

#BLM Btown 2022 Primary Voters Guide Long Form

In April 2022 all primary candidates received a questionnaire covering issues vitally important to the mission goals and values of #BLM Btown who then evaluated and rated each candidate's responses for voters. These assessments are provided to voters for informational purposes. Black Lives Matter does NOT endorse specific candidates.

Basic grading rubric for all candidate questions:

	STRONGLY DISAGREE		NEUTRAL			STRONGLY AGREE		N/A
Awareness: The candidate understood the question's point and demonstrated familiarity with the relevant issues.								
Position: Overall, the candidate supports positions that are consistent with BLM Btown and support BLM Btown's political, cultural and social goals.								
Vision: The candidate is open to reimagining the world and demonstrates vision and imagination that could lead to genuine transformative justice.								
Voices at the Table: The candidate values Black leadership and will make it a priority to invite Black people and other marginalized community members into discussions and decision-making processes in ways that make those voices have deep impact. OR the Candidate is Black or more specifically a Black Progressive anti-racist.								
Commitment and Effectiveness: The candidate clearly expresses the need to advance anti-racism around the relevant issue, offers clear and well-thought-out plans of action that seem practical and useful. Commitment to Action over words.								
Passion and Compartment: The candidate is woke, and is direct about anti-racism being a central issue. For instance, the candidate will name white supremacy and acknowledge that the status quo for white liberals is racist, and does NOT view Bloomington as exceptional when it comes to racial injustice.								

Awareness

Position

Vision

Voices at the Table

Commitment & Effectiveness

Passion & Compartment

Assessment Guide:

Strongly Agree

Agree

Mild Agree

Neutral

Mild Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

2022 Primary Candidate Assessment and brief statement about each candidate

ISAK ASARE - US Representative 9th District

Asare has a great grasp on the issues and embraces Black progressive political stances. He understands systemic racism, and that we must employ anti-racism to combat this on a system and personal level. His policies and stances on federal and local issues are in alignment with an anti-racist platform. As a Black man he is uniquely positioned to understand the issues within our questionnaire and she demonstrates that via his answers.

Awareness: Strongly Agree

Position: Strongly Agree

Vision: Strongly Agree

Voices at the Table: Strongly Agree

Commitment & Effectiveness: Strongly Agree

Passion & Compartment: Strongly Agree

Overall: Strongly Agree

D. LIAM DORRIS - US Representative 9th District

The candidate expresses a general understanding of systemic oppression of BIPOC communities but in some cases chose not to provide details about policy or examples of past successes. Where the candidate does provide more details, the positions described tend to ignore racism and white supremacy in favor of "race-neutral" solutions that focus on economic class alone without any plan for addressing the needs of BIPOC communities in particular.

Awareness: Mild Disagree
Position: Mild Disagree
Vision: Disagree
Voices at the Table: Strongly Disagree
Commitment & Effectiveness: Mild Disagree
Passion & Compartment: Mild Disagree
Overall: Mild Disagree

MATTHEW FYFE - US Representative 9th District

The candidate expresses clear understanding of the issues presented in the questionnaire but offers too few policies and platform ideas. The ideas presented generally present “race-neutral” solutions (e.g., public education funding, improved access to healthcare) which historically tend to leave BIPOC people at a relative disadvantage. Ultimately his execution of his positioning and vision of the awareness he shows in his is lackluster but not without merit.

Awareness: Agree
Position: Mild Agree
Vision: Neutral
Voices at the Table: Neutral
Commitment & Effectiveness: Mild Disagree
Passion & Compartment: Neutral
Overall: Neutral

PENNY GITHENS -State Representative, District 062

The candidate expresses familiarity with some of the issues addressed in this questionnaire and admits to limited knowledge and a mixed voting record on others. The policies supported by the candidate tend to favor small reforms rather than a systemic, anti-racist approaches. She often uses prominent Black leaders in our community as props when she wants to show she knows things about Racism and anti-racism. While she may be well versed on some issues her voting record on progressive issues is beyond questionable.

Awareness: Neutral
Position: Disagree
Vision: Mild Disagree
Voices at the Table: Mild Disagree
Commitment & Effectiveness: Mild Disagree
Passion & Compartment: Mild Disagree
Overall: Mild Disagree

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

On the responses Chopra did provide, we found her to be lacking knowledge about the issues presented and not aligned with our cause and ideals. To be fair, most candidates for judge tend to err on the side of neutrality in order to avoid the ethical boundary walking we are asking them to do. However, that being said we think it is their duty to do that ethical work in order for us to know WHO we are electing and if they are capable of doing that ethical work within a criminal justice system that is already prejudiced against BIPOC folks.

