Local and state prosecutors hold extraordinary power in the criminal justice system. How they exercise discretion at each stage of criminal proceedings—from initial charging decisions to the sentences they seek to impose—determines whether the local justice system is fair and just. They also wield significant influence as policymakers and civic leaders, and can work with legislators, judges, public defenders, law enforcement, and other community stakeholders to advance justice through policy reforms.

Prosecutors can and should use this power to end the scourge of mass incarceration in America. Texas has one of the largest prison populations in the country. The state’s over-reliance on incarceration and harsh punishment is both costly and ineffective; it exacts enormous financial, emotional, and social costs on communities across the country while exacerbating recidivism and leading to more crime.

This questionnaire evaluates whether local prosecutors are committed to addressing the key drivers of mass incarceration. The questions fall broadly into six categories:

1. Policies Aimed at Reducing Mass Incarceration
2. Policies Aimed at Reducing Excessive Punishments
3. Policies that Aid Undocumented Communities
4. Policies that Promote Police Accountability
5. Policies that Promote Transparency and Accountability to the Community
6. Policies that Guard the Community Against Abuse of Power by Officials

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Do you believe that there is an over-reliance on incarceration in your county? What do you believe is the prosecutor's role, if any, in ending mass incarceration?

The election of a new DA in 2016 has failed to make true change from the past reliance on mass incarceration, and the current DA’s few changes have been too incremental, too inconsistent, and too conservative to result in the real change needed in this county. For example, the current DA’s office has supported the harsher treatment of misdemeanor offenders by opposing the elimination of cash bail, by arresting and charging misdemeanor marijuana cases, and by requesting an additional $16 million dollars for the expansion of an already bloated office. As your elected District Attorney, I will restore trust and confidence in the system because I believe that government exists to provide justice for all regardless of one’s race, gender, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. As your elected district attorney, I will find innovative solutions to trespassing by homeless people, drug addiction, prostitution, and shoplifting to stop the never-ending revolving door into and out of our jails at an extremely high cost to taxpayers and at a destructive level to our communities and the accused people.

Harris County has an unfortunate legacy of imposing unfair excessive penentiary and other punishments against certain segments of our community, particularly groups that have been plagued by poverty. The impact of that legacy has caused collateral and long-term harm across generations of people. As Harris County’s elected District Attorney, I will change the culture of the office to focus on people who we are afraid of rather than crimes that stem from poverty, drug addiction, or mental illness. That means the elected District Attorney must be a leader who seeks atonement for the past through programs that look to the future for all people and not merely those who are financially secure or who live in a certain part of town. I am committed to ending the disparate overly harsh impact of the criminal justice system on people of color. I will be a caring leader for all of Harris County and have an inclusive justice system that benefits everyone with input from communities that have historically been overrepresented in our jails and prisons.

I am committed to ending mass incarceration with heavy scrutiny over the charging decision and with innovative diversion programs applicable to most misdemeanor offenses and state jail felonies. While I was at the district attorney’s office most recently, I developed a program to more responsibly handle family violence cases and to reduce homicides, including the Harris County Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART), Cultural Outreach Program, and the Strangulation Taskforce that have received widespread recognition for their innovation and success at reducing domestic violence and other serious crimes. More specifically, with respect to the DART program, I developed it when I saw a need to change how we approach domestic violence cases, especially with the ever-growing number of domestic violence
homicides. I wrote a $1.3 million grant, which funded the first DART program. DART teams are comprised of a police officer and a victim advocate whose sole responsibility was to respond to domestic violence crime scenes to provide crisis intervention to stop the cycle of violence. DART teams develop community ties to have more interaction with community partners. I am very proud of the DART program and I believe that shows that I am qualified to develop innovative diversion programs and to acquire funding for them in a wide variety of different types of offenses.

Policies Aimed at Reducing Mass Incarceration

1. Limit the Use of Money Bail

Texas’s continued use of unjust money bail policies contributes to the overall incarceration of poor people and disproportionately harms people of color by keeping them incarcerated simply because they cannot afford to pay bail.

What role, if any, do you think money bail should play in our justice system?

