system differ from ours? What other aspects of culture would be different in a society without prisons?**

*A society without prisons is one where the focus is on restorative justice and rehabilitation. It is also one where we collectively focus on the root causes of crime and poverty, rather than punish those who are experiencing the effects of it. The United States spends an immense amount on incarceration. Not only is incarceration often inhumane, it costs more in the long run when we could be investing dollars into communities and anti-recidivism strategies.*

- 9. Given that the Food insecurity rate for Monroe County is 14.4% which is 32.1% higher \* than the national average what plans or ideas do you have for food justice in our community? Do you support land redistribution for the purpose of growing food? Do you support community based food programs that bring locally grown nutrient dense food to those in need? If so please detail those programs here.**

*\*Statistics from Feeding America Org 2019. These stats have only gotten worse during the global pandemic, though new numbers have not been compiled in this form yet.*

*Despite so many families living in food deserts and without healthy meals everyday, the United States does not have a food shortage. We simply have a food distribution problem. I wholly support community based food programs that bring nutrient dense items to those in need, whether in Monroe County or across Southern Indiana. We should incentivize local and state governments to partner with farmers in the area to properly distribute healthy food to our schools and greater community.*

- 10. In what ways does food justice fit within wider social issues, ie economic, environmental or racial justice? Do you support allowing white supremacists in our local food/farmer's market? If so, why? If not, how do you propose to remove them?**

*Food justice is an important aspect of wider social issues. Having access to healthy and affordable nutrition options keeps communities strong. Throughout my teaching career, I've seen kids walk into class hungry and not know if they'll have a warm, healthy meal. These same kids often have to tackle economic, health, and racial injustices, too. For example, when families don't have access to nutritious food, they are more likely to have long-term health issues which in turn drives up healthcare costs and decreases quality of life.*

*I do not support giving white supremacists or others who present a clear danger to community members a platform at our local farmers markets.*

- 11. Bloomington & Monroe County finds itself in an affordable housing crisis. How will you ensure more affordable housing in spite of the local government's defacto mandate to maintain higher housing prices for tax revenue? Do you support density housing with priority given to people of color, people making under \$30,000 a year, families with dependents, and people with disabilities? Specifically, please discuss non-student housing.**

*I support denser housing in Bloomington to decrease our housing costs. Federally, HUD grants have been proven to be an effective tool to get people housing.*

- 12. Young students of color in particular Black students in Bloomington experience disproportionate rates of detention, suspension, and expulsion\*. To the best of your knowledge, how does this problem contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline? Given that the Indiana Coalition for Public Education has released a report detailing the need for desegregation in Monroe County and a plan for creating greater equity, what are your thoughts on school desegregation in 2022 and what are your plans to help this process?**

*\* According to the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, "black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students. On average, 5% of white students are suspended, compared to 16% of black students."  
(<https://ocrdata.ed.gov/downloads/crdc-school-discipline-snapshot.pdf>)*

*As a public school teacher, I have seen the impacts of bias, zero-tolerance policies, and other harsh disciplinary policies that contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline first-hand. I strive to provide a warm, safe, and nurturing school environment for all of my students, regardless of their background, and I'm happy to know that anti-bias trainings are happening across the country to make more classrooms culturally relevant and sensitive to students' needs. Focusing on quality classroom teaching instead of testing and punishing schools helps Black and Brown students find their passions and connect what they're learning to the real world setting. We need to recruit more Black and Brown educators, so that students and their communities are better reflected in their*

*schools. Furthermore, I'd support utilizing the Department of Education to explore school desegregation and how we can best tackle this issue.*

PENNY GITHENS -STATE REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 062

1. How do you define Anti-Racism? Please try to use your own words and do not quote from a book or online resources. Additionally, how as an elected official would you apply anti-racism? Give specific examples in either your current policies as a seated official or in your candidate platform.

*To me, anti-racism should address ways to dismantle the racism which exists in the United States and other parts of the world. As a Monroe County Commissioner, one of the things we do on a regular basis is insist on a non-discrimination statement in the various contracts which we sign. We have had county employees participate in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training. I have participated in the local BLM DEI Training for Elected Officials. We recently signed a contract with Fred Pryor for training modules, and I was happy to see that DEI training is one of the modules we could utilize for new employees and on-going DEI training. We have a non-discrimination policy in hiring. And, each week at the start of the Board of Commissioners' meeting, we read a statement affirming our commitment to welcome and protect the rights of all people. I also strongly support the training and interventions which our local Youth Services Bureau has instituted to prevent our youth from ever entering the criminal justice system.*

*In terms of my platform for State Representative in District 62, I am a strong supporter of public education. I want Indiana to institute universal pre-K for all 4-year-olds. Doing this helps to break the school-to-prison pipe-line, something which disproportionately impacts people of color, especially Black males. I also want to encourage more people of color to become teachers by offering scholarships and student loan forgiveness. Currently, white women constitute approximately 75% of our educators. I want teachers whom students and parents are more likely to relate to, and who can serve as role models, mentors, and counselors.*

*I believe teaching the true history of the U.S. is also important. Education is the bedrock of our democracy, and understanding our past is critical for moving forward.*

2. How do you define privilege? How has privilege impacted decisions you have made as an elected official, or if you are running for the first time, as an engaged community member? If you are elected, how will you use your privilege to assist BIPOC communities?

*Privilege? I know that I am “privileged” not to have to prove myself in every situation because of the color of my skin. I know because I am an older, white female, I can knock on a door and not have someone call the police. I know if I am driving and obeying the rules of the road, I almost certainly won’t be pulled over by law enforcement. As I reflect on the “privileges” that I have, I know I should also serve as an ally to anyone who does not have these privileges, which includes folks in the BIPOC community.*

*One of the other significant ways in which I have “privilege” is in our healthcare system. As a white person, I know healthcare providers are more likely to listen to me. I know that because I have health insurance through my employer – instead of government-provided health insurance – that I am less likely to suffer discrimination by healthcare workers. If elected to the Indiana General Assembly, I will push to expand Medicaid, including maternal-child care services and treatment for mental health and substance use disorders.*

*I love reading books by certain anthropologists, like paleoanthropologist Richard Leakey. Every human on the planet can trace their roots back to Africa, which makes the differentiation of people according to their skin color, hair texture, or other physical traits, ludicrous.*

*If I am elected to the Indiana General Assembly, I will fight at every opportunity the type of legislation that we saw in 2022 which sought to prevent the teaching of our true history. I will also call for investigations of all jail deaths, like the death of Ta’Neasha Chappell which occurred in the Jackson County jail (<http://www.wbiw.com/2021/12/20/death-of-jackson-county-inmate-ruled-undetermined-jackson-county-sheriffs-dept-employees-cleared-of-any-wrongdoing/>).*

3. Given the history of the BLM Movement and the surge of support in 2020 after George Floyd was brutally murdered by police, the promised police and law enforcement reformed that ultimately has not happened; as well as the backlash against the BLM Movement we are currently seeing in media and politics; are you as a candidate or a current elected official a supporter of the BLM Movement & if so please articulate what that means in your own words? Give specific examples in your policy work or in your candidate platform.

*Yes, I am a supporter of the BLM Movement. At the same time, I am a supporter of law enforcement. I believe law enforcement practices need to be reformed, and any hint of racism in law enforcement personnel needs to be weeded out. The deaths of individuals like George Floyd, Eric Garner and Michael Brown at the hands of law enforcement are unacceptable. What some people don’t seem to understand is that we may never know how many similar deaths went unpublicized because there wasn’t a group like BLM that could draw attention to the racism and injustice of what occurred. I’d rather live in a society where there was no need for BLM and other movements, but that’s not the society in which we all live.*

*Shortly after I was sworn in as a Monroe County Commissioner, I became aware of the*

*effort to create the STRIDE Center. This center serves as a law enforcement assisted diversion program. When an individual with mental illness or a substance use disorder has an encounter with local law enforcement, rather than being taken to jail, the individual can be taken to the STRIDE Center where they can receive services. In 2021, the first full year that the STRIDE Center was operational, it served over 230 individuals, individuals who were not arrested or jailed. That's a real step forward.*

*As a County Commissioner, I have been involved in the discussion of what a new county correctional center might look like. I am convinced that we need to work our way to restorative justice by providing incarcerated individuals with whatever treatment they need, job skills, and a path to re-enter society.*

*Too many of our current jail and prison inmates are people of color. We should decriminalize the possession of small amounts of marijuana and legalize medical marijuana. We should release from our jails and prisons individuals convicted of possessing small amounts of marijuana. We should also decriminalize the possession of syringes and make syringe services programs available throughout Indiana, not just in the counties where the County Commissioners approve them.*

4. Given the American legacy of slavery, tyranny and discrimination against Black people Indigenous people and other people of color notably, Asians & Latino/Latina people, do you believe that White Supremacy exists today in the US within the population, our system of government, schools & education, etc... or in everyday life? If so, please give as many examples as you think are necessary to elucidate that belief and if NOT please tell us why.

*I believe there are people who are White Supremacists, I believe there are White Supremacy groups like the Klu Klux Klan, and I believe racism exists in America. That is not the same as believing that White Supremacy defines the views of all white Americans, because if I believed that, I would likely give up. A reminder that racism exists was vividly brought home to me when Jennifer Crossley, who is now a member of the Monroe County Council, was the victim of racial slurs the day after Donald Trump was elected President in 2016. And all Jennifer was doing was walking on a sidewalk in downtown Bloomington.*

*There are other examples of White Supremacy which we must acknowledge, like the prominent statues of slave owners who fought in the Civil War. The idea of idolizing such individuals has become so distasteful that their statues are finally being removed. We're also renaming schools, streets, and parks which bear their names, which I applaud. We have seen that happen here in Bloomington with part of the former Jordan Avenue being renamed as Eagleson Avenue. (David Starr Jordan wasn't a slave owner, but he was a prominent racist and eugenicist.)*

*I have read about the desegregation of the U.S. Military. It is clear that for too long military commanders did not believe in the skills and intelligence of people of color. (Unless, like the use of Navaho code speakers in WWII, it suited their specific purpose.)*

*Then, with the Vietnam War, a disproportionate number of Black and Brown men were drafted to serve as grunts, which was itself a different form of discrimination. I hope, with the emergence of leaders like Former Secretary of State Colin Powell, that the U.S. military is on the path toward true equality for all.*

*Of course, horrific things have been done by the federal government, like the “Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male.” And there’s the high rate of Black maternal mortality rate that was still 2.9 times that of White non-Hispanics as recently as 2020*

*(<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/maternal-mortality/2020/maternal-mortality-rates-2020.htm#fig1>). This is totally unacceptable. Several years ago, when I attended a presentation by the Reproductive Justice group of the Bloomington Unitarian Universalist Church, Dr. Clark Brittain spoke about the “weatherization” Black people experience in the United States. This “weatherization” leads to higher stress, and I am led to wonder whether this higher stress is linked to higher blood pressure. This is important because high blood pressure is a pregnancy risk factor. If the constant pressure of racism were to be eliminated from the lives of Black women, would this lead to a reduced maternal mortality rate?*

5. To the best of your knowledge, describe why people of color are disproportionately targeted and arrested by the criminal justice system. What ideas do you have to make the justice system more equitable and impartial? What concerns do you have about the militarization of our police force? Name a specific issue in our community relating to the militarization of the police and how you have or would respond to it.

*When there were people at the Bloomington Farmers’ market protesting Schooner Creek Farm owners Sarah Dye and Doug Mackey, I could not believe that the Bloomington Police Department brought out their Bearcat. This seemed an excessive display of force.*

*I am not a law enforcement officer or a person who works in the criminal justice system, so I cannot tell answer the question of why people of color are disproportionately targeted for arrest and processed through our justice system. But, the numbers here do not lie, so we know that a disproportionate number of those in our jails and prisons are people of color.*

*I would like to know if this disproportionality is linked to education level, income level, and for some individuals, their English language skills. I would like to see if there is a discrepancy not only in the arrests, but also – and separately – in the incarceration rates. If it is linked to any of these items, then there is true bias in the system. We need to provide the resources and training necessary to ensure that the system treats people with higher levels of education and greater resources no differently than everyone else, and we need to push for “fair and equal treatment under the law.” One of the resources I would recommend is more staffing for the public defenders’ office. I would also like for there to be yearly, published numbers on arrests and incarceration broken down by “race,” ethnicity, and level of education.*

6. What does restorative justice look like to you? What programs focused on restorative justice do you support or would you support as an elected official? How, give details?

*As I have already stated, the Monroe County Commissioner are looking at ways to reform community corrections. We know that Monroe County needs a new jail, and I want to see one that provides space for education, better medical and mental health treatment, job training skills, contact with family and friends, space for a garden, expanded outdoor recreation space, and more private space to confer with one's lawyer. With a different configuration, this could actually be done with less staffing. I am also very interested in reviewing the Jackson-Jennings County Work Release facility which allows individuals to work and gainfully re-enter society with sufficient funds to find a place to live. Research indicates that if a person who is released from incarceration has housing and transportation, and quickly after that gainful employment, he or she is less like to re-enter the justice system.*

*I applaud the use of mediation in some situations. The local program run by CJAM (Community Justice and Mediation) has helped both offenders and victims. It is hoped that by helping offenders understand the harm they have done to victims, they will be less likely to commit such acts in the future.*

7. Would you support establishing a 311 number that connected people to emergency services and local organizations trained in handling crisis situations rather than the police? What should be done with individuals who make false reports to the police based on racial profiling or prejudice?

*I would need to learn more about the proposed 311 system and its success before answering this question. I hope BLM is willing to educate me.*

*I do support the use of social workers by law enforcement, especially in situations that call for de-escalation.*

*Individuals who make false reports to police based on racial profiling should be offered the alternative of an arrest or going through a research-based program on racism and changing their behavior.*

8. Describe a society in which there are no prisons. How does that justice system differ from ours? What other aspects of culture would be different in a society without prisons?

*No prisons? That would be novel. However, there are countries where all but the most heinous criminals are incarcerated for only a few years, and during their incarceration are offered rehabilitation and training. These countries – in Scandinavia – see much lower recidivism rates.*

*There is also another shift that needs to occur in our society. We need to end the stigma associated with convictions. With true restorative justice, society should acknowledge that with time in jail/prison, and with rehabilitation, a person has paid their debt to*

*society. I have met several people with felonies after they have re-entered society, and they often find it very hard to find a job and to find housing. This needs to end, especially when we look at the fact that too many of the individuals in our local jail suffer from mental health and/or a substance use disorder. Such individuals need treatment, not incarceration. One of the main platforms of my campaign has been providing more treatment facilities for such individuals.*

9. Given that the Food insecurity rate for Monroe County is 14.4% which is 32.1% higher\* than the national average, what plans or ideas do you have for food justice in our community? Do you support land redistribution for the purpose of growing food? Do you support community-based food programs that bring locally grown nutrient-dense food to those in need? If so, please detail those programs here.

*\*Statistics from Feeding America Org 2019. These stats have only gotten worse during the global pandemic, though new numbers have not been compiled in this form yet.*

*During the COVID pandemic, I have been a leader pushing for funding for the Hoosier Hills Food Bank (HHFB) and Pantry 279, and I have volunteered with both organizations to help distribute food. In talking with Julio Alonso, HHFB director, food banks across the country are shifting from just providing calories to providing healthy foods. In the times I volunteered to distribute food, there were always fresh fruit or vegetables given out. Pantry 279 also provides a delivery service to those unable to get to their location. I also participated in providing dinner to those coming to the Beacon Emergency Winter Shelter – which Monroe County helped fund – during the pandemic.*

*The Monroe County Parks and Recreation Department is offering garden plots to residents. I haven't heard if the garden training program previously provided by Lauren McAllister of 3 Flock Farm is continuing, but I hope it is.*

*It doesn't take a lot of space to grow healthy food. For example, it is possible to grow 100 pounds of potatoes in an old (thoroughly cleaned) old drum or large trash container. Some people even grow a limited amount of potatoes in 5- and 7-gallon buckets. Land and containers used for individuals to grow their own food should be easily accessible, without requiring people to travel long distances to tend to and harvest their crops. This speaks to repurposing spaces, like allowing people to grow food in the space between sidewalks and city streets as is being done in Los Angeles.*

*I also propose teaching people that perfectly shaped food isn't necessary for quality and nutrition. An "ugly" tomato or apple is just as nutritious as one that is more eye-appealing. If we could convince people to consume "ugly" produce, we could drastically reduce the amount of food waste in our country and help to bring down the cost of food to consumers. Redistributing land, especially if it is at a distance from where people live, doesn't necessarily translate to the land being used for growing food, which is why I want to bring ideas like container food production and repurposing land to where people live.*

10. In what ways does food justice fit within wider social issues, ie economic, environmental or racial justice? Do you support allowing white supremacists in our local food/farmer's market? If so, why? If not, how do you propose to remove them?

*When I learned of the attitudes/political leanings of Schooner Creek Farm owners Sarah Dye and Doug Mackey, my immediate reaction was, "Well, I will not purchase anything from them. And if enough people agree with me, these vendors will find it unprofitable to sell at the Bloomington Farmers' Market." I behave the same way toward businesses that do not provide health insurance which covers birth control to their employees, I do not do spend my money there. If it is a non-profit, I do not donate to them. If it is a stall at the county fair selling Confederate flags, I will not purchase anything from them. I do not want such entities to use their money/profit to promote ideas and practices which prolong or expand racism in our country.*

*I also try to support businesses, like the Switchyard Brewery, which pay their waitstaff a living wage rather than having the staff rely on tips. I have talked about this policy with Kurtis Cummins, Switchyard's owner, and I think his approach is one more way to provide economic justice to people of color. Ditto for places like Costco, which is employee-owned.*

*Several years ago the City of Bloomington published a list of businesses owned by women. I would like to see this updated and include a list of minority-owned businesses.*

11. Bloomington & Monroe County finds itself in an affordable housing crisis. How will you ensure more affordable housing in spite of the local government's defacto mandate to maintain higher housing prices for tax revenue? Do you support density housing with priority given to people of color, people making under \$30,000 a year, families with dependents, and people with disabilities? Specifically, please discuss non-student housing.

*It is very difficult to get developers to build affordable housing. As you have noted, allowing greater density is one way to decrease the cost of housing. The Monroe County Commissioners are currently exploring ways to work with a developer to create additional affordable housing in a residential-TIF area, writing in a covenant to the deed which would hold the re-sale price of the house to a level connected to the local average median income. This would still allow a homeowner to acquire equity in a property while keeping it affordable.*

*Monroe County Government has donated land to Habitat for Humanity for its latest subdivision, and we may donate some of the federal American Rescue Plan Act money to them, also. While it is not widely known, those with disabilities are eligible to own a Habitat Home.*

*I realize that some of my votes for housing rezones have not always pleased some people – especially the developers – but part of my reason for denying these requests has been due to environmental concerns, especially when the development is near karsts. And, I*

*do not think homes with a sticker price of \$275,000 (and up) qualify as affordable housing.*

*If the current annexation effort by the City of Bloomington is successful, housing costs – due to increased property taxes – will make housing in the annexed areas more expensive. I was recently out in Van Buren Township talking with residents, and there are several who have their homes on the market in order to escape this possible increase.*

*Finally, housing affordability is also linked to wages. If local employers paid higher wages, housing would be more affordable. And, if the mayor of Bloomington is able to push through a higher local income tax, people will have less money to pay for housing. As a County Commissioner my hands are tied when it comes to establishing a higher minimum wage. However, if I am elected to the Indiana General Assembly, this is something I plan to work on. I also want to work on pay equity and paid family leave.*

*Indiana's income and sales taxes are extremely regressive. Currently Indiana has a flat-rate income tax. Making the income tax progressive, by reducing the percentage of the tax on lower income earners and increasing it on higher income earners, would put more money into people's pockets to help cover the cost of housing. And if Indiana reduced the sales tax rate and relied more on income taxes to pay for government operations and services, this would also benefit lower wage earners.*

12. Young students of color in particular Black students in Bloomington experience disproportionate rates of detention, suspension, and expulsion\*. To the best of your knowledge, how does this problem contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline? Given that the Indiana Coalition for Public Education has released a report detailing the need for desegregation in Monroe County and a plan for creating greater equity, what are your thoughts on school desegregation in 2022 and what are your plans to help this process?

