

LIBERTY CITY LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER DEMOCRATIC CLUB

2009 JUDICIAL PRIMARY ELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Name Jonathan Q. Irvine Office Sought Judge – Court of Common Pleas
Date 4/1/09

1) What is your experience with the LGBT community both generally and/or professionally?

I have represented LGBT clients in my law practice. I have also presided over hearings while sitting as a Truancy Hearing Master(Court of Common Pleas), Adoptions Hearing Master(Court of Common Pleas), and Domestic Violence Hearing Master(Municipal Court) with LGBT parties.

2) How have you advanced, through professional and personal achievements, the rights of the LGBT community, racial and ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities?

Since, I am African – American I personally understand discrimination. I zealously represent all of my clients. Furthermore, I do my best to protect any/all of my clients from discrimination or unfair treatment of any kind.

2) Do you support the rights of LGBT people to the following:

- a. Marriage? Yes
- b. Civil Unions?
Yes
- c. Domestic Partnership?
Yes
- d. Second-parent adoption?
Yes
- e. Protection from workplace discrimination?
Yes
- f. Protection from housing discrimination?
Yes
- g. Protection from acts of violence based on their sexual orientation or gender identity?
Yes

3) Do you consider transgender rights a civil rights issue? Explain your answer.

Transgender rights become a civil rights issue when a transgendered person is discriminated against for any reason. Transgender persons are afforded the same equal protection under the United States Constitution.

4) How should a judge support public accommodations for transgender individuals appearing before them or otherwise within the criminal justice system?

An administrative Judge is more qualified to answer that question than I am, however, I do think that transgender individuals should be afforded some type of consideration with respect to public accommodations .

5) LGBT youth sometimes act out because of harassment at school or in the home due to their gender/sex identity. When ADAs prosecute cases against these members of our community, what will you do to prepare your staff to be sensitive to their issues? Additionally, LGBT youth who spend time in juvenile detention facilities face many dangers. What alternative sentences might

you seek in their cases?

LGBT clients and cases present unique challenges. I practice law in juvenile court regularly and sometimes face these challenges. LGBT youth do sometimes face challenges in detention facilities. I think there should be constant monitoring and communications with respect to all children in detention facilities. However, LGBT children in detention facilities probably should have a higher level of monitoring and communication if they are identified as being in danger.

6) What has been the general nature of your practice and particular areas of concentration? Please describe any changes throughout the years?

I have been a sole practitioner for 13 years. My areas of concentration are criminal defense, dependency law and family law. I sit as a Truancy Master (Court of Common Pleas), Domestic Violence Hearing Master (Municipal Court), and Certified Arbitrator (Municipal Court). I have handled 200-300 cases per year for at least 10 years.

7) Describe a few of the most significant cases you have litigated. Please give a summary of the substance of the cases, the citations if available, and why you believe they were significant.

The most significant case I litigated was a dependency case, In Re: M.X.G., et al; J.G., Petition No. 111 EAL 2007. I won the trial in the Court of Common Pleas. The case was overturned on appeal by the Superior Court of Pennsylvania. I appealed the case to the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania and the Superior Court's decision was overturned by the Supreme Court. It was very gratifying because my client had done everything right in this case and he was rewarded in the end.

8) State briefly why you are seeking the Democratic nomination to be a judge in Philadelphia, and what qualities you believe you possess that would serve you especially well if you were elected to the Court.

I am a very competent, seasoned and well rounded attorney. I have 13 years of experience being a trial attorney. I have handled 200-300 cases each year. Furthermore, I have presided over cases as a Truancy Master, Adoptions Hearing Master, Domestic Violence Hearing Master and a Certified Arbitrator. I am qualified, dedicated, and experienced. Furthermore, I am a compassionate, no – nonsense person. Lastly, I have good common sense.

9) What are the most pressing needs of reform in our judicial system in your opinion?

Mandatory sentencing is one of the most pressing needs in our judicial system. Judges need to have the authority to make decisions on a case by case basis based on the facts and circumstances of each individual case.

10) For what organizations have you done pro-bono work?

I have not done pro bono work for any organizations; however, I have done pro bono work for various indigent clients.

11) Do you support a woman's right to choose?

Yes

12) Have you ever been sanctioned for any alleged breach of ethics or professional conduct by any court, administrative agency, bar association, disciplinary committee, judicial conduct committee, or other professional group? If so, please explain the nature of the sanction.

No

13) Have you been recommended by the Philadelphia Bar Association? Yes

Yes

Please return by Friday April 3rd via e-mail to matt@libertycity.org

Or via mail to:

Liberty City Lesbian and Gay Democratic Club

C/o Matthew Woodcock

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