I strongly believe that pretrial release should not be based on a person’s financial ability to make bail. Pretrial release should not be a question of money because that type of system is more likely to make our society more dangerous and is unfair to indigent people. I, therefore, agree with the order issued by Judge Lee Rosenthal in the Harris County bail lawsuit.

Will you adopt a bail policy that will end the use of cash-bail for felony cases?

☐ Yes

☐ No
Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

With the exception of someone who is too dangerous to be released into our community or is a real risk of absconding from the county, I will agree to pretrial release without any financial burdens imposed against people accused of misdemeanors or non-violent felonies, subject to the Code of Criminal Procedures Article 17.026 which prohibits personal bonds cases such as Injury to Child, Burglary, or where the person’s release threatens the safety of the victim and/or community. More specifically, I agree with Harris County’s misdemeanor bail reform plaintiffs in Harris County and I would expand it as discussed below.

Harris County just entered into a misdemeanor cash bail settlement. Are the reforms in the settlement enough? Too much? Are there additional changes you would make to an internal office policy on bail?

I would extend the federal order to felonies to as large an extent as possible. For felony offenses, under current law, judges must consider certain factors in deciding the amount of bail. I believe, however, that even for felony offenses, pretrial release should be based on considerations other than financial ability, such as whether an accused offender is a danger to society or an offender is likely to flee from the county to avoid facing the charges. For example, if bail is set at $50,000 for a wealthy but dangerous person, that person can make that bail and will be released from jail, which makes our society unsafe. Similarly, if bail is set at $50,000 for the same offense alleged against an indigent but non-dangerous person, that person will remain confined at a high cost to the taxpayers and he or she will likely become unemployed, which also harms our general society. By mistakenly focusing pretrial release on the amount of cash attributable to each type of accusation, as compared to whether a person is a risk to the community or a risk of absconding, judges have historically made Harris County less safe, increased costs to taxpayers, and harmed accused people. When elected, I will be proud to stand with proponents of more widespread bail reform (including felonies) taking into consideration the safety concerns of the victim as well as the investigation conducted by law enforcement. My position for felony charges, probation and parole is the same as my position for other offenders. They are presumed innocent and may be granted pretrial release based on whether they are a risk to the community safety or at risk of absconding from the charges, as described above.

I believe the district attorney can be more proactive than merely agreeing to changing the system into a non money pretrial release program. I will offer diversion options for people who are in jail so that they may receive the benefit of those alternative options.
Will you work with law enforcement to successfully implement cite-and-release for eligible misdemeanors?

- Yes
- No
- Other: 

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

Historically and today, Harris County Arrests offenders rather than using a cite and release program. I will help develop programs similar to other counties that cite and release offenders. I will also be innovative in my approach to charging people with offenses by developing pre-arrest programs. If used appropriately, cite and release can be an effective way for beginning the criminal process. Unfortunately, the current district attorney has not implemented this tool. Other counties in Texas, Bexar and Travis, have implemented cite and release for limited types of cases and I would look to their processes for guidance. I would develop procedures for cite and release that conform to the statute, which permit the cite and release of offenders accused of Class B offenses of Possession of Marijuana, Possession of a Controlled Substance, Criminal Mischief, Graffiti, Theft, Theft of service, Contraband in a Correctional Facility, and Driving While License Invalid.

Will you agree to waive discretionary fees for anyone who cannot pay for court fees, classes, or supervision fees imposed as a condition of their pretrial release? If no, why not?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

I will end the DA’s reliance on collecting fees from indigent people.
I will end the DA's requests for conditions on pretrial release bonds that are not absolutely necessary for the safety of the public or the appearance of the accused person in court.

2. Keep People Out of Jail for Drug-Related Offenses

Years of experience with ineffective drug laws and the latest medical research on addiction suggest that treating drug use as a public health issue, as opposed to a criminal justice issue, is a more effective and humane approach to reducing harm.

Will you support diversion programs for all low-level drug offenses?