- *According to the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, "black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students. On average, 5% of white students are suspended, compared to 16% of black students."*  
<https://ocrdata.ed.gov/downloads/crdc-school-discipline-snapshot.pdf>

*As I said earlier, we need to actively work to increase the number of BIPOC teachers, counselors and school administrators. Paired with this, we need to offer quality, universal pre-K to all 4-year-olds in Indiana to prepare them for kindergarten. Those who attend quality pre-K programs are more likely to graduate from high school, earn more over their lifetimes, and are less likely to be incarcerated.*

*Families socialize their children differently. If a child has been taught that it is disrespectful to look directly at an adult when responding to the adult, that puts this child at a disadvantage in a school run by teachers who believe a student should look at the teacher to show that the student is paying attention. If there is a child who is not looking at the teacher, rather than punishing the child, the teacher should ascertain in other ways if the child is paying attention. If a child is agitated, rather than punishing the child, the teacher or other school personnel should figure out why that is happening. If there is a*

*child who is falling asleep during class, instead of punishing the child, school personnel should figure out why that is happening. If a student is distracted because they are hungry, we should feed them. We need to ensure that a student's housing is safe, not just from violence, but also from lead paint which can cause neurological damage. (And, as we have seen in Flint, Michigan, there are also problems caused by aging lead water pipes.) I have a masters degree in educational psychology and have served as a volunteer educational advocate with IN\*SOURCE (<https://insource.org>) for almost 25 years. Students with neurological deficits often have difficulty concentrating and struggle to learn. As in Flint, Michigan, we need to clean up the environment in which children live and provide them with healthy, nutritious food. That's not just in Bloomington and Monroe County, but across the State. That's not just for students of color, but for all students, though students of color may be disproportionately impacted by these problems.*

*Figuring out why behaviors happen is important, and I can give you an example from my own son, who has autism. When my son first started elementary school, I prepared his lunch for him. However, when he was in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, he indicated he wanted to "be like the other kids," and buy his lunch at school. His wonderful special education teacher had developed a visual chart to track his behavior and his ability to stay on task. This chart was taped to his desk each day and then came home to me each night in a notebook. Suddenly, at around 2:00 PM every afternoon my son's behavior started to deteriorate. His special education teacher and I sat down together to try to figure out what was happening, when I realized that the change in his behavior started when he began buying his lunch. The next day his special education teacher followed him into the cafeteria to observe what was happening. She realized that with the time it took my son to go through the lunch line, he didn't have time to eat very much. As soon as my son started taking his lunch to school again, the behaviors almost completely vanished. He just needed to eat.*

*Teachers, counselors, school psychologists, school administrators, and school board members are aware that a higher percentage of Black students are detained, suspended and expelled. Those who are detained are often seen as "problem students," and carry a label from one teacher/class to the next. It also impacts the student's self-image and confidence. Those who are suspended fall behind in class work, making it more difficult for them to excel. And those who are expelled find it difficult to find gainful employment with no degree. Black students are also disproportionately identified as special education students, especially as students with learning disabilities. We need alternatives to suspension and expulsion to keep students on-track with their learning, we need more social workers to address challenges outside of school, we need more BIPOC teachers to serve as role models, counselors and mentors, and we need to offer extended school year services to help with remediation if it is needed. Instead of blaming the child, we need to identify what is interfering with a student's progress and work to correct the situation. That takes resources, and the State should be providing significantly more funding to public education to make these things happen.*

*Respectfully submitted by Penny Githens on April 18, 2022. I affirm that this is solely my work, completed without assistance from anyone else.*

ALLISON CHOPRA -JUDGE OF THE MONROE CIRCUIT COURT, 10TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, NO. 7

*Any answers I could give to these questions must be tempered by the Indiana Code of Judicial Conduct, which says that judges have an obligation to uphold the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the judiciary. This includes avoiding impropriety and even the appearance of impropriety in all of a judge's activities, including in their extrajudicial activities so as to minimize conflict, and it includes not engaging in political or campaign activity inconsistent with the three I's.*

*These questions were released on Friday, April 15, so there was very little time to address them to the breadth and depth called for. Nevertheless, here are my responses, made to the best of my ability.*

1. How do you define Anti-Racism? Please try to use your own words and do not quote from a book or online resources. Additionally, how as an elected official would you apply anti-racism? Give specific examples in either your current policies as a seated official or in your candidate platform.

*It's not enough just to acknowledge the existence of systemic racism; to be anti-racist, we must also recognize the existence of implicit bias, and work actively to counter prejudice both conscious and unconscious. There is significant implicit bias in the criminal justice system. As a judge or even a candidate for judge, I am concerned that it would be unethical to answer this question further.*

2. How do you define privilege? How has privilege impacted decisions you have made as an elected official, or if you are running for the first time, as an engaged community member? If you are elected, how will you use your privilege to assist BIPOC communities?

*Privilege is remaining free of the burden of others' biases whether conscious or not, and never being forced to reckon with the problems of society, let alone from other people's perspective. But privilege comes from the Latin for "private law." As a judge, the last thing I want to do is to uphold someone's privilege, or exacerbate another's lack of it, by allowing the law to be applied exceptionally because of the color of one's skin.*

*But, knowing the inequities people of color have experienced, I must always keep in mind their experience of those inequities when making decisions that involve them. I made this same effort in my career as a city council member: I pushed the application of the \$15 minimum wage for all city employees, even seasonal ones. As chair of the Jack Hopkins Social Services Committee, the citizen members I had the opportunity to appoint were young women of color.*

3. Given the history of the BLM Movement and the surge of support in 2020 after George Floyd was brutally murdered by police, the promised police and law enforcement reformed [sic] that ultimately has not happened; as well as the backlash against the BLM Movement [sic] we are currently seeing in media and politics; are you as a candidate or a current elected official a supporter of the BLM Movement & if so please articulate what that means in your own words? Give specific examples in your policy work or in your candidate platform.

*I do agree with the principal statement of the movement's title: Black lives matter. They have not been treated equally in the legal system overall and the criminal justice system in particular, and we as members of a society have an obligation to actively move that society closer to equal treatment for all who must enter it.*

4. Given the American legacy of slavery, tyranny and discrimination against Black people Indigenous people and other people of color notably Asians & Latino/Latine people; do you believe that White Supremacy exists [sic] today in the US within the populus [sic], our system of government, schools & education, etc... or in everyday life? IF so, please give as many examples as you think are necessary to elucidate that belief and if NOT please tell us why.

*Yes, White supremacy exists, partly because we are not yet a society that lives up to the ideals described in our founding documents. We should be ruled by just laws, not the arbitrary whims of people, let alone people with biases and hatred toward others for their physical differences.*

5. To the best of your knowledge, describe why people of color are disproportionately targeted and arrested by the criminal justice system. What ideas do you have to make the justice system more equitable and impartial? What concerns do you have about the militarization of our police force? Name a specific issue in our community relating to the militarization of the police and how you have or would respond to it.

*I feel this question is answered by the other questions herein. Questions about the militarization of police forces are for elected mayors, city councils and sheriffs, not for judicial candidates.*

6. What does restorative justice look like to you? What programs focused on restorative justice do you support or would you support as an elected official? How, give details?

*Restorative justice is a system where the parties can grow and learn from each other and hear each other out, as an alternative resolution to a case other than a conviction. I would support the use of an underutilized organization like CJAM, which I've been a financial supporter of for more than a decade. I do think, though, that it's more the role of prosecutors and defense attorneys to utilize mediation; victims have rights in the state of Indiana, and as a judge, I don't think it would be right to order victims to mediate.*

7. Would you support establishing a 311 number that connected people to emergency services and local organizations trained in handling crisis situations rather than the police? What should be done with individuals who make false reports to the police based on racial profiling or prejudice?

*This question is moot. There is already a number in the x11 series exactly for this type of service, and it's 211, and it's been active in this community for years. (311 is for cities to provide a single point of contact for all municipal services.) Stiffer penalties for false reporting are matters for legislators to enact and for prosecutors to enforce; judges must apply laws as they are written.*

8. Describe a society in which there are no prisons. How does that justice system differ from ours? What other aspects of culture would be different in a society without prisons?

I simply don't believe that there should be no prisons. No country in the world has eliminated all their prisons. Not even the Netherlands. But the fact that they have one-tenth as many people in prison should make us ask the question why. Some of the implications of the questions you've asked, and some of the answers I've given, would improve our society.

*Looking to keep non-violent offenders out of prison, or the bail system, will be a goal I keep in mind whenever possible. But there has to be a place for offenders who are violent or who are sexual predators.*

9. Given that the Food insecurity rate for Monroe County is 14.4% which is 32.1% higher \* than the national average what plans or ideas do you have for food justice in our community? Do you support land redistribution for the purpose of growing food? Do you support community based

food programs that bring locally grown nutrient dense food to those in need? If so please detail those programs here.

\*Statistics from Feeding America Org 2019. These stats have only gotten worse during the global pandemic, though new numbers have not been compiled in this form yet.

*This question is intended for executive and legislative offices, and goes well beyond the scope of a judicial race.*

10. In what ways does food justice fit within wider social issues, ie economic, environmental or racial justice? Do you support allowing white supremacists in our local food/farmer's market? If so, why? If not, how do you propose to remove them?

*This question is intended for city-related offices, and goes well beyond the scope of the county judicial race I'm running for.*

11. Bloomington & Monroe County finds itself in an affordable housing crisis. How will you ensure more affordable housing in spite of the local government's defacto mandate to maintain higher housing prices for tax revenue? Do you support density housing with priority given to people of color, people making under \$30,000 a year, families with dependents, and people with disabilities? Specifically, please discuss non-student housing.

*Questions of affordable housing and tax revenue are completely beyond the scope of a judge's duties, or her ability to affect.*

12. Young students of color in particular Black students in Bloomington experience disproportionate rates of detention, suspension, and expulsion\*. To the best of your knowledge, how does this problem contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline? Given that the Indiana Coalition for Public Education has released a report detailing the need for desegregation in Monroe County and a plan for creating greater equity, what are your thoughts on school desegregation in 2022 and what are your plans to help this process?

\* According to the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, "black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students. On average, 5% of white students are suspended, compared to 16% of black students." (<https://ocrdata.ed.gov/downloads/crdc-school-discipline-snapshot.pdf>)

*This is definitely a question for a candidate for school board, not for a judge who may be asked to rule on lawsuits related to such matters.*

EMILY A. SALZMANN - JUDGE OF THE MONROE CIRCUIT COURT, 10TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, NO. 7

1. How do you define Anti-Racism? Please try to use your own words and do not quote from a book or online resources. Additionally, how as an elected official would you apply anti-racism? Give specific examples in either your current policies as a seated official or in your candidate platform.

*I define Anti-Racism as the continuous and deliberate awareness of the presence of racial bias or prejudice. This bias or prejudice can be implicit or explicit and can be identified both in our society and in ourselves. Racism in all its forms should be first identified and then confronted. I am committed to this process and to being aware of any racial dynamics or biases that exist in the courtroom.*

*My childhood and educational experiences were unique and have greatly impacted my beliefs. At age 5, my parents enrolled me in a Spanish Immersion program where all of my classes and school activities were taught and conducted in Spanish. Many fellow students, teachers and experiences were based in the Latino community. My appreciation for its culture is engrained in my life's outlook. The essence of how I learned was through different cultures and is illustrated by a fitting example: I learned U.S. History in Spanish, from a Hispanic-American teacher. My childhood and adolescence have increased my sensitivity to and appreciation of other cultures and affected my views concerning racism.*

2. How do you define privilege? How has privilege impacted decisions you have made as an elected official, or if you are running for the first time, as an engaged community member? If you are elected, how will you use your privilege to assist BIPOC communities?

*I believe that privilege is the collective benefits and attributes that certain groups experience that are based on societal and historical prejudices. These can be based on race, gender, sexual orientation or other factors. It is critical to be aware of the privileges that you have. Individuals who come from different groups have drastically different experiences of the world. All of my educators growing up and many of my fellow students looked different than I do. But more importantly, these people who were different from me talked about their lives, cultures and challenges so that we would all have an appreciation of each other. Instead of being raised to be insulated by the privilege into which I was born, I was taught to use the privilege that I have to advocate for and help others. I was encouraged from childhood to use my fluency in Spanish to help those who had language barriers and who needed help communicating. Since becoming an attorney, I have sought to assist others both with my language skills but also through legal services. These efforts have been focused on the Monroe County Bar Association's mission to promote access to justice, service on the board of Cutters Soccer (a local non-profit) and the taking of pro bono and appointment cases that many times*

*utilize my Spanish fluency. I will use the privileges that I have had to work toward an inclusive environment for the people I will serve if elected*

3. Given the history of the BLM Movement and the surge of support in 2020 after George Floyd was brutally murdered by police, the promised police and law enforcement reformed that ultimately has not happened; as well as the backlash against the BLM Movement we are currently seeing in media and politics; are you as a candidate or a current elected official a supporter of the BLM Movement & if so, please articulate what that means in your own words? Give specific examples in your policy work or in your candidate platform.

*Yes, I am a supporter of the BLM Movement. I believe that black lives are the lives that are being lost in this country in use of force situations with police. I believe that training on the use of force, implicit bias and the culture of law enforcement all need to be mandated and increased. My focus is on criminal defense in my legal practice. I work both with police and with those individuals who are interacting with police every day. It is my job to advocate for my clients who are trying to move forward after this interaction and to help them feel heard.*

4. Given the American legacy of slavery, tyranny and discrimination against Black people Indigenous people and other people of color notably Asians & Latino/Latina people; do you believe that White Supremacy exists today in the US within the populous, our system of government, schools & education, etc... or in everyday life? IF so, please give as many examples as you think are necessary to elucidate that belief and if NOT please tell us why.

*Yes, I do believe that white supremacy exists in our society. There was a time that white supremacy was becoming, throughout most of the United States, a present but less visible phenomenon. However, racism and hatred have become overt in our society again. There are countless examples of where white supremacy and racism exists in our society if you just read the headlines. For example, in November 2018, there was a 26-year-old African American security guard working for a bar in Illinois. A gunman had shot four people in that bar. The security guard had subdued the shooter and pinned him to the ground. When a police officer responded to the incident at the bar, he mistakenly shot the security guard. When this is the kind of headline that we read with regularity in this country, there can be no doubt that white supremacy exists in our society.*

5. To the best of your knowledge, describe why people of color are disproportionately targeted and arrested by the criminal justice system. What ideas do you have to make the justice system more equitable and impartial? What concerns do you have about the militarization of our police force? Name a specific issue in our community relating to the militarization of the police and how you have or would respond to it.

*There is no simple response to why people of color are disproportionately affected by the criminal justice system. The system and society that we live in has evolved through historical prejudices, the expansion of the prison system, disproportionate sentences for different drugs, socio economic issues, etc. What we have seen historically is that these issues have been recognized and addressed by our federal legislative branch. Based at some upon the works of David Harris, the legislative branch took heed of his studies and held legislative hearings and reformative measures for the disproportionate stopping of African Americans. They ameliorated the problem by tying federal funds to require implementation of new policies and practices to address the issue.*

*As a Judge, I will be bound to hear the cases that come before me fully and fairly and to apply the law equally among all. I am committed to doing so justly and to be aware of both personal and societal implicit and explicit biases when making all decisions. However, Judges are only one part of the large and evolving criminal justice system. I cannot ethically state how I would rule on any particular case, but I can say that I am committed to making the system fairer and more just.*

*Militarization of the police force has accelerated the declining interaction between society and those that are pledged to protect it. The idea of engaging with an enemy is inherent in the military and the increased militarization of the police force creates that same dynamic in our society. That dynamic will likely worsen given the evolving gun laws in Indiana at this time.*

6. What does restorative justice look like to you? What programs focused on restorative justice do you support or would you support as an elected official? How, give details?

*Restorative Justice prioritizes addressing the underlying issue leading to a conflict among the parties and increasing understanding and restitution among them; as opposed to our current justice system with a dual rehabilitative/punitive purpose. I support the increased use of restorative justice in our society. The Community Justice and Mediation Center here in Monroe County (CJAM) is a wonderful restorative justice and mediation organization that already does great work in our community. CJAM provides mediation services, restorative justice services and a shoplifting and theft education class, all designed to provide restorative justice to the community of Monroe County. The Center for Community Justice in Elkhart, Indiana has engaged in groundbreaking restorative justice services throughout the state. If elected, I would explore the use of restorative justice in all cases appropriate for these services where the parties agree to participate.*

7. Would you support establishing a 311 number that connected people to emergency services and local organizations trained in handling crisis situations rather than the police? What should be done with individuals who make false reports to the police based on racial profiling or prejudice?

*Yes, I would. This kind of service is essential because a lot of the interaction that police have may not be because a crime has occurred. Many times, police are called for other reasons such as mental health crises or intoxication but situations escalate or they seek to intervene because they believe the commission of a crime may be imminent. The use of appropriate social work, mental health and substance use resources would assist to decrease the number of individuals engaging with police and would improve outcomes. I personally believe that individuals who make false reports to police should be charged. A false report, even of a minor crime, has huge effects on the lives of those who are falsely accused of a crime.*

8. Describe a society in which there are no prisons. How does that justice system differ from ours? What other aspects of culture would be different in a society without prisons?

*The world I see without prisons is a society with no need of them. I see a society with affordable housing for all. I see a society with medical services for all. I see a society with mental health treatment for all. A society with no violence, with no hatred, with no hunger, with no abuse and with no racism.*

9. Given that the Food insecurity rate for Monroe County is 14.4% which is 32.1% higher \* than the national average what plans or ideas do you have for food justice in our community? Do you support land redistribution for the purpose of growing food? Do you support community-based food programs that bring locally grown nutrient dense food to those in need? If so, please detail those programs here.

*\*Statistics from Feeding America Org 2019. These stats have only gotten worse during the global pandemic, though new numbers have not been compiled in this form yet.*

*Food insecurity is an issue that faces far more citizens in our community than it should. We should all work together to address this. I support the existing efforts in our community to provide food for those in need such as the Community Kitchen, Hoosier Hills Foodbank and especially the programs directed at providing food to children who are suffering from food insecurity. However, I also believe there is more assistance needed based on the current number of those suffering from food insecurity. As a judge, the more services that exist, the more resources we can refer those individuals to who come before us needing help. I would like as many tools as possible to get assistance to those in need.*

10. In what ways does food justice fit within wider social issues, ie economic, environmental or racial justice? Do you support allowing white supremacists in our local food/farmer's market? If so, why? If not, how do you propose to remove them?

*Though it is a question that is important to Monroe County, judicial ethics require that I not answer this question. Were I to answer this question it could disclose information regarding how I might rule on a question before me as a Judge.*

11. Bloomington & Monroe County finds itself in an affordable housing crisis. How will you ensure more affordable housing in spite of the local government's defacto mandate to maintain higher housing prices for tax revenue? Do you support density housing with priority given to people of color, people making under \$30,000 a year, families with dependents, and people with disabilities? Specifically, please discuss non-student housing.

*Although I believe in affordable housing and the impact of stable housing in improving the lives of individuals, as a judicial candidate and, if elected, a judge, I will not be in a position to ensure more affordable housing.*

12. Young students of color in particular Black students in Bloomington experience disproportionate rates of detention, suspension, and expulsion\*. To the best of your knowledge, how does this problem contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline? Given that the Indiana Coalition for Public Education has released a report detailing the need for desegregation in Monroe County and a plan for creating greater equity, what are your thoughts on school desegregation in 2022 and what are your plans to help this process?

*\* According to the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, "black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students. On average, 5% of white students are suspended, compared to 16% of black students." (<https://ocrdata.ed.gov/downloads/crdc-school-discipline-snapshot.pdf>)*

Again, my answer would necessarily disclose information regarding how I might rule on a question before me as a judge. For that reason, judicial ethics prevent me from answering this question.