Awareness: Neutral
Position: Strongly Disagree
Vision: Strongly Disagree
Voices at the Table: Disagree
Commitment & Effectiveness: Disagree
Passion & Compartment: Strongly Disagree
Overall: Strongly Disagree

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

Salzmann demonstrated relevant insights about her awareness levels of the issues in the questions. Additionally she is providing her opinion personally while not being unethical. However, in the final 3 questions she is unable to provide her personal opinion while balancing the ethical responsibility of a judge. Overall Salzmann acknowledges key points in her answers but ultimately falls short in providing nuanced answers. To be fair, most candidates for judge tend to err on the side of neutrality in order to avoid the ethical boundary walking we are asking them to do. However, that being said we think it is their duty to do that ethical work in order for us to know WHO we are electing and if they are capable of doing that ethical work within a criminal justice system that is already prejudiced against BIPOC folks.

Awareness: Agree

Position: Mild Agree

Vision: Mild Agree

Voices at the Table: Neutral

Commitment & Effectiveness: Neutral

Passion & Comportment: Neutral

Overall: Neutral

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

Wilson chose not to answer our question and instead wrote a statement about a Judicial candidate's ethical boundaries. While a finely crafted statement, Wilson dodges the heart of these issues in our questionnaire and doesn't take the opportunity to walk the ethical boundary we are asking her to in order for the electorate to evaluate her. To be fair, most candidates for judge tend to err on the side of neutrality in order to avoid the ethical boundary walking we are asking them to do. However, that being said we think it is their duty to do that ethical work in order for us to know WHO we are electing and if they are capable of doing that ethical work within a criminal justice system that is already prejudiced against BIPOC folks.

Awareness: Disagree

Position: Disagree

Vision: Strongly Disagree

Voices at the Table: Strongly Disagree

Commitment & Effectiveness: Strongly Disagree

Passion & Comportment: Strongly Disagree

Overall: Strongly Disagree

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

Wrenbeck provides a few good examples from her law career and personal beliefs. However, like other candidates, she falls short to walk the ethical lines of personal opinions or past activity and what a judge can and should ethically talk about. To be fair, most candidates for judge tend to err on the side of neutrality in order to avoid the ethical boundary walking we are asking them to do. However, that being said we think it is their duty to do that ethical work in order for us to know WHO we are electing and if they are capable of doing that ethical work within a criminal justice system that is already prejudiced against BIPOC folks.

Awareness: Mild Agree

Position: Neutral

Vision: Neutral

Voices at the Table: Disagree

Commitment & Effectiveness: Neutral

Passion & Comportment: Neutral

Overall: Neutral

RUBEN D MARTE - Monroe County Sheriff

Marte has a good understanding of the issue in our questionnaires and as a Afro-Latino man many of these issues he has faced personally. However his background in law enforcement bears a heavy influence on his answers. For instance, his support of the BLM movement is truncated by a commitment to serving "all people" which is a cop out for just saying Black Lives Matter. Additionally some of this positioning and vision is more about a police increase rather than a decrease. The candidate expresses an understanding of the issues and some specific plans for finding solutions that do not rely on a "color-blind" mentality. As an Afro-Latino man, the candidate has faced

many of these issues personally. Answers to questions about policing include specific policy experience and ideas, some of which focused more on incremental reform than progressive, systemic anti-racist approaches.

Awareness: Agree
Position: Mild Disagree
Vision: Mild Disagree
Voices at the Table: Mild Agree
Commitment & Effectiveness: Mild Agree
Passion & Comportment: Mild Agree
Overall: Neutral

ANGIE PURDIE - Monroe County Sheriff

The candidate expresses an interest in anti-racist reform though some of the solutions proposed here appeared more cosmetic than substantive. Fundamentally these responses show a candidate that is not overall aligned with our values. On matters of position, vision and bringing voices to the table Purdie seems to be lacking and we worry that Purdie needs a great deal of work to bring her mild awareness into a more informed position.

Awareness: Mild Agree
Position: Mild Disagree
Vision: Mild Disagree
Voices at the Table: Mild Disagree
Commitment & Effectiveness: Neutral
Passion & Comportment: Neutral
Overall: Mild Disagree

JOANI STALCUP - Monroe County Sheriff

The candidate expresses some familiarity with the issues discussed in this questionnaire and the descriptions of past experience or future plans for dealing with them demonstrate a general trend toward moderate reform. The reforms described (particularly those regarding the role of prisons in our society) are not in line with the vision of the future that is central to Black progressive politics. Her lack of vision shown in question 8 about a world without prisons is troubling.

Awareness: Neutral
Position: Strongly Disagree
Vision: Strongly Disagree
Voices at the Table: Strongly Disagree
Commitment & Effectiveness: Mild Disagree
Passion & Comportment: Neutral
Overall: Disagree

DOMINIC THOMPSON - Monroe County Commissioner

The candidate has a good understanding of the issues in this questionnaire and expresses a consistent desire to center BIPOC communities in finding solutions. The candidate demonstrates an intersectional understanding of marginalization and often provides detailed description of past experience and/or plans for future action.