Historically, Harris County has been opposed to criminal justice reform and diversion programs and even the current approach to diversion is too limited in scope and approach. This is an obstacle to justice that I can overcome by uniting our county's justice partners to embrace, adopt, and achieve real criminal justice reform with innovative programs that are available even to defendants who in jail.
If you elect to prosecute possession of a controlled substance for drugs other than marijuana, will you commit to charging it as a Class C misdemeanor?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

As an elected prosecutor, I am sworn to uphold the laws of the State of Texas. As I will use my discretion to limit the amount of low level drug charges filed, there may be circumstances that involve a large amount of drugs or individuals attempt to sale drugs, that will be prosecuted. Having large amounts of controlled substances or selling controlled substances leads to other highly dangerous organized criminal activity that I must protect the citizens of Harris County from encountering. Minorities have disproportionately been charged with low level drug offenses, accordingly we will work to make sure those racial disparities are monitors and not allowed.

In the absence of sufficient evidence of intent to cause death, will you commit to not charging drug overdose cases as homicides?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

In cases where you cannot prove intent to cause death, I will not seek charges on the intentional act of Murder.
Will you commit to not charging "trace" amounts of narcotics at less than a quarter of a gram?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

Will you adopt an office-wide Good Samaritan policy stating that individuals who call the police in response to an overdose will not be prosecuted?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

Every case requires an independent evaluation. In the absence of evidence indicating that the person acted or who's failure to act, directly lead to the death of the victim, we would use our discretion to refrain from prosecution without additional evidence.

3. Adopt Policies to Avoid the Criminalization of Poverty

Local criminal justice systems disproportionately harm people living in poverty. Whether through the imposition of fines and fees as a condition to resolving cases, or through laws that effectively criminalize homelessness, local actors have imposed a poverty penalty on many within the community.
Will you refuse to permit a person's financial resources to play a role in their eligibility for bail, a plea agreement, the appropriate sentence, or entrance to a diversionary program?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

I will provide diversionary programs in a more expansive, more effective, and more inclusive manner than ever utilized in Harris County to date. For example, under the current diversionary programs in Harris County, a person is criminally charged with a misdemeanor marijuana offense, diverted to a program, pays for the program, and then the charges are dismissed. I will approach diversionary programs differently. Depending on the offense, my diversion programs will be available BEFORE and AFTER a charge is filed so that defendants have an option of avoiding the stigma of a criminal accusation. I would also expand the availability of diversion programs to other offenses committed by financially challenged people and people in need of drug treatment. These types of programs would be available for misdemeanor or state jail level marijuana offenses, shoplifting, theft by check, driving with a license invalid, and other offenses. My diversionary programs will have goals of restorative justice prior to the filing of the criminal charge and I will work with Commissioner’s Court to obtain funding so these programs can be free for indigent people. For example, during my time as a prosecutor, I created an innovative program to divert domestic violence cases to reduce homicides and preserve families. My leadership will concentrate on training and mentoring the hundreds of employees in my office with my clear vision about the meaning of restorative and rehabilitative justice. My policies will add fairness in the criminal justice system that will benefit not only people of color but all people who interact with police and prosecutors.

Will you adopt fee waiver programs for those diversionary programs that currently require fees?

- Yes
- No
I will waive fees so that indigent people are afforded the same opportunity at diversion programs as those who could traditionally afford them. Historically and today, Harris County has had a criminal justice system infected with racism and that discriminates against indigent people. Those obstacles to justice can be overcome with my programs that will be inclusive and nondiscriminatory to result in real change within the office as well as for victims, the accused and the entire county.

Will you oppose incarceration based upon the failure to pay fines or fees?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

Our greater community good is best achieved by allowing those who are financially challenged to resolve their problems through diversion and restoration rather than criminalization. I will not seek revocation of these programs solely for failure to pay fees.

Will you establish a strong presumption against prosecuting criminal trespass and other conduct that is a byproduct of homelessness or poverty?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

I will use my discretion to refuse any charges that do not serve the public good, such as offenses based on the status of homelessness and declining a prostitution charge against a person who is a victim of human trafficking.
Policies Aimed at Reducing Excessive Punishments

1. Treat Kids Like Kids

Recognizing that children's brains continue developing until around age 25 and that research supports their enhanced capacity for rehabilitation, children should not be prosecuted in adult court and they should not be given punishments that preclude the opportunity for redemption.