APRIL ANN WILSON - JUDGE OF THE MONROE CIRCUIT COURT, 10TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, NO. 7

*Dear BLM BTOWN Core Council,*

*Thank you for the Black Lives Matter Primary Questionnaire. Due to time constraints and rules guiding judicial candidates, I am submitting this letter in response.*

*As judicial candidates, we may not make pledges, promises, or commitments inconsistent with the impartial performance of judicial responsibilities. By answering some of these questions, it may appear to some that I support particular issues or platforms, affecting my impartiality. Consistent with my commitment to this position, I am unable to provide a response to many of the following questions. Additionally, present work and campaign responsibilities affect my ability to fully answer the remaining questions.*

*As a judicial officer, I will be committed to performing my duties impartially, with an open mind, and without bias or prejudice.*

*Respectfully,*

*April Wilson*

KAREN ELISE WRENBECK- JUDGE OF THE MONROE CIRCUIT COURT, 10TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, NO. 7

1. How do you define Anti-Racism? Please try to use your own words and do not quote from a book or online resources. Additionally, how as an elected official would you apply anti-racism? Give specific examples in either your current policies as a seated official or in your candidate platform.

*Anti-racism is recognizing that racism exists in our society (both historically and presently) and actively fighting against racism.*

*Indiana Code of Judicial Conduct Rule 2.3(A) requires that a judge perform the duties of the office without bias or prejudice, and a judge shall not, in the performance of judicial duties, by words or conduct manifest a bias or prejudice upon the basis of race. Furthermore, the judge must not permit individuals under her direction and control from violating this provision.*

*I actively seek to apply anti-racism in my personal and in my professional life as a public defender. In addition to continuing legal education, I will also make it a priority to continue to train and educate myself on this subject as well. As judge, I would ensure that all my court staff are required to acknowledge and follow an anti-racist code of conduct consistent with Rule 2.3(A). All court staff should also be required to complete implicit bias training.*

*Judicial candidates are not permitted to have a campaign platform like candidates for other offices.*

2. How do you define privilege? How has privilege impacted decisions you have made as an elected official, or if you are running for the first time, as an engaged community member? If you are elected, how will you use your privilege to assist BIPOC communities?

*Privilege means the intrinsic advantages that people have but they typically don't think about, because they have not experienced the perspective of other underprivileged people. I recognize my privilege as a white cis-gender straight female.*

*As a public defender, I use my privilege every day in advocating for my clients, who are facing a very daunting and intimidating legal system. I ensure that my clients are heard and respected at every stage of the process. I do not remain quiet when I experience something that's unfair or offensive. I use my privilege to support and mentor my colleagues, particularly our newer attorneys who are still learning how to manage their cases. I use my privilege to teach and guide our office's interns; I want them to know why this work matters and hopefully encourage*

*them to consider public defense for their careers.*

*As a public defender, I've worked with many clients who are inherently mistrustful of the system. I have to do a lot of work to overcome my clients' preconceived notions about me as a public defender. Common misconceptions I hear regularly are that I'm paid more when a client pleads guilty, that the judge is my boss, that I don't care about my clients or what happens to them, etc. None of those things are true.*

*Those preconceived notions for public defenders overlap a lot with those for judges. My goal as judge would be for parties to have confidence that I've listened to them, considered all the evidence before making a decision, and that I'm dedicated to properly handling their case. As a judge, it would also be my obligation to follow the law and protect everyone's constitutional rights.*

*I would also be responsible for running my courtroom. I will treat everyone before me with dignity and respect, and I will not tolerate any type of mistreatment or derogatory comments. As a judge, consistent with Rule 2.3, I will also require lawyers in proceedings before me to refrain from manifesting a bias or prejudice, or engaging in harassment based on attributes such as race.*

3. Given the history of the BLM Movement and the surge of support in 2020 after George Floyd was brutally murdered by police, the promised police and law enforcement reformed that ultimately has not happened; as well as the backlash against the BLM Movement we are currently seeing in media and politics; are you as a candidate or a current elected official a supporter of the BLM Movement & if so please articulate what that means in your own words? Give specific examples in your policy work or in your candidate platform.

*Yes, I believe Black Lives Matter. It would be fundamentally inconsistent to be a public defender and not believe that Black Lives Matter. As a public defender, I am in the trenches every day fighting to protect constitutional rights and ensuring that my clients' voices are heard.*

*Judicial candidates are not permitted to have a campaign platform.*

4. Given the American legacy of slavery, tyranny and discrimination against Black people Indigenous people and other people of color notably Asians & Latino/Latine people; do you believe that White Supremacy exists today in the US within the populus, our system of government, schools & education, etc... or in everyday life? IF so, please give as many examples as you think are necessary to elucidate that belief and if NOT please tell us why.

*Yes, I believe white supremacy exists today. If you've spent any amount of time reading the news or browsing the Internet, examples are everywhere. The video footage from the Charlottesville rally in 2017 immediately comes to mind as an obvious example. Our society has many institutions that are still impacted by the lasting effects of white supremacy: education, housing, business, and the legal system to name a few.*

5. To the best of your knowledge, describe why people of color are disproportionately targeted and arrested by the criminal justice system. What ideas do you have to make the justice system more equitable and impartial? What concerns do you have about the militarization of our police force? Name a specific issue in our community relating to the militarization of the police and how you have or would respond to it.

*The research and data are very clear: vulnerable people and marginalized people and BIPOC people have faced discrimination at every stage of the criminal process nationwide. This happens for many reasons, including racism, implicit bias, and our country's terrible history of inequality.*

*The criminal legal system can fail to be equitable and impartial in many ways. Generally, communities of color are subject to more policing. Officers are more likely to detain or arrest a person of color. Prosecutors may be more likely to charge a person of color. Defense attorneys may do less work to fight the case and protect the rights of a person of color. Judges may more harshly sentence a person of color. Probation officers may file more violations on a person of color. Parole boards may more often deny release to a person of color.*

*It's critical that judges acknowledge this history and face it head on, to make the system more equitable and impartial. All court systems should be studied and data should be reported on how the courts are handling their cases. All court staff, including judges, should be required to complete implicit bias training. All court staff should be required to acknowledge and follow an anti-racist code of conduct.*

*I cannot address the militarization of the police due to Indiana Code of Judicial Conduct Rule 4.1(A)(13), because this is an example of a case, controversy, or issue that is likely to come before the court. I cannot make any promises or commitments on that issue, as that would be inconsistent with the impartial performance of my duties in judicial office.*

6. What does restorative justice look like to you? What programs focused on restorative justice do you support or would you support as an elected official? How, give details?

*Restorative justice is a method of resolving harms/disputes that purposely takes place outside of the traditional criminal legal system. It usually works by bringing together the person who caused the harm, the person/organization who was harmed, and the community where the harm happened. The goals are to ensure that all parties hear from each other, encourage discussion and relationship building, and avoid future harm.*

*This is an example of an area of law that hasn't fully developed yet, so there's not many detailed restorative justice procedures or policies in the Indiana Code.*

*I would support any and all restorative justice programs permitted by law including: diversion, mediation (either professional or community-based), and restorative re-entry (for individuals being released from prison/jail). CJAM is a local organization that does a lot of*

*work in this area. I would be interested in partnering with them to encourage restorative justice options.*

*Restorative justice is a process that all parties have to agree to participate in, including defendants/offenders, victims, and the community. As judge, I would certainly encourage its use for any type of case where the parties may be willing to participate.*

*Judges generally cannot and should not order an unwilling party to participate in restorative justice programs. For example, if a defendant or victim does not wish to participate in such a program, their rights to decline participation should be respected.*

7. Would you support establishing a 311 number that connected people to emergency services and local organizations trained in handling crisis situations rather than the police? What should be done with individuals who make false reports to the police based on racial profiling or prejudice?

*Yes, I would support establishing a 311 number.*

*If anyone makes a false report to the police for any reason, the police can send that information to the prosecutor's office for possible charging. The prosecutor's office decides whether to file charges for false reporting.*

*I am not permitted to say what should be done with individuals who make false reports to the police based on racial profiling or prejudice due to Indiana Code of Judicial Conduct Rule 4.1(A)(13), because this is an example of a case, controversy, or issue that is likely to come before the court. I cannot make any promises or commitments on that issue, as that would be inconsistent with the impartial performance of my duties in judicial office.*

8. Describe a society in which there are no prisons. How does that justice system differ from ours? What other aspects of culture would be different in a society without prisons?

*I don't know of any modern nation that governs without any form of state incarceration, but I am aware of countries where sentences are considerably shorter, with a much greater focus on rehabilitation efforts, life skill building, and successful reintegration into society. Denmark is widely regarded as having one of the best criminal legal systems in the world, and, with this hypothetical, I imagine an American society without prisons would mirror some of the cultural differences that exist in Denmark's system: Social problems are not necessarily criminal (so certain issues could be better handled by economic and social measures separate from the criminal legal system).*

9. Given that the Food insecurity rate for Monroe County is 14.4% which is 32.1% higher \* than the national average what plans or ideas do you have for food justice in our community? Do you support land redistribution for the purpose of growing food? Do you

support community based food programs that bring locally grown nutrient dense food to those in need? If so please detail those programs here.

*\*Statistics from Feeding America Org 2019. These stats have only gotten worse during the global pandemic, though new numbers have not been compiled in this form yet.*

*Judicial candidates are not permitted to make promises or have a campaign platform. Judges don't control the city or county budget, and judges don't pass laws/policy on any specific topic, including food insecurity.*

*I personally support and have referred clients to many of our community-based food programs (Hoosier Hills Food Bank, Mother Hubbard's Cupboard, Pantry #279, Community Kitchen, Shalom Center, and many more). These organizations do excellent work in our community fighting food insecurity.*

10. In what ways does food justice fit within wider social issues, ie economic, environmental or racial justice? Do you support allowing white supremacists in our local food/farmer's market? If so, why? If not, how do you propose to remove them?

*I cannot address the farmer's market issue due to Indiana Code of Judicial Conduct Rule 4.1(A)(13), because this is an example of a case, controversy, or issue that may come before the court. I cannot make any promises or commitments on that issue, as that would be inconsistent with the impartial performance of my duties in judicial office.*

11. Bloomington & Monroe County finds itself in an affordable housing crisis. How will you ensure more affordable housing in spite of the local government's defacto mandate to maintain higher housing prices for tax revenue? Do you support density housing with priority given to people of color, people making under \$30,000 a year, families with dependents, and people with disabilities? Specifically, please discuss non-student housing.

*Judicial candidates are not permitted to make promises or have a campaign platform. Judges don't control the city or county budget and judges don't pass laws/policy on any specific topic, including affordable housing, housing density, or non-student housing.*

12. Young students of color in particular Black students in Bloomington experience disproportionate rates of detention, suspension, and expulsion\*. To the best of your knowledge, how does this problem contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline? Given that the Indiana Coalition for Public Education has released a report detailing the need for desegregation in Monroe County and a plan for creating greater equity, what are your thoughts on school desegregation in 2022 and what are your plans to help this process?

*\* According to the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, "black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students. On average, 5% of white students are suspended, compared to 16% of black students."*

*(<https://ocrdata.ed.gov/downloads/crdc-school-discipline-snapshot.pdf>)*

*This question focuses more on school discipline, which isn't something that judges handle.*

*Judges can be more involved in the other side of this question: detention of juveniles.*

*As a public defender, I represent children in both juvenile delinquency cases (where the child has been charged with something that would be a crime if they were an adult) and child welfare cases (where the child is the subject of the case because they are a victim of abuse or neglect). Beyond the question prompt, there are other ways that children of color can be disproportionately harmed by the criminal legal system. The research and data show that nationwide, these children are more likely to be waived from juvenile court to adult court and treated as adults, when compared to similarly situated white children.*

*In August 2014, [Monroe County](#) joined Indiana's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative ("JDAI"), which means that we have committed to move low-risk children from secure detention into community-based alternative programs. We do not have a juvenile detention facility in our county, so everyone is very aware that secure detention will absolutely disrupt a child's relationship with their family, community ties, and education.*

*All Monroe County stakeholders (judge, prosecutor, public defender, juvenile probation, Department of Child Services) are JDAI partners and actively seek alternatives to detention whenever possible. It's extremely rare for a child in Monroe County to be sentenced to the Indiana Department of Correction, due in part to our commitment to JDAI and everyone's hard work trying to find appropriate alternatives to secure detention.*

*I am not permitted to answer the question about school desegregation due to Indiana Code of Judicial Conduct Rule 4.1(A)(13), because this is an example of a case, controversy, or issue that could come before a Monroe County court. I cannot make any promises or commitments on that issue, as that would be inconsistent with the impartial performance of my duties in judicial office. I can say that if I'm elected judge, I will swear an oath to the Constitution, and I'll absolutely protect every part of it, including the Equal Protection clause of the 14th Amendment.*

## RUBEN D MARTE - MONROE COUNTY SHERIFF

1. How do you define Anti-Racism? Please try to use your own words and do not quote from a book or online resources. Additionally, how as an elected official would you apply anti-racism? Give specific examples in either your current policies as a seated official or in your candidate platform.

*Anti- Racism to me means to continue to educate others through training programs that will emphasize the empowerment of our community and implement new training paradigms for first responders including, but not limited to, the following topics:*

- *Relationship-based policing*
- *Crisis intervention, mediation, and conflict resolution*

- *Appropriate engagement with youth*
- *Appropriate engagement with LGBTQ, transgender and gender nonconforming individuals*
- *Appropriate engagement with individuals who do not speak english*
- *Appropriate engagement with individuals from different religious affiliations*
- *Appropriate engagement with individuals mental illness*
- *De-escalation techniques*
- *Cultural awareness*
- *Implicit bias and understanding it's impact on others*

*I have spent 31 years as an officer with the Indiana State Police. I choose a career in law enforcement as a means of improving the relationship between law enforcement and the various communities in which I serve. During my career, I have volunteered on several community boards and committees, I have provided hundreds of training programs regarding diversity to police officers and the community alike.*

*I also have the honor of being appointed as the first Equity and Inclusion Officer with the Indiana State Police. Nevertheless, after a full career with ISP, I am reaching the time for my retirement—but I still feel like there is much more to do. I am seeking office to continue to improve on and develop effective communication between the police and the communities in order to alleviate long-standing community distrust and other historical barriers that impact effective police-community partnerships.*

*The first step to improving communication is to have a series of open in-person facilitated programs, engaging the Monroe County Sheriff's Department and community residents in an open dialogue to identify issues and work together to develop collaborative solutions that will improve police-community partnerships. I want to use the office to improve public safety by strengthening trust and developing partnerships between law enforcement and the diverse communities we serve.*

2. How do you define privilege? How has privilege impacted decisions you have made as an elected official, or if you are running for the first time, as an engaged community member? If you are elected, how will you use your privilege to assist BIPOC communities?

*As a Afro-latino Black man, I do not consider myself to be privileged. However, do educate others about my culture by implementing uncomfortable conversations about race and history. Oftentimes during my training, some people will try to*

*offer an early retort that they “do not see color” that they are “colorblind.” I find that explanation to often be a cop out only offered to avoid difficult discussion on the issue. I explain to these individuals that if they were truly ‘colorblind’ that they are not looking for or readily observing the obvious disparities that exist. If they are consciously or unconsciously not observing the disparities, then they are not being part of the solution.*

3. Given the history of the BLM Movement and the surge of support in 2020 after George Floyd was brutally murdered by police, the promised police and law enforcement reformed that ultimately has not happened; as well as the backlash against the BLM Movement we are currently seeing in media and politics; are you as a candidate or a current elected official a supporter of the BLM Movement & if so please articulate what that means in your own words? Give specific examples in your policy work or in your candidate platform.

*If elected as the next Monroe County Sheriff my primary obligation is to respect, protect and ensure human rights for all people regardless of race, gender, nationality, age, sexual orientation or whom they may love. I will strive to promote respect for human rights, tackling discrimination and be an influence to bring about positive change. Respect for human rights also has significant positive impacts on people’s lives and on communities. It is an important contribution towards the achievement of inclusion and equality.*

4. Given the American legacy of slavery, tyranny and discrimination against Black people Indigenous people and other people of color notably Asians & Latino/Latine people; do you believe that White Supremacy exists today in the US within the population, our system of government, schools & education, etc... or in everyday life? IF so, please give as many examples as you think are necessary to elucidate that belief and if NOT please tell us why.

*Again, as a Afro-latino Black man, I have experienced discrimination in my life. I have been pulled over by members of law enforcement for driving while black, I have been seated in restaurants in areas out of the view of other patrons and, as many people of color can relate to, I have been followed in department stores. However, instead of just accepting it as the way the world is, I have dedicated several years of my career and my life to speaking to people, including approximately 8,000 police officers in an effort to bring light to the disparate treatment of people of color. On the community side, I have reached tens of thousands—including radio shows (English and Spanish), panel discussions, community forums, as well as colleges and universities to help mend the bridge between the police and the community.*

5. To the best of your knowledge, describe why people of color are disproportionately targeted and arrested by the criminal justice system. What ideas do you have to make the justice system more equitable and impartial? What concerns do you have about the militarization of our police force? Name a specific issue in our community relating to the militarization of the police and how you have or would respond to it.

*My ideas on improving the Monroe County Sheriff Department be more equitable and impartial.*

**1) Increasing public safety.** *This should be the ultimate goal of law enforcement and it's accomplished by:*

- *Being transparent*
- *Increasing accountability*
- *Acknowledging the challenges our community is facing and discussing them with residents*
- *Working hand-in-hand with social service programs*
- *Working to gain public trust*

**2) Reducing the recidivism rate of individuals in the justice system.** *This is possible through:*

- *Criminal expungements of those convicted of various crimes*
- *Expungements are currently available, but most people are unaware of how to clear their criminal record and get a fresh start*
- *The division I worked in for a number of years at the State Police completed, on the average, 10,000 expungements a year*
- *Providing diversion programs*
- *Working hand-in-hand with social service programs that provide support to individuals who have recently left jail or prison*
- *Education*
- *Training*

**3.) Increasing training for all Sheriff's Office employees.** *This includes training on:*

- *Crisis Intervention and De-escalation Techniques*
- *Cultural Awareness for Law Enforcement*
- *Implicit Bias and Understanding it's Impact on Actions & Decisions*
- *Police Response to Mental Illness*

**4.) Expanding public outreach and community engagement through the Police and Community Partnership Program.** *This program would include:*

- *Citizen's Police Academy*
- *"Do's and Don'ts at a traffic stop" program*

- *New resident orientations*
- *International Resident Orientation*
- *Bringing community members and police officers together in a neutral setting outside of the traditional police service roles*
- *Building a safer community through education by tailoring our educational endeavors to meet our community needs*

6. What does restorative justice look like to you? What programs focused on restorative justice do you support or would you support as an elected official? How, give details?

***Reducing the recidivism rate of individuals in the justice system and clearing the way for those who have repaid their debt to society in ways that allow them to succeed and prosper; This is possible through:***

- *Criminal expungements of those convicted of various crimes*
- *Expungements are currently available, but most people are unaware of how to clear their criminal record and get a fresh start*
- *The division I worked in for a number of years at the State Police completed, on the average, 10,000 expungements a year*
- *Providing diversion programs*
- *Working hand-in-hand with social service programs that provide support to individuals who have recently left jail or prison*
- *Education*
- *Training*

7. Would you support establishing a 311 number that connected people to emergency services and local organizations trained in handling crisis situations rather than the police? What should be done with individuals who make false reports to the police based on racial profiling or prejudice?

*Yes, I support the establishing a 311 number that connects people to emergency services and local organizations trained in handling crisis situations rather than the police. I am one of the very few Indiana State Troopers who has volunteered to be trained to assist the mentally ill in crisis situations. My training including, scenario based training, ride-alongs with Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trained officers and mental health experts as well as spending time assisting and observing in a mental health ward of a hospital. As a result, I fully understand and appreciate the services and skills that a mental health professional can bring to a critical situation.*

*If an individual make a false report to the police based on racial profiling or*

*prejudice, then that person shall be held accountable.*

8. Describe a society in which there are no prisons. How does that justice system differ from ours? What other aspects of culture would be different in a society without prisons?