Awareness: Strongly Agree
Position: Agree
Vision: Agree
Voices at the Table: Agree
Commitment & Effectiveness: Agree
Passion & Comportment: Strongly Agree
Overall: Agree

PETER J IVERSEN - Monroe County Council, District 1

Iverson is very well versed on many of the issues these questions are trying to get to, while there are times his positioning does not quite match ours he appears open to listening to those differences. He has good plans for the county and reaches out to BIPOC to get help on his vision and goals. His questionnaire was very detailed and it appeared that she spent a great deal of time ensuring that he answered thoroughly. We appreciate that work as

many other candidates did not put in the work on this questionnaire. Overall Iverson positioning vision and awareness are compatible with the anti-racist issues in our questionnaire.

Awareness: Strongly Agree

Position: Agree

Vision: Agree

Voices at the Table: Mild Agree

Commitment & Effectiveness: Agree

Passion & Compartment: Agree

Overall: Agree

KATE WILTZ - Monroe County Council, District 2

Wiltz is decently well informed and solid in positioning. Her vision and inclusion has improved greatly since her first appearance at our Seat at the Table events in 2018. We have been following her development since BLMBtown butted heads with her over the Amanda Barge sexual harrassment contronversy in 2019. Currently her overall answers to our questionnaire are a marked improvement in her policies and platform and are compatable with the anti-racist issues in our questinnaire.

Awareness: Agree

Position: Mild Agree

Vision: Mild Agree

Voices at the Table: Mild Agree

Commitment & Effectiveness: Mild Agree

Passion & Compartment: Agree

Overall: Mild Agree

JENNIFER CROSSLEY - Monroe County Council, District 4

Crossley is the first Black woman on the County Council; she was caucused into her role and is currently running to keep that seat. Crossley is a former member of BLM Btown who left the organization amicably in order to chair the Democratic party in Monroe County. Her grasp on topics in these questions are the model example of what BLM Btown looks for from our elected officials as she helped to shape them. Her positioning, vision and commitment to the issues in our questionnaire give hope that things can change in the county government.

Awareness: Strongly Agree

Position: Strongly Agree

Vision: Strongly Agree

Voices at the Table: Strongly Agree

Commitment & Effectiveness: Strongly Agree

Passion & Compartment: Strongly Agree

Overall: Strongly Agree

NICOLE BROWNE - Monroe County Clerk

Browne as a Black woman has an amazing understanding and awareness of the issues our questionnaire covers. Her positionality and vision are in alignment with progressive Black ideology. Moreover her commitment to engaging in the issues we discuss in our questionnaire is very good. Though on some levels our vision or policies diverge she is still within the range of our platform. This time of year is her department's busy season so we are grateful she was able to participate on our questionnaire.

Awareness: Agree

Position: Agree

Vision: Agree

Voices at the Table: Strongly Agree

Commitment & Effectiveness: Strongly Agree

Passion & Compartment: Strongly Agree

Overall: Strongly Agree

Non-Responsive Candidate Statement:

There are several candidates who choose not to fill out our questionnaire. Some candidates cited a lack of time as the reason they did not complete the questionnaire. (Candidates were given five days including a weekend & were told the time constraint was a part of the assessment.) Regardless of the reason given, not submitting responses for this Voter's Guide shows disrespect to Bloomington voters. Further, since our organization supports and advocates for Black and other systematically marginalized people, candidates' refusals to provide answers for this Voter's Guide should remind us that the majority of the Bloomington political landscape is built to sustain anti-Black practices.

Those Candidates are: THOMAS M. MCDERMOTT, JR., KURTIS J CUMMINGS, MATT PIERCE, BRAD SWAIN, MARY ELLEN DIEKHOFF, HOLLY M. HARVEY, STEVE HALE, TROY THOMAS, ERIKA OLIPHANT, ELIZABETH (LEE) JONES, ASHLEY CRANOR, AMY SWAIN, JUDITH A SHARP

Judge Candidate Statement:

Many candidates chose to not answer (or to partially answer) questions, citing ethical commitments to not disclose information regarding future rulings from the bench. Given that US law is rooted in injustice, misogyny, white supremacy, heteronormativity, and many other oppressive ideologies, this Voter's Guide seeks to determine whether candidates will uphold a system that harms BIPOC people. For those non-participating judicial candidates citing ethical concerns we are left with little to demonstrate their ability to interpret these biased laws and it could therefore point to them continuing to replicate the systemic issues mentioned above.

Additional Candidates Statement:

Lee Jones -Commissioner:

BLM Btown spoke out against the behavior of Commissioner Lee Jones who openly mocked a Black woman colleague on an October 18 2021 Zoom call about voter access. Commissioner Jones refused to take responsibility for her behavior and, instead, made excuses. Due to this situation we called for her resignation. This combined with her political policies and voting record make Commissioner Jones a poor match for the values of BLM Btown.