*Public safety could be better achieved by spending less money incarcerating people and spending more money on health care, education, housing, and jobs programs. If we commit to a public safety justice system instead of a punitive one, there is a huge opportunity for fundamental change and community-based alternatives to incarceration and detention.*

9. Given that the Food insecurity rate for Monroe County is 14.4% which is 32.1% higher \* than the national average what plans or ideas do you have for food justice in our community? Do you support land redistribution for the purpose of growing food? Do you support community based food programs that bring locally grown nutrient dense food to those in need? If so please detail those programs here.

*\*Statistics from Feeding America Org 2019. These stats have only gotten worse during the global pandemic, though new numbers have not been compiled in this form yet.*

*I am not sure that this question directly relates to the duties and responsibilities of the Office of Sheriff. Nevertheless, of course I support feeding those who are financially, physically or mentally incapable of meeting their own dietary needs.*

*Food is a basic*

*human right—no one should ever go to bed hungry because they cannot provide themselves or their families with their most basic needs.*

*This topic is also dear to my heart. My mother volunteered her time managing a very successful food pantry in the Bronx, New York. Her services were provided during a time that she knew she was terminally ill. I am confident that helping others, on a daily basis, and knowing that she was taking care of hungry people, especially children, helped to extend her life.*

10. In what ways does food justice fit within wider social issues, ie economic, environmental or racial justice? Do you support allowing white supremacists in our local food/farmer's market? If so, why? If not, how do you propose to remove them?

*I think by reaching out to groups that are likely to respond to a hate event, such as faith alliances, labor unions, teachers, women's groups, university faculties, fair housing councils, the YMCA, and youth groups is a good way to join forces in order to address the issue of white supremacist or any other hate group wherever they may exist. Making a special effort to involve businesses, schools, houses of worship, politicians, children, and members of targeted groups is empowering within itself. Also, call local law enforcement officials. Work to create a healthy relationship with local police; working together, human rights groups and law enforcement officials*

*can track early warning signs of hate brewing in a community, allowing for a rapid and unified response.*

11. Bloomington & Monroe County finds itself in an affordable housing crisis. How will you ensure more affordable housing in spite of the local government's defacto mandate to maintain higher housing prices for tax revenue? Do you support density housing with priority given to people of color, people making under \$30,000 a year, families with dependents, and people with disabilities? Specifically, please discuss non-student housing.

- *The Office of Sheriff does not make policy concerning city or county planning or zoning*
- *However, of course I support affordable housing for all citizens of Monroe County. Additionally, I also support subsidized housing for those who qualify*

12. Young students of color in particular Black students in Bloomington experience disproportionate rates of detention, suspension, and expulsion\*. To the best of your knowledge, how does this problem contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline? Given that the Indiana Coalition for Public Education has released a report detailing the need for desegregation in Monroe County and a plan for creating greater equity, what are your thoughts on school desegregation in 2022 and what are your plans to help this process?

*\* According to the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, "black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students. On average, 5% of white students are suspended, compared to 16% of black students."  
(<https://ocrdata.ed.gov/downloads/crdc-school-discipline-snapshot.pdf>)*

- *All students, regardless of race should be treated fairly and consistently when applying discipline to their behavior*

#### ANGIE PURDIE - MONROE COUNTY SHERIFF

1. How do you define Anti-Racism? Please try to use your own words and do not quote from a book or online resources. Additionally, how as an elected official would you apply anti-racism? Give specific examples in either your current policies as a seated official or in your candidate platform.

*I define Anti-Racism as action. It is "seeing something and saying something." It is interrupting thoughts and actions. It is about being open to correction and learning. It is*

*NOT ignoring observed/heard micro-aggressions, racist actions/comments, and addressing the issues directly.*

*How would I apply anti-racism? I would encourage a workplace that promotes conversations and learning. A workplace that honors, respects, and encourages alternate cultures. A workplace that empowers our minority, marginalized (and those who are not) populations to say- "That is not right. That is hurtful (or would/could be). I find that disrespectful or I don't understand" and have it result in an actual conversation of learning and growth.*

*I don't know that I am considered a currently seated official, but I was instrumental in and an advocate for the County's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training program that sadly was born from the murder of Mr. George Floyd.*

*As your elected Sheriff, I will ensure ongoing DEI training for all Deputies, jailers, and staff members. I will utilize organizations such as the Equal Justice Initiative to provide ongoing trainings and guided discussions. My intention is every deputy and jailer will have visited as part of their ongoing education, the Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery Alabama.*

2. How do you define privilege? How has privilege impacted decisions you have made as an elected official, or if you are running for the first time, as an engaged community member? If you are elected, how will you use your privilege to assist BIPOC communities?

*I think the best definition of privilege is the ability to be ignorant of privilege and the expression of denial and/or defensiveness when the word is even brought up.*

*How has privilege impacted decisions made as an elected official or as a first-time candidate, as an engaged community member?*

*Every decision and thought had to have been born from privilege. My decision to run for this office was born from my white privilege. As a women running for the office of Sheriff, I have found myself having to respond to questions regarding the perception the office is strictly for men.*

*I will use my privilege and position to lift voices of color and be an advocate for education, change, and racial justice.*

3. Given the history of the BLM Movement and the surge of support in 2020 after George Floyd was brutally murdered by police, the promised police and law enforcement reformed that ultimately has not happened; as well as the backlash against the BLM Movement we are currently seeing in media and politics; are you as a candidate or a current elected official a supporter of the BLM Movement & if so please articulate what

that means in your own words? Give specific examples in your policy work or in your candidate platform.

*I struggled with the murder of Mr. Floyd. I struggled with the anti-law enforcement response. I struggled, I sought information, I talked to people of color, my law enforcement family, my black friends, and I studied. I learned A LOT and yet not enough. I found for myself, supporting BLM did not have to be exclusive, but **it does require** that I acknowledge law enforcement HAS to change.*

*I am a supporter of Black Lives Matter.*

*I don't believe law enforcement will change if law enforcement does not face, acknowledge, and learn from the past. We are way past white ignorance.*

*An example of how I would support BLM as your elected Sheriff is the education of all deputies and jailers in DEI and more importantly, requiring their education include a trip to the Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery Alabama.*

4. Given the American legacy of slavery, tyranny and discrimination against Black people Indigenous people and other people of color notably Asians & Latino/Latine people; do you believe that White Supremacy exists today in the US within the populus, our system of government, schools & education, etc... or in everyday life? IF so, please give as many examples as you think are necessary to elucidate that belief and if NOT please tell us why.

*Our history of racial injustice is long, disgusting, and shameful. The term white supremacy is offensive to me, although I do understand what is meant by the term. White is "better." White hair, white skin, white culture, white language is EXPECTED. Failure to meet any of those items makes a person lessor AND it is expected those who are different will assimilate to the "white" way.*

*This was all perpetrated through white people in power. The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment: equal rights for all, yet supported disparity and allowed for the continuation of slavery; the institution of Jim Crowe Laws, less pay for same work, inability to obtain education, segregation of education AND housing, and the condoned lynching of people of color has all led to a perception of a racial hierarchy. A hierarchy many white people do not even conceive yet perpetuate.*

*It is a fact black men are six times more likely to be incarcerated than white men. Our laws are written by and for white people. The presumption of guilt and danger has let to the murder, torture, and incarceration of people of color.*

*Terribly sorry, from this point onward, I'm afraid I have not been able to give the questions the appropriate level of investigation and response.*

5. To the best of your knowledge, describe why people of color are disproportionately targeted and arrested by the criminal justice system. What ideas do you have to make the justice system more equitable and impartial? What concerns do you have about the militarization of our police force? Name a specific issue in our community relating to the militarization of the police and how you have or would respond to it.

*I believe this question is answered in the above response. White history has promulgated the belief / perception that people of color are a danger and are guilty.*

*More equitable and impartial: HAVE to start talking to our legislators. We must stop viewing **our** culture as purely a white culture.*

*Militarization of our police force. Our police force should not be a military organization. If we want our citizens to trust our officers, creating one more barrier specifically between people of color (who are exponentially negatively affected by law enforcement) is not going to promote trust.*

*Community issue: It would have to be the purchase of the BearCat by the City of Bloomington. It is my opinion a purchase of that nature should have been discussed with our community people of color and their voices should have been heard.*

6. What does restorative justice look like to you? What programs focused on restorative justice do you support or would you support as an elected official? How, give details?

*Locally, our CJAMS does nice work with restorative justice. That said, I also believe we have an obligation to apply restorative justice to those people who come in contact with the criminal justice system. We know we inflict harm, we know the incarceration of individuals affects more than that direct person. We have to start looking at ways to reduce the harm, establish programs that help people NOT become involved with the criminal justice system, and programs that help people when they are in the system and when they get out. The intention is to stop inflicting harm and stop promoting recidivism.*

7. Would you support establishing a 311 number that connected people to emergency services and local organizations trained in handling crisis situations rather than the police? What should be done with individuals who make false reports to the police based on racial profiling or prejudice?

*YES! There is currently movement to establish a mental health hotline number 988 within the country. I will attach the information I have to my email.*

8. Describe a society in which there are no prisons. How does that justice system differ from ours? What other aspects of culture would be different in a society without prisons?

*This is a most thought provoking question. I really want to investigate such a concept. I have to state I cannot imagine such a society given the cultures within our Country.*

*What other aspects of culture would be different in a society without prisons? It is my opinion that culture would require the extension of kindness, respect, and the elimination of the egocentric and entitlement of our current culture.*

9. Given that the Food insecurity rate for Monroe County is 14.4% which is 32.1% higher \* than the national average what plans or ideas do you have for food justice in our community? Do you support land redistribution for the purpose of growing food? Do you support community based food programs that bring locally grown nutrient dense food to those in need? If so please detail those programs here.

*\*Statistics from Feeding America Org 2019. These stats have only gotten worse during the global pandemic, though new numbers have not been compiled in this form yet.*

*Food justice is one component of the programs that have to be in place for our community to help eliminate contact with the criminal justice system, help people through the criminal justice system and help people not return to the criminal justice system.*

*I would certainly support community based food programs – and I believe we could establish such a program within our community.*

10. In what ways does food justice fit within wider social issues, ie economic, environmental or racial justice? Do you support allowing white supremacists in our local food/farmer's market? If so, why? If not, how do you propose to remove them?

*Food justice is part of the need for overall racial equity. When white people have pushed people of color into lower socio economic levels, have a medical program that is based on the white body, and enacts laws that specifically address people in poverty – we cannot overlook our need to provide an equitable food program.*

*I do not support white supremacy anywhere, that said, I do believe we do not censor speech, religion, or other fundamental rights. I believe the best way to remove someone like that is to not purchase their product.*

11. Bloomington & Monroe County finds itself in an affordable housing crisis. How will you ensure more affordable housing in spite of the local government's defacto mandate to maintain higher housing prices for tax revenue? Do you support density housing with priority given to people of color, people making under \$30,000 a year, families with dependents, and people with disabilities? Specifically, please discuss non-student housing.

*Housing is deplorable in Bloomington/Monroe County. I will support what the people of color in my community want.*

12. Young students of color in particular Black students in Bloomington experience disproportionate rates of detention, suspension, and expulsion\*. To the best of your knowledge, how does this problem contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline? Given that the Indiana Coalition for Public Education has released a report detailing the need for desegregation in Monroe County and a plan for creating greater equity, what are your thoughts on school desegregation in 2022 and what are your plans to help this process?

*\* According to the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, "black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students. On average, 5% of white students are suspended, compared to 16% of black students." (<https://ocrdata.ed.gov/downloads/crdc-school-discipline-snapshot.pdf>)*

*Quick answer as I believe all of these questions stem from the root issue of white dominant behavior/actions/policies. If we as a community have programming in place that is designed to address racial and marginalized equity we can stop, interrupt or decrease the school to prison rate of our black youth.*

JOANI STALCUP - MONROE COUNTY SHERIFF

1. How do you define Anti-Racism? Please try to use your own words and do not quote from a book or online resources. Additionally, how as an elected official would you apply anti-racism? Give specific examples in either your current policies as a seated official or in your candidate platform.

*To me, anti-racism is the idea that we have to work against years of the system placing people of color at a disadvantage for resources in our community and within the criminal justice. This can be best done by looking at the pain points being experienced by African Americans and other races in our community and designing programs to alleviate those pain points. These could involve working with the Prosecutor's Office to take a look at the number of racial minorities being arrested for specific petty crime and whether this is disproportionate to the averages. It may involve using current methods in training to reinforce topics on racial minority bias and racial empathy training.*

2. How do you define privilege? How has privilege impacted decisions you have made as an elected official, or if you are running for the first time, as an engaged community member? If you are elected, how will you use your privilege to assist BIPOC communities?

*As a female coroner, I represent the struggle for all women to achieve equal status among my male counterparts in our field, so while I may not fully grasp what it is like to be a person of color I certainly can empathize. I do understand that the struggle for minorities of all types is never over. As a current law enforcement official and future sheriff, I seek to not use any privilege in making decision but using my well-earned judgment and discretion to keep the scales of justice from tipping in any one direction.*

3. Given the history of the BLM Movement and the surge of support in 2020 after George Floyd was brutally murdered by police, the promised police and law enforcement reformed that ultimately has not happened; as well as the backlash against the BLM Movement we are currently seeing in media and politics; are you as a candidate or a current elected official a supporter of the BLM Movement & if so please articulate what that means in your own words? Give specific examples in your policy work or in your candidate platform.

*As an elected official of Monroe County and your future sheriff, I recognize the struggle for people of color and all minorities throughout our county and our great state. Systemic racism is still a problem in law enforcement in the delivery of justice, and my administration will confront that issue through better training, better messaging, and better hiring practices to ensure that our community is well represented by minorities in our Sheriff's Department and working in our jail.*

4. Given the American legacy of slavery, tyranny and discrimination against Black people Indigenous people and other people of color notably Asians & Latino/Latine people; do you believe that White Supremacy exists today in the US within the populous, our system of government, schools & education, etc... or in everyday life? IF so, please give as many examples as you think are necessary to elucidate that belief and if NOT please tell us why.

*The ugliness that is hate groups, white supremacy included, exists all throughout our culture since the dawn of the American ideal. Today, as a society, we recognize these groups and give great thought to how they are dealt with. We identify followers within the jail and prison systems and we make sure that our school environments remain an open forum of expression sans the hate that can permeate with the introduction of racist rhetoric and bigotry. We have come a long way in Indiana and America as a whole but we still have a long way to go to bring to fruition the vision that Martin Luther King Jr. and other great African American leaders gave us.*

5. To the best of your knowledge, describe why people of color are disproportionately targeted and arrested by the criminal justice system. What ideas do you have to make the justice system more equitable and impartial? What concerns do you have about the militarization of our police force? Name a specific issue in our community relating to the militarization of the police and how you have or would respond to it.

*The unbalance in the criminal justice system that sways towards people of color is recognizable and certainly a problem that we all need to give credence to. Minorities, people of color included, suffer poverty at much higher rates. As households struggle for resources in poorer neighborhoods, many times the struggle for resources can turn into a struggle against the criminal justice system. As I have stated before, Monroe County needs increased vigilance against poverty and the struggle for resources in the community. If we can answer the community's cries for better valuable resources, we can cut down on a tremendous amount of petty crime. Through positive training initiatives and modern approaches to police discretion we can also address any minority bias that*

*may arise. These are not overnight solutions but long term initiatives that will take time to implement with the whole community's support.*

6. What does restorative justice look like to you? What programs focused on restorative justice do you support or would you support as an elected official? How, give details?

*As restorative justice models become more popular in communities across the United States, we find that recidivism rates can be addressed and the needle can be moved against individuals returning to the system time and time again. It is effective. I have advocated for more mental health assistance in the community and a focus on how that mental health assistance can work towards address correctional issues. Making victims whole again and providing a platform for offenders to return to being a positive part of our community will be a focus of my administration.*

7. Would you support establishing a 311 number that connected people to emergency services and local organizations trained in handling crisis situations rather than the police? What should be done with individuals who make false reports to the police based on racial profiling or prejudice?

*From the very beginning of my candidacy and throughout my career I have advocated for better mental health care access throughout our county. As we provide better training to our officers and law enforcement, we also need to think outside the box to how we address the needs of the community better to give them the access they need. Any new avenues of access are a move in the positive direction. With the county's support, I would certainly advocate for any new ideas that could make access to mental health assistance more attainable.*

8. Describe a society in which there are no prisons. How does that justice system differ from ours? What other aspects of culture would be different in a society without prisons?

*The idea that we could exist without prisons is just not feasible nor is it compatible with human nature. Human nature is based on both good and evil. As long as there is good in the world, there will be evil to balance that. It's a hard fact but it's a fact nonetheless. Policing society is a concept as old as civilization itself. We have been able to hone the craft and identify better ways to do it. We are not perfect. We have weaknesses in criminal justice and we always have the ability to do better. That's what progress is about and that's what my campaign is about; improving the situation and making a better community for all, jails and correctional facilities included.*

9. Given that the Food insecurity rate for Monroe County is 14.4% which is 32.1% higher \* than the national average what plans or ideas do you have for food justice in our community? Do you support land redistribution for the purpose of growing food? Do you support community based food programs that bring locally grown nutrient dense food to those in need? If so please detail those programs here.

*Having only some knowledge of the food infrastructure food programs here in Monroe County means that I can only speak to my personal beliefs that all people should have access to good quality foods and the county's programs should support that in any way possible while respecting the people the programs serve. Poverty is still an issue here in the county and as we move forward to creating better programs to address these needs, we need to be creative and hone our ideas to the problem at hand.*

*\*Statistics from Feeding America Org 2019. These stats have only gotten worse during the global pandemic, though new numbers have not been compiled in this form yet.*

10. In what ways does food justice fit within wider social issues, ie economic, environmental or racial justice? Do you support allowing white supremacists in our local food/farmer's market? If so, why? If not, how do you propose to remove them?

*Access to healthy and plentiful food sources is vital to our community's infrastructure. This applies to all people. As a mother, I recognize the need for good diet and healthy habits as children grow. This can only happen through equitable and affordable access to good foods such as through our local farmer's market.*

*The simple presence of an ideology in a public place is not enough to constitute breaking of a law. When we become the thought police then we devolve from a free country that promotes free constructive thought to a place where a mere thought is illegal, no matter how ugly that thought might be. If a private owner wishes to not serve someone, they have the right to refuse service but as a law enforcement official, I would be beholden to the laws of Indiana which do not state that mere presence of white supremacist ideology is illegal and constitutes removal from a premises.*

11. Bloomington & Monroe County finds itself in an affordable housing crisis. How will you ensure more affordable housing in spite of the local government's defacto mandate to maintain higher housing prices for tax revenue? Do you support density housing with priority given to people of color, people making under \$30,000 a year, families with dependents, and people with disabilities? Specifically, please discuss non-student housing.

*As a law enforcement official, I am not sure that I am completely qualified to speak on housing issues within the community without more background beyond 5 days of research. I do not know that as we lift our communities out of poverty and provide a good basis for all people to stand on we can help curb crime and give everyone a more fair chance at good employment, better living conditions, and more affordable housing.*

12. Young students of color in particular Black students in Bloomington experience disproportionate rates of detention, suspension, and expulsion\*. To the best of your knowledge, how does this problem contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline? Given that the Indiana Coalition for Public Education has released a report detailing the need for desegregation in Monroe County and a plan for creating greater equity, what are your thoughts on school desegregation in 2022 and what are your plans to help this process?

*\* According to the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, "black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students. On average, 5% of white students are suspended, compared to 16% of black students." (<https://ocrdata.ed.gov/downloads/crdc-school-discipline-snapshot.pdf>)*

*Without extensive knowledge of public education in Indiana, I feel I can only speak on the implications this has on the criminal justice system of Monroe County. As previously stated, I plan on instituting better training for all of my officers and employees throughout the Sheriff's Office of Monroe County. School equity and access to a good education are vital to our youth of color and all minorities that face struggles outside of the educational system.*

#### DOMINIC THOMPSON - MONROE COUNTY COMMISSIONER

*My name is Dominic Thompson, and I am running to be our next Monroe County Commissioner. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to tell you a little bit more about my views and vision for Monroe County.*

1. How do you define Anti-Racism? Please try to use your own words and do not quote from a book or online resources. Additionally, how as an elected official would you apply anti-racism? Give specific examples in either your current policies as a seated official or in your candidate platform.

*Anti-racism means acknowledging the systemic racism that permeates every part of our society and then working to dismantle it. We have to look in the mirror, acknowledge the biases that we hold and overcome them.*

*How would I apply anti-racism? Our county government and its boards and commissions are a good place to start. Although Monroe County considers itself so inclusive, I disagree. Black, Indigenous and People of Color and young people are vastly underrepresented in county government elected positions, appointed positions, and on its boards and commissions. These are the places decisions are made. I am committed to making sure I do everything in my power to see that not only are our boards and commissions more diverse but also using any privilege I have to support future elections and progressive BIPOC candidates accordingly. There are huge obstacles in running for office, and I am committed to sharing the resources I have to break down those barriers for the next generation.*

2. How do you define privilege? How has privilege impacted decisions you have made as an elected official, or if you are running for the first time, as an engaged community

member? If you are elected, how will you use your privilege to assist BIPOC communities?

*I define privilege as the unearned benefit that people get because of who they are perceived to be; the benefit usually comes as a result of another group being marginalized.*

*I was born into a low-income family and experienced homelessness as a child. I grew up in a Northern Indiana town and was an openly gay teenager in my unaccepting community. However, I came to Bloomington, earned my degree, contributed to many community initiatives and am working to become our next Monroe County commissioner, and Indiana's first LGBTQIA+ county commissioner. With that comes a seat at the table and the privilege to make sure more voices are heard and more underserved voices join me at the table like I mentioned in the previous question. Further, I have long-believed that elected officials need to go to where their constituents are. That doesn't mean just holding constituent meetings; that means joining the neighborhoods at their meetings, supporting the grassroots work that our community members are doing and making sure that I connect the resources of the county with the residents that need them the most. We have so many programs and benefits that most residents don't even know about. We need to do better to connect residents with programs and aid and get rid of or modify the programs that don't work. And that starts with actively engaging more constituents and listening to what they need. We don't do that currently.*

3. Given the history of the BLM Movement and the surge of support in 2020 after George Floyd was brutally murdered by police, the promised police and law enforcement reformed that ultimately has not happened; as well as the backlash against the BLM Movement we are currently seeing in media and politics; are you as a candidate or a current elected official a supporter of the BLM Movement & if so please articulate what that means in your own words? Give specific examples in your policy work or in your candidate platform.

*My definition of the Black Lives Matter Movement means:*

- 1. Recognizing that historically Black voices have been erased,*
- 2. Recognizing that the time to change is now,*
- 3. Centering Black voices.*

*I absolutely believe that as a country and as a county, we must do better to center Black voices. I also believe that most long-lasting change comes through structural reform. We have to engage community stakeholders and elected leaders to achieve goals that transform our county. That means centering people with lived experience in decision-making processes to ensure that BIPOC and historically marginalized residents are heard.*

*Monroe County has thought of itself as a very inclusive, accepting community, but we rarely see more than one Black or Brown voice at the table. If we truly want to be*

*equitable, we need to start centering people with lived experiences in our decision making to see the change we want.*

4. Given the American legacy of slavery, tyranny and discrimination against Black people Indiginouse people and other people of color notably Asians & Latino/Latine people; do you believe that White Supremacy exists today in the US within the populus, our system of government, schools & education, etc... or in everyday life? IF so, please give as many examples as you think are necessary to elucidate that belief and if NOT please tell us why.

*White supremacy still exists today in every part of life. We see it in almost every unit of government from the national level to local level, in our school districts, in our healthcare system, in the kind of grocery stores each neighborhood has, etc. We see white supremacy where decisions are made. The only way to dismantle white supremacy is to center marginalized and BIPOC voices when we rebuild the table.*

5. To the best of your knowledge, describe why people of color are disproportionately targeted and arrested by the criminal justice system. What ideas do you have to make the justice system more equitable and impartial? What concerns do you have about the militarization of our police force? Name a specific issue in our community relating to the militarization of the police and how you have or would respond to it.

*People of color are disproportionately targeted and arrested because white supremacy still exists today in every part of life. Racism is so deep-rooted in our social policies that many people are unaware of how unfair our society is, at all levels, especially in the criminal justice system.*

*In August of 2021, Monroe County established a Criminal Justice Response Committee to review and recommend steps for implementation of the RJS Justice Services and Inclusivity Strategic Consulting Reports. There is one Black voice and vote on that committee. I don't believe that this particular committee is the right one to make recommendations for the equitable changes that we need when BIPOC voices are not centered.*

*One issue in our community relating to the militarization of police that immediately comes to mind was the barricade situation in January of this year. Police surrounded the building; critical incident response officers and negotiators were called to the scene. Media reports stated that tear gas could be smelled in the air. Later reports state that the man in question, Mr. Gilbert, had a last known address at the Shalom Center. Some reports stated Mr. Gilbert may be suffering from mental illness, and some reports stated that he was simply looking for a warm place to stay on a cold night.*

*As a county, we have to recognize how our issues are intersectional. That we could not offer a low-barrier, overnight warming shelter and are not doing more to accommodate the basic needs of our most vulnerable residents is unacceptable. That the city and*

*county don't do more to prioritize the safety of our most marginalized members is unacceptable. That we aren't utilizing all the tools in our toolbox and maximizing the amount of federal monies and grants to solve some of our biggest problems- like a lack of emergency housing for people experiencing homelessness- is unacceptable. We fund our priorities, and I would start there.*

6. What does restorative justice look like to you? What programs focused on restorative justice do you support or would you support as an elected official? How, give details?

*Restorative Justice requires acknowledging, empowering and rebuilding in a way that centers the voice of the marginalized.*

*Using my example from the previous question, over 32 people who were previously unhoused or currently experiencing homelessness died in Monroe County last year. That is unacceptable especially for a county that considers itself so compassionate. We must do better. These are our people. I would use my privilege and my office to bring the community stakeholders, elected leaders across the township, city and county, the non-profits and especially our people who are experiencing homelessness and front line workers to the table to come up with a solution that addresses the short-term problem of temporary housing and the long-term one of funding a sustainable model to address this issue. I believe in looking to other cities who have addressed this problem justly and looking at best practices to model in addressing many of our issues. Other communities like ours have addressed this problem much better than we have- what can we learn from them and how can we do better?*

7. Would you support establishing a 311 number that connected people to emergency services and local organizations trained in handling crisis situations rather than the police? What should be done with individuals who make false reports to the police based on racial profiling or prejudice?

*I would pledge my support to form a task force and center constituent outreach around the possibility of a 311 number. I would seek feedback from the community about the need for this service and explore best practices from other counties that use the service. I hear that residents need more accessibility to highly-trained constituent service representatives who are ready to assist with requests for non-emergency services, information and possibly crisis situations. We have a multitude of resources in the county that no one even knows about; we must do better about informing our residents about this, so I would be interested in looking at expanding a 311 number to include those services also while making sure that we have a plan to make this language accessible as well.*

*There absolutely should be consequences for Individuals who make false reports to the police based on racial profiling or prejudice and possibly referred to the federal*

*justice system for hate crime consideration.*

8. Describe a society in which there are no prisons. How does that justice system differ from ours? What other aspects of culture would be different in a society without prisons?

*A society where there are no prisons is one that focuses on restoring dignity and worthiness to a population that we dehumanize. That justice system is diametrically opposed to ours, which is centered around dehumanization and castigation. A society without prisons centers the human experience around empathy. When we seek to understand the reasons why people are incarcerated, we realize that many of the reasons are due to harm, oppression or fear.*

*The office of the Sheriff is an important race this year, especially because that office will take the lead on the conversation and planning of any jail. If I am elected, I am committed to using my privilege to include as many voices at this table to push for a jail that does better to center the human experience around empathy. Are we taking components of that model in question, and at the very least, are we doing all we can to provide job training, good medical and psychological care, and educational and learning environments?*

9. Given that the Food insecurity rate for Monroe County is 14.4% which is 32.1% higher \* than the national average what plans or ideas do you have for food justice in our community? Do you support land redistribution for the purpose of growing food? Do you support community based food programs that bring locally grown nutrient dense food to those in need? If so please detail those programs here.

*\*Statistics from Feeding America Org 2019. These stats have only gotten worse during the global pandemic, though new numbers have not been compiled in this form yet.*

*We must do better to ensure that our food desert areas are provided with more access to fresh foods and low-cost grocery options. Transportation is also a factor with access to food. My plan is to work with the city, county and community stakeholders to do what I can to make sure that our residents have access to food. For example, I am aware that Crestmont residents have a hard time using Bloomington Transit to access Walmart, which is one the cheapest sources of food in Monroe County. I am monitoring conversations with Bloomington Transit leadership to see if microtransit is an option to provide direct shuttles to neighborhoods in need. It is not an option for some people with mobility issues to transfer buses then walk a distance to reach their destinations, especially with groceries. I would also like to work with Rural Transit to ensure that access by our most vulnerable is ensured so that they can also reach the food and basic services that they need, especially when so many people rely on public transit as their sole method of transport.*

*I believe in looking at best practices in similar communities and being open to new ideas. There are often unused funding and grant opportunities to achieve some of our community's goals. I would commit to looking at expanding rural development for the*

*purpose of growing food and ensuring that county-owned land is used responsibly and thoughtfully, centered by residents' voices and concerns.*

*I totally support community based food programs that bring locally grown nutrient dense food to those in need. I believe in centering the voices of the community leaders doing that work while also centering the voices of those most in need. We have amazing community members who work tirelessly providing CSA boxes to families on a weekly basis and non-profits doing incredible work to also provide food to families in need. I want to use my privilege to bring all those voices to table to ensure that we are working collaboratively when we can, to make sure we aren't missing any sections of the county who are in need and most importantly, that I am doing all I can to advocate for funding these necessary programs by connecting these food programs with ARPA monies or working with county staff to identify grant and funding opportunities for our hard-working grassroots efforts and community agencies. I want to be a partner in this effort.*

10. In what ways does food justice fit within wider social issues, ie economic, environmental or racial justice? Do you support allowing white supremacists in our local food/farmer's market? If so, why? If not, how do you propose to remove them?

*All issues are intersectional. Food justice is intersectional with social, economic, environmental and racial justice issues. Only when we acknowledge the problem and center the voices of the most marginalized do we start to get to the root of any justice issue.*

*I do not support white supremacists in any local market. Black and Brown voices have repeatedly said that they do not feel safe or welcome at any local market that allows white supremacist vendors. I hear them, and I believe them. Any community space needs to be a safe one for all of our people or it's not a safe space for any of our people. In my opinion, this issue is one of safety for our community. I hoped that this issue could have been resolved on that basis through the legal system.*

11. Bloomington & Monroe County finds itself in an affordable housing crisis. How will you ensure more affordable housing in spite of the local government's defacto mandate to maintain higher housing prices for tax revenue? Do you support density housing with priority given to people of color, people making under \$30,000 a year, families with dependents, and people with disabilities? Specifically, please discuss non-student housing.

*One of my main reasons for running for commissioner is because our current commissioners have done such a poor job of approving affordable housing, or really any housing. As I stated earlier, we fund our priorities. I am committed to supporting housing developments that make sense for our community. That means talking to residents about projects that would fit into our existing neighborhoods. That means talking to the city of Bloomington to make sure the county and city start working together more equitably so some of the neighborhoods in the city don't feel like they are*

*being priced out of their neighborhoods because of redevelopment.*

*That being said, Monroe County is a very desirable place to live and build a family. I am committed to work for equitable solutions with Habitat for Humanity and responsible developers who provide real affordable housing, not homes that cost \$500,000+. There are ways for counties to subsidize affordable housing, and I am committed to listening to a variety of voices on this issue to ensure the county is doing its fair share to respond to the affordable housing crisis. I also commit to looking and advocating for programs that work for our first-time homeowners. Our programs should be attainable and make sense for our residents; I would rely on constituent feedback to ensure that our programs are working for them.*

12. Young students of color in particular Black students in Bloomington experience disproportionate rates of detention, suspension, and expulsion\*. To the best of your knowledge, how does this problem contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline? Given that the Indiana Coalition for Public Education has released a report detailing the need for desegregation in Monroe County and a plan for creating greater equity, what are your thoughts on school desegregation in 2022 and what are your plans to help this process?  
*\*According to the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, "black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students. On average, 5% of white students are suspended, compared to 16% of black students." (<https://ocrdata.ed.gov/downloads/crdc-school-discipline-snapshot.pdf>)*

*It is a fact that young students of color, particularly Black students in Bloomington experience disproportionate rates of detention, suspension, and expulsion. This fact is consistent with a nationwide study done by the US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights that found Black students and students with disabilities are disproportionately represented in the school-to-prison pipeline.*

*I commit to use my privilege to do what I can to amplify the voices to redraw school catchment zones to create greater equity. I trust experts like fmr. School Board Member Jacinda Townsend. I hear her when she says that Fairview and Templeton's class sizes are far larger than other elementary schools, serve a greater population of students receiving free and reduced lunches and need more Title I help. Creating more balance will help. I pledge my support to the current school board members who continue this effort that School Board member Townsend championed and will amplify that effort in whatever way I can be most effective.*

PETER J IVERSEN - MONROE COUNTY COUNCIL, District 1

*My name is Peter Iversen, and I am running for the Monroe County Council, 1st District. I am a straight, cis-gendered, white, male. I serve the public on the Monroe County Council and have since 2019. My campaign website is [www.peteriversen.org](http://www.peteriversen.org), and my cell phone is published at [www.co.monroe.in.us/council](http://www.co.monroe.in.us/council). I remain interested in collaborative public management.*

*I sincerely appreciate these thoughtful questions. I would look forward to a time where we could discuss these whether at "A Seat at the Table" or a similar event to discuss these key community*

*issues in greater detail.*

1. How do you define Anti-Racism? Please try to use your own words and do not quote from a book or online resources. Additionally, how as an elected official would you apply anti-racism? Give specific examples in either your current policies as a seated official or in your candidate platform.

*I define Anti-racism as using policy and procedure to acknowledge and fight racism that overtly and passively perpetuates the systems of discrimination, subjugation, and wealth concentration. The acknowledgment of this system is owning my work and not placing the emotional burden of my progress on others. This also means stepping outside comfort zones to listen to others. Summed up in the best advice I have heard about acknowledging racism: shut up and listen.*

*Anti-racism also means fighting to reduce barriers to equity, which is how I will continue to implement anti-racism in the Monroe County Council. I wrote a blog post regarding this at <https://peteriversen.org/peters-perspective/from-an-ally-to-an-accomplice-and-beyond>. So much has been written about being an ally. Within the local government context, allyship indicates performative action that doesn't reduce barriers. I first heard the term "accomplice" from Jennifer Crossley, and I have started to use this word instead of in my speech. More importantly, you can increasingly see this change in how the Council and my campaign operate.*

*First, in County governance, I am very proud that the Council voted to approve a contract with BLM-Btown. There were nay-sayers, and boundaries promoted that attempted to keep barriers to this training in place. Nonetheless, we appropriated the funds, and the Council was the only local government entity that invested in anti-racism. We also followed up with additional training. This process was not perfect, but it was a productive initial step. A second outcome is that we quantified bias in the County using the Intercultural Development Index. My scores indicate that I consider myself more woke than I am. But we also have data demonstrating areas of growth for the County. A third outcome is that County Department Heads are more likely to bring forward projects with DEI as their focus. I wholeheartedly voted in favor of all of these. Examples include a contract quantifying structural racism in the Prosecutors Department. We are looking to grow and learn. In April, we appropriated funds to two other contracts for projects that focus on diversion, not incarceration. The project on youth diversion is with a professor at the IU School of Public Health, and the adult project is with a series of faculty across the nation. Grants fund some of this work that our department heads seek out, focusing on DEI. While the Council appropriates others using local tax dollars. I see this as decolonizing wealth because we are using public dollars to reduce barriers to justice in our community.*

*The County needs increased diversity in boards and commissions. Monroe County staff also needs more representation.*

*Second, the Committee to Elect Peter Iversen reflects lessons learned. First, I intentionally asked women of color to join the campaign in positions of authority. I regularly seek advice from others, and diverse representation in the campaign is vital. Just the other day, a graphic*

went out without vetting. The feedback was that any future posts needed to reflect the Committee and social diversity. Second, I intentionally made DEI a talking point of the campaign; you can see this at <https://peteriversen.org/issues>. I did not include this to indicate that I had all the answers but rather to project that we need to have this focus going forward.

Lastly, should I be elected to continue as a public servant, I will work to do the following. Much of what is here is from public remarks I gave on February 27th, and I posted at <https://peteriversen.org/peters-persepective/7qsl8k25jaq62geis1zoo0miaeo95z>.

- Continue to appropriate funds to local projects that quantify and illuminate structural racism and create policies and procedures enshrining equity.
- Continue to appropriate funds to move away from incarceration and toward Interception (see below) and diversion.
- Maintain the ease and desirability to explore personal and corporate bias ● Work to ensure that the County workforce is diverse and representative of the community.
- Implement policies based on the fact that racism is a public health crisis, as declared by the American Public Health Association and the Monroe County Health Department. ● Implement lessons learned from the Monroe County Environmental Resilience Report (<https://catstv.net/m.php?q=9487&t=404>) and approach climate reliance and sustainability from a lens of equity.

2. How do you define privilege? How has privilege impacted decisions you have made as an elected official, or if you are running for the first time, as an engaged community member? If you are elected, how will you use your privilege to assist BIPOC communities?

*I define privilege as advantages that a person possesses by being part of a group(s). My privileges are that I was born a straight, white, cis-gender male. Accordingly, I move through the world with relative ease vis-a-vis those not born with these advantages. This privilege affects my decisions as an elected official.*

*Sometimes this is negative. Privilege allowed me to never second guess that I could be an elected official. Second, it led me to ignore the humiliations of a Black colleague as not my problem, something to which I have privately apologized. Lastly, I have a nasty tendency to mansplain. I have become aware of these as I work to be a better listener and meditate to be present and grounded.*

*But privilege can also be constructive, leading me to seek out opinions and thoughts that are not my own. Until recently, I was the only Monroe County elected official holding regular listening sessions. I used these times with constituents to listen and learn. Second, I used my privilege to move challenging situations through the halls of power. An example is when, last year, the Monroe County Women's Commission lost grant funding for a Girls Coding Camp. So I worked with the Commission members and my Council colleagues to include camp funding as a dedicated line in the budget.*

*Transparency is a privilege issue. While this is something that Monroe County could improve, we have made strides recently to make our meetings more accessible. Now our meetings are closed captioned in real-time. We also preserved the ability for the public to attend virtually or in person. The feedback received is that individuals with a disability now find our meetings more accessible than ever.*

*Lastly, I can use privilege to affect BIPOC communities positively. I reviewed my platform in the previous question, but there are issues. First, Monroe County was glaringly absent during Black History Month 2022, leading to conversations about barriers to Black history celebrations but others that are not acknowledged. Second, as the labor market continues to be tight, it has pushed County department heads to use digital tools to seek employees in a state or national arena. But there are no meaningful policies or practices (see above on Anti-Racism) about how to structure/use these employee searches to increase the diversity and inclusion of the Monroe County labor force.*

3. Given the history of the BLM Movement and the surge of support in 2020 after George Floyd was brutally murdered by police, the promised police and law enforcement reformed that ultimately has not happened; as well as the backlash against the BLM Movement we are currently seeing in media and politics; are you as a candidate or a current elected official a supporter of the BLM Movement & if so please articulate what that means in your own words? Give specific examples in your policy work or in your candidate platform.

*I think the national narrative regards police divestments that some communities reversed. Another indicator is that President Biden has taken a friendlier position to law enforcement. The backlash referenced in the question is occurring. Locally, this is not happening as dramatically as in other communities. One proof of this is the talking points of Sheriff candidates at a recent labor event. They each talked about increased training and using social workers in lieu of officers in crisis situations. I recall a meeting two years ago where I suggested social workers in the Sheriff department. In response to my audacity a current law enforcement chief publicly mocked me for my supposed ignorance.*

*We see a sharp decline in those who want to pursue a career in law enforcement locally. Seasoned officers are quitting the force to join the private sector, and recruits are of such low quality that they are not passing physical or psychological tests. Furthermore, the trust that used to be associated with police in predominantly White communities has been steadily eroding.*

*Lastly, as the Council is the fiscal body, we appropriate portions of the sheriff budget. For example, a recent \$2 million county-wide investment raising staff salaries to keep the county competitive included the sheriff department. However the ongoing challenge of the sheriff's department is the officers feel there aren't enough staff to patrol the county adequately. Some of the reasons are those I discussed above.*

4. Given the American legacy of slavery, tyranny and discrimination against Black people

Indiginouse people and other people of color notably Asians & Latino/Latine people; do you believe that White Supremacy exists today in the US within the populus, our system of government, schools & education, etc... or in everyday life? IF so, please give as many examples as you think are necessary to elucidate that belief and if NOT please tell us why.

*White supremacy exists. To find examples, we investigate areas where inclusion is not equitable. Here are local measures:*

- *The districting of MCCSC. See below for a more robust discussion.*
- *The fact that locally some feel emboldened to spread hateful symbols and flyers on and off-campus. I support the Southern Poverty Law Center, which currently counts 14 separate hate groups in Indiana (Source: <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map?state=IN>)*
- *Black Hoosiers are disproportionately affected by the criminal legal system, period. Black people account for 34 percent of the prison population and only 9 percent of Indiana's adult population. (Source: <https://www.aclu-in.org/en/campaigns/systemic-equality-indiana>)*
- *A 2019 Regenstrief report found that in Indiana:*
  - *Black individuals were less likely to perceive they were at risk for cancer and less worried about getting cancer than white individuals.*
  - *Black women were more likely to have cervical cancer screening than white women. (Source: <https://aacrjournals.org/cebp/article/28/3/462/71758>)*

*This list goes on and on. However, I want to emphasize that correlation does not equal causation and that there are complicated barriers to justice and health. One of the dangers we have even heard locally is that everyone in a racial or ethnic group is the same. This mindset is as dangerous as ignorance of racial disparities. Not all Black households are poor, lack education, or lack health insurance.*

5. To the best of your knowledge, describe why people of color are disproportionately targeted and arrested by the criminal justice system. What ideas do you have to make the justice system more equitable and impartial? What concerns do you have about the militarization of our police force? Name a specific issue in our community relating to the militarization of the police and how you have or would respond to it.

*The original sin of slavery is why people of color are disproportionately impacted in our Justice system. In grad school, I took a class where the professor assigned Shane Bauer's book American Prison. He compellingly points out the linkages between the tactics used to capture slaves to the Jim Crowe era and prisons for profit using prisoner leasing. Furthermore, we see that plantations became prisons. Even today, we see White officers on horseback overseeing Black prisoners in the fields. I write this knowing that esteemed historians are reading this and that my understanding of the linkages between the institution of slavery and the carceral institutions is not complete.*

*I have many thoughts on how to make the Justice system more equitable. First, I would ensure continued investment in bias education. One of the facts that emerged from training was that at least one adult employee of the County had not heard of the Jim Crow era before. Second, we need to elect Judges, Prosecutors, and Probation staff who are fluent in these issues. Locally we are fortunate to retain staff doing great work in the Probation Department. Specifically, the JDAI grant led to the evidence-based review of County practices to examine racial bias (Source: <https://www.co.monroe.in.us/departments/board.php?structureid=138>). Third, we need to continue to invest in diversion and problem-solving courts. Here again, our Judges and prosecutors are leading the state in their efforts to identify and stop structural racism. Fourth, we need to continue to support non-prison alternatives for those in crisis. This can take the form of social workers instead of officers or using Crisis Centers like the Stride Center in Bloomington. These all keep people out of jail. Fifth, we need to invest as a community in mental health. I toured jail facilities in two communities. At each site, inmate mental health is the main obstacle in moving people back into society. Sixth, we need to bolster our community with investments with the township trustees because there are linkages between poverty and prison. Seventh, we need to address the school-to-prison pipeline and the disparate paths Black students receive instruction and punishment in our schools.*

*Lastly, the sheriff's department should not be militarized. If you look at County investments, we invested in body cameras (although the evidence showing their efficacy is up for debate) and additional training. As I write this, the video of Patrick Lyoya's execution is deeply disturbing, which is why I continue to call for non-armed responses to crisis. There are two main barriers to this. First, there needs to be leadership from law enforcement on this. However, we have seen reticence from law enforcement to use the Stride Center. Second, the extreme right in Indiana encourages public militarization by signing into law permitless concealed carry. Now, we do not know who is carrying a lethal weapon or what (if any) training they have to use a firearm. I do not point these things out to avoid action but to acknowledge that the problem is significant. We need to continue to seek collaboration to fight these injustices.*

6. What does restorative justice look like to you? What programs focused on restorative justice do you support or would you support as an elected official? How, give details?

*Restorative justice is about removing barriers. These barriers include but are not limited to cash bail, pre-trial detention, user fees, inequitable sentencing practices, and more. It also means that BIPOC voices are heard, valued, and centered. One of the lessons I learned from our contract with BLM-Btown was that volunteer work was not an appropriate way to center Black voices. Contractual work should always be compensated at fair market rates.*

*Article 1, Section 18 of the Indiana Constitution states, "The penal code shall be founded on the principles of reformation, and not of vindictive justice". So, under Indiana law, we look not to be punitive but rather restorative.*

*In my service on the County Council, this takes the form of alternatives to incarceration, which I discussed above. These alternatives include supporting the staff and financing: • Diversion programs with Probation*

- *PreTrial Diversion with the Prosecutor*
- *Problem Solving Courts*
  - *Drug Treatment Court*
  - *Mental Health Court*
  - *Reentry Court*
  - *Veterans Court*
- *Bias and other training to raise County staff scores on Intercultural Competency.*
- *Poverty relief with the Township Trustees*
- *Safe spaces for Youth in Crisis with the Youth Services Bureau. As a reminder, as a community, we made a decision in the not too distant future to not build a youth detention center.*
- *Reducing user fees and using public dollars to make up the difference. This effort was led by retiring Judge Galvin.*
- *Syringe Exchange Services does not incarcerate but treats those suffering from substance use disorder who use needles. We are one of the only communities in Indiana to offer this evidence-based service.*

*While not an exhaustive list, these policies represent initiatives that demand continued investment, as all of these programs can continue to adapt to the provision of justice.*

7. Would you support establishing a 311 number that connected people to emergency services and local organizations trained in handling crisis situations rather than the police? What should be done with individuals who make false reports to the police based on racial profiling or prejudice?

*As stated above, I support connecting people in crisis to alternatives to armed law enforcement. There are programs across the country that have successfully implemented this using disparate forms. CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) International is a community-based program I like. Multiple people in Monroe County completed training on its precepts. However, leadership is needed to influence adoption across jurisdictions.*

*Additional training for 911 dispatch is part of the solution. Currently, 911 dispatch is one of the ways that Monroe County engages productively with the City of Bloomington and the Towns that make up the county. The current challenge in this department is that turnover is high, and to train staff, we will also need to incentivize longer tenures in this stressful job. The rollout of 988 is concerning. The US Congress enacted this bill to divert mental health calls from 911. However, Congress did not allocate sufficient funding for implementation or training. As such, Congress depended on the states to roll out the program in the manner Congress expected. The*

*Pew Charitable Trust put out a report on why this is not happening. (Source: Most States Have Not Yet Action to Support New 988 Behavioral Health Lifeline: <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2021/10/26/most-states-have-not-yet-acted-to-support-new-988-behavioral-health-lifeline>). Nonetheless, according to a report from Indiana FSSA, 988 is scheduled to go live in Indiana on July 16, 2022 (Source: Indiana 988 Plan <https://www.in.gov/justice/files/jrac-2021-0604-988.pdf>).*

*211 also exists throughout Indiana, and this service is a solid model to divert calls from dispatch. The traditional use has been for social service provision. But during the pandemic, we used it so residents could quickly find testing and vaccination sites. 211, like 988, will be housed in the IN FSSA department. As of this moment, 311 is not available in Indiana, but I have an interest in exploring its expansion here.*

*Lastly, the issue of false reports falls under the embarrassment that is the Indiana Hate Crimes Law. This law does not enumerate protected classes, taking the teeth out of efforts to prosecute hate crimes in the state. For Indiana to be serious about false reports based on race or other federally protected classes, we need to urge our state representatives to enumerate these protected classes in the statute.*

8. Describe a society in which there are no prisons. How does that justice system differ from ours? What other aspects of culture would be different in a society without prisons?

*We know from outside reports that our current jail system is broken. (Source: [https://www.co.monroe.in.us/egov/documents/1628182211\\_14418.pdf](https://www.co.monroe.in.us/egov/documents/1628182211_14418.pdf)) There are multiple reasons. Repeat offenders keep coming into the jail. The jail itself is not appropriate to house inmates. The jail is often overcrowded. These and more are in the reports we commissioned.*

*A society with no jails is one where comprehensive mental health services exist. We know that mental health is a problem with current detention. Those who have spent the most time in the Monroe County Jail do not have a place to go. Much of this is not new and caused by mental health institutions closing in the 1970s without adequately resourced community-based programs to replace them. We need to bolster the existing system of state hospitals run through FSSA to accept those who have a diagnosable condition and pose a risk to themselves or others. Until we find ways to treat those with mental illness, we will continue to rely on jails as our solution, and they will continue to be overcrowded. Comprehensive mental health should be developmentally driven and preventative instead of reactive.*

*A society with no jails invests in housing, which can reduce recidivism. We do a decent job of a warm hand-off from the jail's exit doors, but we need a longer-term approach. For those who are house-less, a housing first model is something that our community invests in as an*

evidence-based model based on the Heading Home plan (<https://www.monroeunitedway.org/HeadingHome2021>). For those who lack sufficient financial resources, affordable housing is needed. This must be balanced with a variety of housing, as I discuss below.

A society with no jails invests in strong intercepts, as described by The Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) (Source: <https://www.samhsa.gov/criminal-juvenile-justice/sim-overview>). This model helps communities identify resources and gaps in services and develop local strategic action plans, which is what Eve Hill recommended in her report to Monroe County (Source: [https://www.co.monroe.in.us/egov/documents/1643299740\\_74003.pdf](https://www.co.monroe.in.us/egov/documents/1643299740_74003.pdf)). This is also the work that the Criminal Justice Response Committee, on which I sit, is working. Lastly, a society with no jails invests in meaningful poverty reduction. At this point, this work is partially done through coordinated work with social service agencies and township trustees. More work is done through the support of secondary and post-secondary educational institutions. As a former employee at The Salvation Army, I am under no illusions that this work is easy, cheap, or quick.

#### *Food Insecurity*

9. Given that the Food insecurity rate for Monroe County is 14.4% which is 32.1% higher \* than the national average what plans or ideas do you have for food justice in our community? Do you support land redistribution for the purpose of growing food? Do you support community based food programs that bring locally grown nutrient dense food to those in need? If so please detail those programs here.

*\*Statistics from Feeding America Org 2019. These stats have only gotten worse during the global pandemic, though new numbers have not been compiled in this form yet.*

*The Monroe County Government understands the importance of food security. Through our long-term partnership with the Hoosier Hills Food Bank (HHFB) and support of individual social service organizations through the Sophia Travis grant cycle, we watch as the quantity in pounds of food distributed increases. (Source: <https://www.hhfoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/HHFB-AR-21.pdf>, p. 21). Monroe County used a portion of CARES funds to bolster operations at the HHFB. A strong food bank supporting a variety of food pantries in disparate locations in the region is the best way to support food insecurity on a broad scale.*

*It continues to be disappointing that some grocery stores close in the region. However, it is valuable to see multiple grocers in the area openly supporting local growers.*

*In terms of land redistribution, I support mixed-use zoning. This is an ongoing debate in our community where some argue that we need more large homes on large lots. I disagree. I think that certain areas of the County are ideal for mixed-use zoning. These neighborhoods could lead to innovation. I think about shared neighborhood gardens. Also, areas where people could plant a row for the hungry, or work to develop a cash crop that would sell well at Bloomingfoods or the Peoples Market.*

*In terms of community-based food programs, we need more of those and are based on equity. One of the ways to pursue this is to include communal incubator kitchens. In my hometown of Iowa, there is a place called NewBo Market*

<https://www.newbocitymarket.org/explore-the-market>). It has spurred many small businesses that sell artisanal foods. I think that would be a good use of space here in Monroe County. One of the challenges to existing food stands is that the resources to create them were not allocated transparently. This needs to change.

A second idea is including food insecurity in Climate Action Plans (CAP). The City of Bloomington outlines three measurable food and agriculture goals in their CAP. ●

Goal FA 1: Increase food and nutrition security citywide.

- Goal FA 2: Increase local agricultural resilience to climate shocks.
- Goal FA 3: Increase and stabilize local food

(Source:

<https://bloomington.in.gov/sites/default/files/2021-04/Bloomington%20CAP%2006%20Local%20Food%20and%20Agriculture.pdf>) Under my leadership, the County is moving toward creating its CAP. Presumably the County CAP would also include Food and Agriculture goals that are more rural-oriented.

10. In what ways does food justice fit within wider social issues, ie economic, environmental or racial justice? Do you support allowing white supremacists in our local food/farmer's market? If so, why? If not, how do you propose to remove them?

*I do not support white supremacists at Farmer's Market. I was a regular at the Bloomington Farmers Market before I knew about Schooner Creek. I hosted voter registration drives and candidate information sessions at the Monroe County Dems booth. You could find me there most Saturdays, spreading democracy. I will never forget watching armed Three Percenters set up perimeter positions around the market. It felt that violence would erupt at any moment, and I have never been back.*

*The reason I don't support white supremacists at the market is that they peddle hate. They retort with convoluted First Amendment arguments which act as a shield for hateful and bigoted violence. As a supporter of the Southern Poverty Law Center, it is clear that giving a little to hate groups leads to further erosion of rights.*

*To prevent hate in markets, I don't think public entities should operate markets. The City put itself into a terrible situation from which they are still reeling. Private entities are more beneficial because:*

- Operations can be outside jurisdictional boundaries
- Charter documents are not beholden to electoral swings.
- Operations can have a more organic relationship with growers.

*My experience tells me this is true. In grad school, I participated in a capstone project which sought to revitalize a dying farmer's market. The local politicians lost interest, and there was no political will. The private sector tried to intervene, but they didn't have relationships or the trust of the local growers. For their part, the local growers took their goods to markets in other communities. In essence, the effort for a unified market became siloed, and progress never occurred.*

*This does not mean that the public sector can not be involved. The local government can still*

*regulate food safety. It can still support organizations through transparent grant processes. However, I would not advocate a Public-Private Partnership for the same reasons enumerated above.*

11. Bloomington & Monroe County finds itself in an affordable housing crisis. How will you ensure more affordable housing in spite of the local government's defacto mandate to maintain higher housing prices for tax revenue? Do you support density housing with priority given to people of color, people making under \$30,000 a year, families with dependents, and people with disabilities? Specifically, please discuss non-student housing.

*To describe the local situation as a crisis is apt. Embarrassingly, the County Commissioners repeatedly vote down much-needed housing. (Source: <https://bsquarebulletin.com/2021/06/10/monroe-county-commissioners-reject-another-residential-development-south-of-bloomington-this-is-a-lot-of-housing-on-not-a-lot-of-space/>) This has frustrated local activists, who have become disheartened. Two of the most vocal affordable housing activists have moved out of the community to Boulder and Washington DC in the past 12 months.*

*I need to be clear that I do not support voting down these housing developments. These housing units would have offered homes available to those priced out of the market. Some constituents relate that they can not find a house in a price range they can afford. Indeed, the median house price in our community approached \$300,000. (Source: Bloomington-area housing market 'still red hot.'; Herald Times; February 23, 2020).*

*Presented is a classic economic situation. High demand for a commodity in low supply drives up prices. We need to increase supply. This idea is not just my opinion. This conclusion is the professional advice of ROI, who is the authority on quantifying housing in the Uplands Region. They offer seven Strategic Housing Goals, which the Commissioners ignore. (Source: <https://indd.adobe.com/view/3473d5d6-6e91-4490-af93-83f8aed10d27>, pp. 316-7)*

*We can work to adopt these goals which include density housing for a variety of income thresholds, abilities, and others. One way we can do that is to utilize inclusionary zoning in our Planning processes. We are currently revisiting our Unified Development Ordinance and Monroe County Plan Department staff have made presentations to the Monroe County Affordable Housing Commission on areas in the County that can support affordable housing. However, the political will in the Board of Commissioners is absent. This situation is frustrating for many, not least those who are "stuck" in apartments and can not afford the home of which they dream.*

12. Young students of color in particular Black students in Bloomington experience disproportionate rates of detention, suspension, and expulsion\*. To the best of your knowledge, how does this problem contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline? Given that the Indiana Coalition for Public Education has released a report detailing the need for desegregation in

Monroe County and a plan for creating greater equity, what are your thoughts on school desegregation in 2022 and what are your plans to help this process?

*\* According to the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, "black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students. On average, 5% of white students are suspended, compared to 16% of black students." (<https://ocrdata.ed.gov/downloads/crdc-school-discipline-snapshot.pdf>)*

*In follow up to the BLM training given to the Monroe County Council, I reached out to Professor Michele Moyd, who gave a presentation that day. After a series of conversations, she showed me the capstone report that IU O'Neill students completed in the summer of 2020 entitled "The Equity Model: Increasing Educational Equity by Redrawing School Catchment Boundaries in Monroe County, Indiana". (Source: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1q0FgMK-1tkEU5tuyz9PMfn8ia9eb8I-8/view>) Their client was the Indiana Coalition for Public Education in Monroe County. They wrote a blog article about their experience. (Source: <https://www.icpe-monroecounty.org/blog/the-oneill-school-capstone-report-on-redrawing-school-catchment-zones-for-economic-and-racial-equity>). It remains a goal to seek a long-overdue referendum to redistrict MCCSC school boundaries. I reaffirm my desire to help get to this end so that we can seek more equitable treatment of students.*

*In conversations with former school board member Jacinda Townsend Gides and Professor Moyd, we discussed raising awareness about this issue. However, the school board remained starkly divided to the frustration and exhaustion of many. Moreover, we discussed a political solution involving a campaign leading to a local referendum. This option remains something I am willing to explore. It became even more so as the MCCSC administration advocate for a referendum to increase revenue this November without addressing this issue. (Source: <https://www.heraldtimesonline.com/story/news/education/2022/04/15/monroe-county-community-school-2022-referendum/7287021001/>)*

*As a County Councilor, I do not have statutory jurisdiction over school corporations. I do not appropriate any part of their budget, nor do I approve human resources policies and procedures, as I do for Monroe County operations. However, this does not preclude me from wanting to take action against the injustice meticulously detailed in Professor Ashlyn Nelson's student work.*

KATE WILTZ - MONROE COUNTY COUNCIL, District 2

1. How do you define Anti-Racism? Please try to use your own words and do not quote from a book or online resources. Additionally, how as an elected official would you apply anti-racism? Give specific examples in either your current policies as a seated official or in your candidate platform.

*In the past three-plus years on County Council, I have been intentional about learning, understanding, and adopting anti-racism in my work and private life. I have read many books, participated in four different equity-oriented professional development trainings. I joined the antiracist table and worked through their monthlong online experience. One thing I can say after all this is that anti-racism is HARD. It is the difficult practice of disrupting the norm and moving from ally to advocate to accomplice. It is the uncomfortable denouncement of micro- and macro-aggressions that plague people of color specifically. I am still learning, and I am not getting it all right, but I am being more bold and insisting on programming and policy to back up statements. For example, I am working on an indigenous land acknowledgement for the County, and I have the pleasure of partnering with a brilliant indigenous woman who works in our parks department. As we navigate what words make the most sense for Monroe County, we are outlining specific actions the County should take to implement the statement.*

2. How do you define privilege? How has privilege impacted decisions you have made as an elected official, or if you are running for the first time, as an engaged community member? If you are elected, how will you use your privilege to assist BIPOC communities?

*Privilege is the ease with which I sailed through elementary school. It is watching my mom pore over a chart comparing school districts to select the neighborhood in which to house hunt in the town we were moving to. Privilege is me as an oblivious high schooler who got lead parts in the mainstream plays we put on every year. Privilege is knocking on doors while campaigning and never worrying if the tone of my skin was going to set the tone of the welcome I received. And privilege is knowing that, even as I feel inadequate and exposed sitting in a room with other government officials, no matter how much I feel I'm faking it, I am "in."*

*I am working on various committees as part of my role on County Council, and in each I try to check myself. I am not great at it and I have a lot of room for growth, but I'm working to elevate marginalized voices by including more seats at every table. I hope to become strong enough to step away from the table to make room for BIPOC perspective and experience. Specifically, we are just beginning to plan and implement criminal justice reform across our county. I am honored to have Jennifer Crossley working alongside me on the small committee that has such promise for real impact. As we move forward, I hope that Jennifer, Peter Iversen and I will meaningfully implement ideas and strategies directly informed by BIPOC stakeholders.*

3. Given the history of the BLM Movement and the surge of support in 2020 after George Floyd was brutally murdered by police, the promised police and law enforcement reformed that ultimately has not happened; as well as the backlash against the BLM Movement we are currently seeing in media and politics; are you as a candidate or a current elected official a supporter of the BLM Movement & if so please articulate what that means in your own words? Give specific examples in your policy work or in your candidate platform.

*I support the Black Lives Matter movement. To me the BLM movement is about challenging and fundamentally changing the societal structures that retain white power over people of color.*

*It's about recognizing and forcing the conversation on our inherently racist past and present, and ultimately it is about dismantling white supremacy. When community members (finally) engaged with the County Council in the summer of 2020 and flooded one of our meetings with public comment on the issue of our Sheriff's Office budget, I moved to create more welcoming space for dialogue. Specifically, I set up a community conversation opportunity for elected officials and concerned community members to talk about what Monroe County's law enforcement should be and what local government can do in terms of reallocating resources to achieve those goals. Later, when our ignorance on important issues related to equity and structural racism was pointed out, I worked to fund both a training from BLM-Bloomington for elected officials, as well as a long-term training program for all county staff. There is still much to do and I am committed to working on elevating BIPOC voices as we face significant reform in our local criminal justice system over the next few years.*

4. Given the American legacy of slavery, tyranny and discrimination against Black people, Indigenous people and other people of color notably Asians & Latino/Latine people; do you believe that White Supremacy exists today in the US within the populus, our system of government, schools & education, etc... or in everyday life? IF so, please give as many examples as you think are necessary to elucidate that belief and if NOT please tell us why.

*I don't believe that White Supremacy exists across all sectors of the US – I know that it does. White supremacy is like the air we breathe. As a white person, I don't always see it, yet shapes nearly everything we do. One example that sticks with me is the fact that, at one time in America's history there were Irish, German, Italian, Finnish, and many other ethnic groups struggling to establish their community values and as a result, vying for power. Over time, and not coincidentally, these white folks began to identify more with their whiteness and less with their unique ethnicities. This strategy of aligning with the growing strength and power of whiteness was an evolution of that vying for power. For one individual or group to have power over another requires that the latter gives up power (or has it stolen). Under the guise of a harmonious melting pot of nation building, whites found unity amongst their differences and an insurance against becoming powerless. People of color became a common powerless other to be dominated.*

5. To the best of your knowledge, describe why people of color are disproportionately targeted and arrested by the criminal justice system. What ideas do you have to make the justice system more equitable and impartial? What concerns do you have about the militarization of our police force? Name a specific issue in our community relating to the militarization of the police and how you have or would respond to it.

*Contrary to the way Justice is portrayed as a blindfolded lady holding impartial scales, our justice and law enforcement systems operate with prejudice. They operate with the same rules as they have for centuries. In each era of reform, we change the details but not the substance. We may not have debtors' prisons, but we systematically remove opportunities for success from black and brown children and their families. We may have outlawed segregated schools and removed redlining from our housing policies, but we still withhold educational excellence and*

*quality of life from poorer neighborhoods (locations of parks, sidewalks, and other infrastructure, for example) through districting, zoning, and behavioral profiling. All of this, and much more, contributes to the disproportional number of black and brown people in our criminal justice system.*

*Changing the circumstances that shape the lives of BIPOC individuals is the most important thing we can do to change this reality. Implementing a desegregation of our schools as suggested by a recent local study would be a good start. Inclusive zoning that supports the integration of multiple housing options is another pre-emptive measure. As silly as it may sound, developing recreation, walkability, and transit would also have positive impacts.*

*Regarding the militarization of our police, I couldn't be more concerned about the detrimental impact of this trend. There is an unnecessary escalation of the perceived need for escalated arming of our officers. I understand a need to protect those in law enforcement, and I respect the need for preparation for disastrous scenarios involving armed aggressors. However, the time, place and manner for these extreme and extraordinarily rare instances must guide our policy and practice. Across the nation, police forces are accessing military surplus and tactical gear. By and large these things are bringing more violence to our communities – not deterring it. Instead of gearing up for battle on a daily basis, I would like to see neighborhood/beat policing applied with a community outreach approach – an unarmed community outreach approach, supported by crisis response and harm reducing programs.*

*Finally, with respect to the Bearcat (the most obvious specific issue in our community), I am certain that I would not have allocated funding for the type of vehicle that was purchased by the City of Bloomington.*

6. What does restorative justice look like to you? What programs focused on restorative justice do you support or would you support as an elected official? How, give details?

*Interestingly, restorative justice is mandated in Indiana's constitution. Just as interesting, is the lack of restorative approaches to justice that exist in this state. Monroe County leads the state in offering restorative justice processes to resolve criminal offenses. If we are to reform our criminal justice system, we must incorporate a restorative approach to resolving criminal harm. My understanding is that restorative justice involves an acknowledgement of the wrongdoing and its effects on others, followed by communicating and connecting with the victim(s). The third component is a healing that results from honest reckoning with the impacts of one's actions and an effort to repair the damage done. Incorporating this approach in the alternatives to incarceration that we will be exploring with criminal justice reform will be a priority for me.*

7. Would you support establishing a 311 number that connected people to emergency services and local organizations trained in handling crisis situations rather than the police? What should be done with individuals who make false reports to the police based on racial

profiling or prejudice?

*I would support an emergency number for crisis response that is qualified in mediation, mental health, and de-escalation. As part of our efforts in criminal justice reform locally, I have suggested that we include analyzing and re-apportioning the dispatch center's budget to incorporate training on selective response to emergency calls. I tend to believe that, overall, it might be best to continue to direct emergency calls to a central 911 response center that would have access to non-police crisis response units. With training and appropriate resources, the public would not be burdened with multiple emergency numbers, but specialized response would be dispatched to mental health or other crises that can be resolved without the inherent violence that accompanies police responders. As for those making false reports that target people of color, they should be charged with a hate crime and also prosecuted civilly for wasting government resources.*

8. Describe a society in which there are no prisons. How does that justice system differ from ours? What other aspects of culture would be different in a society without prisons?

*Prisons are a failure of our democratic society. They have always been misguided, in the sense that they codify historical slavery into a modern racist system that depends on the treatment of black and brown people as a force-labor economy. A society without prisons would be one born of having to address the true nature of racism in our country. In order to envision a society without prisons, we must address the inequity that feeds the current system. Instead of seeing the solution to crime as a punitive, labor-sourcing, violent warehousing of non-white people, it would engender the development of robust mental health intervention and treatment, supports for families and children facing few options economically, and stopping cycles of abuse that currently feed the prison pipeline. I would imagine that without prisons, policies that equitably support health and welfare would be foundational.*

9. Given that the Food insecurity rate for Monroe County is 14.4% which is 32.1% higher \* than the national average what plans or ideas do you have for food justice in our community? Do you support land redistribution for the purpose of growing food? Do you support community based food programs that bring locally grown nutrient dense food to those in need? If so please detail those programs here.

*\*Statistics from Feeding America Org 2019. These stats have only gotten worse during the global pandemic, though new numbers have not been compiled in this form yet.*

*I think that we are facing some very tough economic times over the next few years. Food prices are skyrocketing and the disparity in access to food across our community is startling. I am impressed by the work that the People's Market has done with respect to creating safe spaces for diverse growers and shoppers. The affiliated efforts with CSA and mutual aid are proof that there*

*is power in grassroots approaches to environmental and social justice. I would like to see more subsidized urban agriculture programs, and I am interested in expanding efforts to connect growers and suppliers of fresh food to food pantries and directly to community members in need.*

10. In what ways does food justice fit within wider social issues, ie economic, environmental or racial justice? Do you support allowing white supremacists in our local food/farmer's market? If so, why? If not, how do you propose to remove them?

*As with many socio-economic issues, safe access to healthy, fresh food is a matter of power dynamics fostered by unchecked capitalist agendas. When certain people gatekeep healthy food by locating well-stocked groceries in wealthier neighborhoods while leaving swaths of food deserts across other areas, there is a fundamental injustice at work.*

*While it is legally complicated to ban someone from a public space for their distasteful opinions, support of a white supremacist organization while operating in a public space should be considered a form of hate crime – at the very least it is intimidation that can and should be banned. While pursuing legal means of eviction, I propose that there be designated a Nazi section of the market where that particular booth can be located. I would be sure to indicate the Nazi and non-Nazi areas with appropriate signage. It sounds like I'm joking. I am not. If necessary, I would have created a private, non-profit entity to manage the market so that it could legally evict the offensive seller. There just cannot be space for that hate in our community.*

11. Bloomington & Monroe County finds itself in an affordable housing crisis. How will you ensure more affordable housing in spite of the local government's defacto mandate to maintain higher housing prices for tax revenue? Do you support density housing with priority given to people of color, people making under \$30,000 a year, families with dependents, and people with disabilities? Specifically, please discuss non-student housing.

*The housing crisis extends across our country, but there are some great models where communities have brought their unhoused populations to near zero. These examples differ in many ways but have some common attributes. They all include people from the groups mentioned above as key advisors on planning and implementing solutions. They also address the housing stock for seriously low-income individuals and families. And they offer permanent supportive housing to those who qualify. I absolutely support zoning and government support for denser housing development that prioritizes the groups mentioned above. We must be aggressive in our approach to housing – and it should be a fundamental right for all people to have a safe place to live. By attaching priority for minorities and those in need to housing access that is densely developed (infilling in redevelopment areas) and integrated with multi- and single-family housing, we can be intentional about equity in housing opportunity. Unless the University is substantially involved in a specific development, I am disinclined to prioritize anything that would be considered student housing to the exclusion of others.*

12. Young students of color in particular Black students in Bloomington experience disproportionate rates of detention, suspension, and expulsion\*. To the best of your knowledge, how does this problem contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline? Given that the Indiana Coalition for Public Education has released a report detailing the need for desegregation in Monroe County and a plan for creating greater equity, what are your thoughts on school desegregation in 2022 and what are your plans to help this process?

\* According to the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, "black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students. On average, 5% of white students are suspended, compared to 16% of black students." (<https://ocrdata.ed.gov/downloads/crdc-school-discipline-snapshot.pdf>)

*Discriminatory and no-tolerance discipline approaches in schools force children out of the very system that is protective from entering the justice system. Once expelled, often as a result of discretionary enforcement, youth are left with few alternatives to keep them out of the juvenile justice system. Once in the justice system, individuals are many more times at risk for recidivism. I have spoken with school board members about the desegregation and encouraged funding of a follow-up study (as was indicated in the ICPE report) that would provide even more detail on specific locations for redistricting. I fully support a district-wide equity-based approach to school assignment.*

JENNIFER CROSSLEY - MONROE COUNTY COUNCIL, District 4

1. How do you define Anti-Racism? Please try to use your own words and do not quote from a book or online resources. Additionally, how as an elected official would you apply anti-racism? Give specific examples in either your current policies as a seated official or in your candidate platform.

*-Anti-Racism is NOT this idea of wearing a BLM sweatshirt or showing up at a rally or coming up with a fancy slogan to profess that you're not a racist. Anti-Racism is the act of dismantling racist policies and ideologies that have harmed Black communities and other communities of color. Making sure that before the company that you work for doesn't just release the simple solidarity statement in honor of Black lives and then turn around and not have any BIPOC people at the head of the company, but working towards stepping aside and being an active listener to Black communities. Making sure that instead of wearing a BLM t-shirt in a meeting as an elected official that you actively do the work YOURSELF as a non-BIPOC person and be an active listener and put policies such as ordinances in place that will improve the quality of life of Black communities and communities of color. Anti-Racism is a marathon not a race and folks should always want to continue the work of making sure our everyday lives are being led as anti-racists.*

*As an elected official and being the only Black person being seated on the council, I would work to make sure our department heads and our council have AND continue training efforts and be active participants in the discussions and efforts. As a Black*

*person, I don't think that it's my job always facilitate and make sure these things are happening, BUT as a councilor I would always make sure that I'm watching what people are saying and doing and calling out anti-racist behaviors. Another way that I would do this as an elected official and as the liaison to departments such as the jail and sheriff's offices is to ensure practices and policies do not harm communities that look like me and bring Black community members and other community members of color in to make sure that we are all being held accountable for the things that we say and do.*

2. How do you define privilege? How has privilege impacted decisions you have made as an elected official, or if you are running for the first time, as an engaged community member? If you are elected, how will you use your privilege to assist BIPOC communities?

*-There are many different types of privilege but to me it's a characteristic or an advantage that one has that could be used in many different ways to enhance or benefit someone in certain situations. For example, white privilege can be used by white folks when they go into a store and they are less likely to be stopped or followed by employees of the store, or when a white person is stopped by the police for a minor traffic infraction, they possibly don't have the fear of what will happen to them if they don't keep their hands visible to the police as opposed to a Black person being stopped by the cops.*

*While this is my first time running for office, I have held leadership positions in our community in which my position was my privilege and allowed me to speak and bring attention to certain things such as lunch shaming at MCCSC, displacing our unhoused in the thick of Covid without viable solutions, and holding our elected leaders accountable by speaking out. With me having the privilege of holding these leadership positions, it was never easy, in fact extremely difficult because of the severe backlash that was thrown my way, but I did it to shine the light on the issues and to say that we can be better and the community deserves more. The small voices that opposed me were outweighed by the community support in using my privilege and I wouldn't change any of those things that I was a part of.*

*Elected officials, whether we want to admit or not, knowingly have privilege and it is not necessarily a bad thing as long as you know when and how to use it. If I am re-elected to the council, I will use my privilege as a Black person and as a councilor to shed light and and speak up on things that are impacting my constituents in which I serve including making sure that BIPOC voices are not just hear from but listened to and actions are to be done as a result of listening to our BIPOC communities.*

3. Given the history of the BLM Movement and the surge of support in 2020 after George Floyd was brutally murdered by police, the promised police and law enforcement reformed that ultimately has not happened; as well as the backlash against the BLM Movement we are currently seeing in media and politics; are you as a candidate or a current elected official a supporter of the BLM Movement & if so please articulate what

that means in your own words? Give specific examples in your policy work or in your candidate platform.

*- I would say on a personal level, as a candidate, and as an elected official that I support the BLM movement. When we are simply asking for us to live and be happy, what is so wrong and radical about that. When we ask for police accountability when we see police brutality and work towards those goals by trying to hold those accountable, what is so radical and wrong about that? Why aren't those who have Black faces and protest in favor of Black lives AND work towards justice aren't considered patriots of this country but those who stormed the Capitol and STILL refused to believe the outcome of the 2020 Election be considered a patriot who is just trying to defend freedom? To me, loving this country all the way down to our city and county means putting in the work for ALL those who we say we want to go out to represent and serve; and at the same time being able to critique those same fundamentals that are supposed to make a decent human beings living is what being a patriot is and to me, that is the entire BLM movement. I am a Black woman who has a Black husband. Who has a Black children. Who has a Black son and just wants him, my husband, my daughters, and everyone else that looks like us a chance to live and be free without people fearing him. So yes, I support the BLM movement because my Black skin and body are already invested in it.*

*I am new to the council and some of my roles are the liaison to the things that are related to the criminal justice system such as the jail, sheriff, and prosecutor. My role as the liaison to these departments is to work with each of them to make sure that their policies and practices are equitable for our BIPOC communities.*

4. Given the American legacy of slavery, tyranny and discrimination against Black people Indiginouse people and other people of color notably Asians & Latino/Latine people; do you believe that White Supremacy exisits today in the US within the populus, our system of government, schools & education, etc... or in everyday life? IF so, please give as many examples as you think are necessary to elucidate that belief and if NOT please tell us why.

*-Of course there is still White Supremacy in our everyday lives, it's alive and thriving everyday. White supremacy is not just the direct racist things that we see and hear that happens in the community or in the news, but it's policies that were done many years ago that were meant for Black communities and other communities of color to not thrive and to stay in the marginalized box and to never succeed. White Supremacy is what allowed the insurrectionists to storm the nation's capitol last year and roam the halls of Congress freely without ANY fear of police or prosecution. If that were to be BLM protestors, we all know (or should know) that we could have had many dead protestors as a result. White Supremacy ignited the flames of emboldenment and gave us Donald Trump and his many minions that have come afterwards, and folks that voted for him still don't want to believe the outcome of the 2020 election, because of all the work that was done by amazing activists groups and individuals such as Stacey Abrams to work to make sure we didn't get a second term of Trump. On the other hand, white supremacy has also allowed some of our Democratic elected officials to see fit that they are only just the sole*

*candidate that can be the person to win certain seats around our statehouse and maybe even here in Bloomington, instead of stepping aside and supporting the person of color. That some don't even have to listen to our communities when we call out errors and run and hide when constituents are confronting them about things. It has also ingrained so much in our daily lives that my son, who is nine years old, is no longer looked at as the sweet kids that gives great hugs, but now looked at as being disrespectful and rule breaker that should be punished because he is trying to follow the rules of the county and what his mother told him to do (My son back in the fall was told that he was being disrespectful because he refused to take off his mask during our county mask mandate while he waited in line at school to take his school picture). Or White Supremacy looks like not working with BIPOC children in our school system when they are acting out or having behavioral or mental health issues, but instead, dismissing them by suspension or not even caring what is causing all of this and setting them for the school to prison pipeline.*

5. To the best of your knowledge, describe why people of color are disproportionately targeted and arrested by the criminal justice system. What ideas do you have to make the justice system more equitable and impartial? What concerns do you have about the militarization of our police force? Name a specific issue in our community relating to the militarization of the police and how you have or would respond to it.

*-People of color are disproportionately targeted and arrested to be placed in the criminal justice system because of a lack of empathy, care, resources, and fear of our skin. When we don't take the time to invest in our communities by providing accessibility to better the quality of lives of communities of color, they are already set up to fail. As a result of this, some will result in other measures to survive and provide for their families, even if the act that they are taking to provide is illegal. We also know that we are targeted because we aren't seen as community members but we are dismissed as someone looking to make trouble. Another reason is because sometimes those that are supposed to protect and serve don't usually live in the same community that they are in and therefore don't get to know the communities and learn from them.*

*In order to make our justice system fair and equitable, our law enforcement should live in the community that they work and be an active participant. We also need to lessen the time that we give to those who are non-violent offenders (i.e. those who get caught with possession of marijuana) and decriminalize those that suffer from substance use disorders. Lastly, I think we need to legalize marijuana and that would help to alleviate those individuals of color to be less likely to be trapped in the system.*

*The issue that I would have with the militarization of police force is the intent to shoot to kill an individual instead of working on other ways to de-escalate a situation or subdue a suspect. When you look at how the Bearcat issue came to light, it didn't have community involvement and input until the community was forced to look at the situation. I think in that case, if I were the elected officials that dealt with the Bearcat, more community talks and engagement should have happened and I don't believe that we needed to have a vehicle as such.*

6. What does restorative justice look like to you? What programs focused on restorative justice do you support or would you support as an elected official? How, give details?

*-Restorative justice to me is something in which the offender has done harm to another individual or a group of people and the process is to work towards acknowledging the hurt and damage that was done and a way to make amends. In order for restorative justice to be successful, the offender has to recognize the impact vs. the intent of the issue being brought into question. Next, would be accountability, which would be once you realize the impact of the offense, holding yourself accountable by recognizing what damage has been done and owning it, but not feeling sorry for yourself (because it's not really about the offender) but the person in which harm was inflicted upon. Third, you have to work on healing, which can mean gaining the trust back of the person(s) and looking at the issue that was at the root of the issue in the first place. Lastly, in the process to making sure restorative justice is effective and successful, you have to ensure and work toward something like this won't happen again and the details of what could/would happen if violations occur, so you would need to have working agreements to be put into place by the offender and community members so that continued accountability happens. For example, the hurt and harm that was done by Commissioner Jones and County Clerk Nicole Browne could have been handled by restorative justice but there has to be a willingness to do so by the offender. In this case, trust was broken and in order to repair confidence of the community's elected official (the Commissioner), acknowledgement of the impact weighed vastly different than the intent and instead of doubling down on the story, acknowledging the hurt and embarrassment that was caused and brought upon Clerk Browne should have been met with a "I'm sorry and will work on being better". When you know better, you do better as long as you have the will to do so.*

*As an elected official, I do support programs for restorative justice and I think that looks like bringing in community members and different activists groups to assist with this. I don't think restorative justice can happen unless we bring the community in to help with the process of healing.*

7. Would you support establishing a 311 number that connected people to emergency services and local organizations trained in handling crisis situations rather than the police? What should be done with individuals who make false reports to the police based on racial profiling or prejudice?

*-I would support the efforts in establishing the 311 alternative. In recent years, we have seen individuals make false reports because they felt that a Black body was "threatening" to their daily life such as calling the police on kids serving water, folks hanging out at a park enjoying the company of others while having a BBQ, a Black man*

*bird watching and the white woman on camera lying about being accosted by him, and so many others to name, and that's deplorable and scary; Scary in a way that if believed, we could only imagine the outcome and could possibly have more names that are immortalized with police brutality or a hashtag all because of a lie. Most importantly, it's a waste of the police's time and possibly vital time taken away in which they could be responding to something else instead of the false report. Therefore, I think those who make false reports should be prosecuted and face consequences for their actions but I also think that they should have to go through some type of restorative justice to see the hurt and pain caused by their actions.*

8. Describe a society in which there are no prisons. How does that justice system differ from ours? What other aspects of culture would be different in a society without prisons?

*- I think that it would be a great thing in which we live in a society in which we would have no crime and would not have to have prisons, but unfortunately, that is not the case. As a person who has had a family member who was shot and killed and my brother's killer was never brought to justice and still roams in society freely while my brother's existence is now just a memory, I struggle with this concept because we would like to see that person brought to justice and serve time for the crime that was committed.*

*I think that we have to think about why folks are incarcerated in the first place such as substance use disorders, mental health crises, and environmental and socio economic hardships and survival modes. Once we look at the why and the cause of why people have committed the offense. THEN, we have to rehabilitate those (specifically for those non-violent offenders) and give them the tools that are necessary for their survival in order for them not to be repeat offenders. Prisons and jails cannot be the holding place for those who are suffering from mental health and substance use disorders. In my role as the liaison for the jail, I will continue to work with staff on our pre-trial diversion. I think if we could start to give communities a chance to thrive at the time of birth and onwards, maybe we can start to look at how society could be without prison.*

9. Given that the Food insecurity rate for Monroe County is 14.4% which is 32.1% higher \* than the national average what plans or ideas do you have for food justice in our community? Do you support land redistribution for the purpose of growing food? Do you support community based food programs that bring locally grown nutrient dense food to those in need? If so please detail those programs here.

*\*Statistics from Feeding America Org 2019. These stats have only gotten worse during the global pandemic, though new numbers have not been compiled in this form yet.*

*-For me personally, in order to work to lessen the numbers of food insecurity in Monroe County, I would like to see how local farmers and groups such as the People's Market*

*can work more within the county and with local food pantries. I think it would also be a good idea for the county to work with the group and give funds to this group to work on our food insecurity issues on a larger platform. Yes, I would fully support land redistribution in order to grow food because this would be able to help with pockets of food deserts in our community.*

10. In what ways does food justice fit within wider social issues, ie economic, environmental or racial justice? Do you support allowing white supremacists in our local food/farmer's market? If so, why? If not, how do you propose to remove them?

*- In my opinion, racial justice always has to be a top priority in the pyramid of social issues, then I think food, economic, and environmental justice will all fall in alignment. We have to see an opportunity for racial justice to be a part of everything that we do because without it, then you'll see food justice and making sure communities have open access to healthy food options without barriers, then you'll see economic justice and have job opportunities and folks be able to make and earn a living wage, then with environmental justice you'll see communities be free of dumping grounds that pollute the environment and accessibility to clean drinking water. Food justice isn't something that isn't talked about often but should definitely be taken seriously because having access to food can help communities thrive.*

*Openly knowing that we have white supremacists in our local market is scary and I don't support them being in our farmer's market and I will not attend the market while they are there.*

*I would love to see this be alleviated by local farmers coming together and possibly working with the city to start a new market and set ground rules for a zero tolerance policy in which groups like the current one is allowed to be at the market. When we see yard signs that say slogans like "Hate does not live here" or "Not in our yard" but we still have them in our market, it gives me mixed feelings because their presence says the exact opposite.*

11. Bloomington & Monroe County finds itself in an affordable housing crisis. How will you ensure more affordable housing in spite of the local government's defacto mandate to maintain higher housing prices for tax revenue? Do you support density housing with priority given to people of color, people making under \$30,000 a year, families with dependents, and people with disabilities? Specifically, please discuss non-student housing.

*- Yes Bloomington and Monroe County have an affordable housing crisis and it's a huge problem that has affected so many that I know, as well as myself. Of course, those that attend Indiana University should have adequate housing while they are completing their studies here. However, those the support staff and graduate students who work at the university, as well as those who aren't associated with the university and just work in the city and county deserve to have access to affordable housing, which in my mind is*

*affordable rent prices and options, and homes that are for sale that those to truly to be able to afford to purchase. My journey in Bloomington should have been over in 2005 or in 2006 when my husband and I graduated from I.U., but due to life changes and opportunities, we decided to stay. Upon graduating, we shared an apartment that we could barely afford because with both of us having college degrees, we weren't able to find work in our field so we were barely making a livable wage. Eventually through some tough and challenging times, we were able to get jobs that had decent pay, but even with the better jobs that both were at, it was still hard to find housing that would be best for our growing family and that was affordable. When we have rents in town for apartments that are going for nearly \$1200+ for a one bedroom, or sparse single family homes that are at a decent price, we have a huge problem. When we see businesses such as Catalant looking to expand and add more employees, the rent that we have here isn't going to attract a young professional who has just graduated with student loan debt looming or a person(s) with a family working within the county be able to afford childcare, get paid a livable wage, be able to afford housing here; by far, we are one (if not the most) expensive place to live in the state and our officials have to do better to help those that aren't associated with the university.*

*I would like to see funds be used within the county to help with rental assistance and a first-time home buyers fund program and classes that it would take to become successful homeowners. As the fiscal body of the county, I would love to work towards these goals for our community members needing assistance. I think the other issue regarding this issue is the accessibility for housing options, meaning we have to start building within the county to start opening up the possibility and this is something that unfortunately is out of the purview of the county council but is the responsibility of the commissioners. I do know that recently they denied a plan for building housing in the county and that was the wrong thing to do in my opinion. I say, as a council member I, along with my other colleagues can encourage and nudge commissioners to make this a priority for our residents but if we continue to keep getting the same results, then it would be up to the Monroe County voters to either vote to change the trajectory of the commissioners or finding someone to run that will run that will make affordable housing a priority and deliver on that promise instead of it being a campaign talking point.*

12. Young students of color in particular Black students in Bloomington experience disproportionate rates of detention, suspension, and expulsion\*. To the best of your knowledge, how does this problem contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline? Given that the Indiana Coalition for Public Education has released a report detailing the need for desegregation in Monroe County and a plan for creating greater equity, what are your thoughts on school desegregation in 2022 and what are your plans to help this process?

*\* According to the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, "black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students. On average, 5% of white students are suspended, compared to 16% of black students." (<https://ocrdata.ed.gov/downloads/crdc-school-discipline-snapshot.pdf>)*

*-This problem sets up our school-to-prison pipeline because we aren't digging deeper and trying to invest in our children and figuring out what's happening with them. In volunteering and working with some of these students, they deal with a lot of things and issues that children their age should not have to go through or deal with. Some of these*

*children have home issues that prevent them from thriving and being their best so when they come to school and are underperforming or perceived to have an “attitude” some of the teachers and administrators are quick to dismiss them and send them to the office to suspend them or even expel the students. When you don’t work and invest in children’s lives and send them to the office for them to deal with the punishment of being suspended or expelled, then you are sending a message to these kids that they aren’t wanted. Some administrators will also get law enforcement involved in fights at school and are detained instead of handling the issue. So once you continue the cycle of school suspensions and expulsions, then once they reach a certain age, you are just setting up the student to fail and to become a part of the system.*

*In reading the report of our school school desegregation issues, I think that it is shocking and I’m not surprised. My kids currently attend Templeton and while we are looking to buy a house, we are making it a conscious effort to find housing in the Templeton district so that our children can attend school there and continue to see children who look like them. Another way that this issue could be combated is that it’s now time for the school districts to be redrawn and that hasn’t been done in years and when you look at how the districts were made up, it was to increase some of the wealthy and elite families not to have to mix with some of the underprivileged kids, which are usually children of color. The way that I can help with this process as a parent of children that are in MCCSC is to keep watching what the board does with this information and work with some of the current members to push them to figure out what they plan on doing with this information. Lastly, if I’m not satisfied with results, I am looking to seek candidates that will work on this issue and help them get seated into these roles.*

NICOLE BROWNE - MONROE COUNTY CLERK

1. How do you define Anti-Racism? Please try to use your own words and do not quote from a book or online resources. Additionally, how as an elected official would you apply anti-racism? Give specific examples in either your current policies as a seated official or in your candidate platform.

*I would define anti-racism as a movement to extinguish a prevalent school of thinking based upon the prism of privilege from which there is a perceived inability or unwillingness to see how the exact same set of circumstances, policies and political agendas can disparately impact people of color, their cultures and communities.*

*As an elected official charged with the bifurcated responsibilities of providing equal access to both the voting booth and the Courts, I feel it is incumbent upon me to meet all members of the community where they are and connect them to avenues of access for services within my Office. I utilize my role as Legislative Chair for the Association of the Clerks of Circuit Courts of Indiana and the Association of Indiana Counties, together with the access it offers me to testify before Statehouse legislators, to stay actively apprised of legislative issues and barriers that could negatively impact people of color, their cultures and communities.*

2. How do you define privilege? How has privilege impacted decisions you have made as an elected official, or if you are running for the first time, as an engaged community member? If you are elected, how will you use your privilege to assist BIPOC communities?

*I would define privilege as advantages, means, access and opportunities that are not afforded equally or to everyone...whether inherited, bestowed or earned. Every professional position I have ever held (from substitute teacher to elected official) has afforded me the opportunity to view the disparate treatment between the “haves” and the “have nots.” I have always ascribed to the belief that “to whom much is given, much is expected” so it did not take my becoming an elected official to understand that I need to make a difference in whatever role I find myself.*

*As an elected official, I have and will continue to use my personal and political affiliations to insert myself in arenas where issues impacting BIPOC communities present themselves and use my platform to shine a light on those issues.*

3. Given the history of the BLM Movement and the surge of support in 2020 after George Floyd was brutally murdered by police, the promised police and law enforcement reformed that ultimately has not happened; as well as the backlash against the BLM Movement we are currently seeing in media and politics; are you as a candidate or a current elected official a supporter of the BLM Movement & if so please articulate what that means in your own words? Give specific examples in your policy work or in your candidate platform.

*As a human being, candidate and elected official, I support the BLM Movement. As a person of color, throughout the years, I’ve watched media coverage of the murders of Trayvon Martin, Breonna Taylor, Jacob Blake, Daunte Wright, Rayshard Brooks and George Floyd (just to name a few) with horrific outrage. Along with other organized groups (e.g., Mothers of the Movement and When We All Vote), I see the BLM Movement and their grassroots efforts as a necessary response to the outrage created by the senseless massacring of people of color. The organization shines a much needed spotlight on the tolerance of behaviors, at every socioeconomic level, that allow this disparate treatment to continue and how the disparate treatment will continue to manifest until/unless these behaviors are addressed and corrected.*

*I consider my professional platform, as an elected official, to be my own contribution to the Civil Rights movement and I am proud to be the face of free and fair elections in Monroe County. I support the BLM Movement’s avenues of effort and influence to elevate and address continued inequities and disparate treatment.*

4. Given the American legacy of slavery, tyranny and discrimination against Black people Indigenous people and other people of color notably Asians & Latino/Latino people; do you believe that White Supremacy exists today in the US within the populous, our system of

government, schools & education, etc... or in everyday life? IF so, please give as many examples as you think are necessary to elucidate that belief and if NOT please tell us why.

*I, wholeheartedly, believe that white supremacy exists today and that it rears its ugly head within the populous, our system of government, schools & education and especially in everyday life. Some of the examples I would offer to elucidate my beliefs are failure to pass the Equal Rights Amendment and, more recently, failure to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Act. I would cite legislation allowing for dark money to be injected into political campaigns and I would encourage all to look at the current makeup of the United States Supreme Court and...in particular...the marked difference in treatment at the confirmation hearings for Brett Kavanaugh and Ketanji Brown Jackson.*

5. To the best of your knowledge, describe why people of color are disproportionately targeted and arrested by the criminal justice system. What ideas do you have to make the justice system more equitable and impartial? What concerns do you have about the militarization of our police force? Name a specific issue in our community relating to the militarization of the police and how you have or would respond to it.

*Quite succinctly, I believe that people of color are disproportionately targeted and arrested by the criminal justice system because they are, overtly and covertly, believed to be expendable by an increasingly exponential citizenry.*

*To make the justice system more equitable and impartial, I believe it is imperative that we continue to elevate people of color to influential elected positions, at every level, that will allow them to have a meaning impact and opportunity to pass legislation.*

*I'm also supportive of mediation tools in lieu of arrests and incarceration as well as fellow candidate Ruben Marte's plan to expand public outreach and community engagement through the police & community partnership program should he be elected to office.*

6. What does restorative justice look like to you? What programs focused on restorative justice do you support or would you support as an elected official? How, give details?

*To even begin to examine restorative justice, a society must acknowledge an inherent wrong--on all levels and in all forms.*

*In present day, I see restorative justice as a concerted effort to level the playing field for people and communities of color via access to opportunities. It can take the form of reparations that would afford families of color to build generational wealth. Those could include, but not be limited to, tax exemptions, credits and incentives that mirror those of their wealthy corporate counterparts, offering lower interest rates and incentives to homebuyers, forgiveness of student loan debts and free or reduced tuition to pursue higher education with public colleges and universities in the United States.*

*For persons of color who are disproportionately and systemically committed to correctional institutions, for low to medium level criminal offenses, restorative justice can also take on the form of holistic opportunities to reconnect with the community through corporate job fairs, school fairs, social services and treatment resource expos.*

7. Would you support establishing a 311 number that connected people to emergency services and local organizations trained in handling crisis situations rather than the police? What should be done with individuals who make false reports to the police based on racial profiling or prejudice?

*I would unequivocally support a number connecting people to emergency services and local organizations trained in handling crisis situations rather than the police. Further, I have no issue with criminalizing the making of a false report to the police based upon racial profiling or prejudice.*

8. Describe a society in which there are no prisons. How does that justice system differ from ours? What other aspects of culture would be different in a society without prisons?

*I would envision a world with no prisons to be more focused on treatment and rehabilitation as a response to holding its citizens accountable for offenses that would have otherwise landed them in prison. The justice system for a society with no prisons would have a shifted focus for treating the problem rather than the symptoms (or the person and not the illness) as you might see in an advanced and holistic medical environment.*

*Culturally, I would think there would be a greater emphasis placed upon family, neighborhoods/communities as well as more of a religion/spiritual focus.*

9. Given that the Food insecurity rate for Monroe County is 14.4% which is 32.1% higher \* than the national average what plans or ideas do you have for food justice in our community? Do you support land redistribution for the purpose of growing food? Do you support community based food programs that bring locally grown nutrient dense food to those in need? If so please detail those programs here.

*\*Statistics from Feeding America Org 2019. These stats have only gotten worse during the global pandemic, though new numbers have not been compiled in this form yet.*

*At a different time in my life, I have experienced hunger and lived on a food budget of \$1.00/day, supplemented by the generosity of friends and family. It is not possible to eat healthy foods on a budget of \$1.00/day.*

*Simply put, there should be no food insecurity in what is considered to be the richest country in the world. To that end, in areas where there are food deserts, I am supportive of holding those communities accountable through land redistribution for the purpose of growing food.*

*I have donated financially to the Feeding America organization to offset the costs of providing meals for families in need.*

10. In what ways does food justice fit within wider social issues, ie economic, environmental or racial justice? Do you support allowing white supremacists in our local food/farmer's market? If so, why? If not, how do you propose to remove them?

*Food justice fits within wider social issues in the same way as other forms of justice, meaning the ability to access justice disproportionately and negatively impacts people of color. As with restorative justice, I consider food justice to be an equalizer and an opportunity to level the playing field.*

*There are no circumstances under which I would ever support white supremacists in our local food/farmer's market.*

*Similar to the endorsement process for candidates running for office, I would be supportive of a questionnaire/interview process for prospective vendors wishing to rent space from the Farmer's Market. The process would require the vendors to disclose controversial organizations and affiliations that might serve as an impediment for prospective buyers from marginalized communities who would otherwise purchase their goods.*

11. Bloomington & Monroe County finds itself in an affordable housing crisis. How will you ensure more affordable housing in spite of the local government's defacto mandate to maintain higher housing prices for tax revenue? Do you support density housing with priority given to people of color, people making under \$30,000 a year, families with dependents, and people with disabilities? Specifically, please discuss non-student housing.

*For many people of color, the affordable housing crisis is nothing new. Having been raised by a single parent, in Gary, Indiana, we often had to move because my mother could no longer afford the rent or mortgage in the place we were living...particularly during economic downturns when she was laid off from Bethlehem Steel.*

*Not only am I supportive of affordable housing for people of color, people whose income falls below \$30,000/year, families with dependents and people living with disabilities, I am supportive of fellow candidate Dominic Thompson's fresh perspective and ideas on how to expand affordable housing and other sustainability measures in Monroe County should he be elected to office.*

*To address both student and non-student housing, I would like to see Monroe County study a rent control model similar to the one used in New York City.*

12. Young students of color in particular Black students in Bloomington experience disproportionate rates of detention, suspension, and expulsion\*. To the best of your knowledge, how does this problem contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline? Given that the Indiana Coalition for Public Education has released a report detailing the need for desegregation in

Monroe County and a plan for creating greater equity, what are your thoughts on school desegregation in 2022 and what are your plans to help this process?

*\* According to the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, "black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students. On average, 5% of white students are suspended, compared to 16% of black students." (<https://ocrdata.ed.gov/downloads/crdc-school-discipline-snapshot.pdf>)*

*I currently hold a substitute teacher's permit and am honored to count a number of teachers among my close circle of friends and family....including my father...so this issue is never far from my heart. My father has often touted that, if you can't read, you will almost certainly find yourself on a pathway to prison.*

*I have also worked as a counselor for low to medium risk male juveniles housed in the Indiana Department of Correction. These experiences have allowed me unique views from the perspectives of both the classroom and the correctional facility. If a student is not in the classroom learning, as my father has expressed, there are few opportunities ahead that don't include prison.*

*I am supportive of desegregating Monroe County Schools so that every student sees a healthy mixture of teachers, coaches, administrators from all walks of life, ethnicities, cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds.*

*I would also hope to see, in lieu of suspension or expulsion, a concept for an intensive reading program component. With the advantages of having Indiana University's School of Education and a plethora of prospective graduates needing to complete a student education component, I believe this could be easily implemented and integrated into Monroe County Schools.*