Will you decline to ask for sentences that are de facto life without parole for any person under 18 at the time of the offense?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

Juveniles are children who should not lose the rest of their lives for a mistake, even a serious mistake, in their youth. I do not support de facto life without parole for juveniles.

Will you establish a strong presumption against prosecuting school suspension or expulsion cases where there is no use or threat of force resulting in physical harm?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

I will instruct prosecutors that I have a strong policy against prosecuting school suspension. I believe there are alternative and more community based approaches to addressing school suspensions.
Will you establish a presumption against recommending the transfer of juveniles to adult court, unless required by law?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

The issue of whether juveniles will be transferred to adult court will be heavily scrutinized by a senior member of my office and we will not transfer juveniles to adult court unless it is the rare case that truly demands that type of punishment. We will make presumptions that cases should not be transferred.

Will you publicly support changing any and all laws that require children to be prosecuted as adults, including laws that raise the age of adult criminal responsibility?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

Historically, too many juveniles have been certified to stand trial as adults and they have been sentenced excessively. Furthermore, I support the raise the age legislation to conform with the rest of this country so that seventeen-year old children are not treated as adults in Texas.
The use of the death penalty has become increasingly isolated to a handful of jurisdictions within the United States. Its use is rapidly decreasing in Texas. There is mounting evidence that the death penalty is fraught with error, provides no additional public safety benefit over other available sentences, and is routinely used against individuals with diminished culpability, including persons with intellectual disabilities and severe mental illness, youthful offenders under the age of 21, and those who have experienced extreme childhood trauma.

In any capital prosecution, will you promise to exercise your discretion to seek sentences other than death?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If not, under what circumstances will you consider the death penalty, and what are the factors that will guide your discretion in determining whether to seek the death penalty?

I am strongly opposed to the current application of the death penalty, but I will honor my oath to uphold the law of the state of Texas and consider using it, only in rare instances, for example, of mass terrorism by someone who is too dangerous to reside in a prison setting.

I will end the government’s targeting of people of color from traffic stops to the imposition of death penalty. In 2018, every person sentenced to death in Texas was a person of color. I will convene and lead a “Capital Committee” to vet all capital murder cases. The Capital Committee will include senior prosecutors with non-death and death penalty experience, a member of the defense bar, a former death row exoneree, a mental health professional, and a victim advocate. I will never seek the death penalty without first consulting with a committee that may include a defense attorney, an exoneree, a victim-right’s representative, and a senior prosecutor, among others.
What will be your office policy in regards to post-conviction death penalty cases?

We will examine all death penalty cases and review for alternative dispositions especially when evidence of reduced culpability.

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

If there are valid claims of injustices, I will have a strong, bold conviction integrity unit to deconstruct cases from the ground up to reveal any past injustice and correct any prosecutorial missteps. These wrongful convictions and sentences stem from Brady violations, ineffective assistance of counsel, junk science, and many other problems. Under the current administration, post-conviction matters are inadequately addressed by a tiny division comprised of two to five prosecutors. This structure is wholly inadequate for the third largest county in the United States and for the county that has sent more people to death row than any other in this country. I will reallocate resources and work with Commissioner’s Court to get additional resources, if needed, to double personnel in this division and instruct them that the proper approach for post-conviction cases is to deconstruct the cases to begin from the ground up rather than starting with the existing conviction and finding ways to uphold it.

In all cases, will you establish an office-wide presumption that the least severe applicable charges apply, and that the lowest sentencing outcome is the correct recommendation?

- Yes
- No
I will end the filing of criminal charges based on inadequate proof of guilt by overhauling the District Attorney's Intake division. Although the law authorizes prosecutors to file charges based on probable case, my administration will work with law enforcement to ensure they understand that we will not file criminal charges that cannot be proven beyond a reasonable doubt, which is a different approach than any prior administration. I know fully well that even the mere accusation of a crime has long-term consequences including not limited to impacting a person's job, housing, or family situation.

3. Promote Proportionate Sentencing and Pathways to Second Chances

People are more than their worst acts, and even people who commit the most serious offenses often change profoundly over time. To recognize the worth and potential for growth in all people, it is important for local prosecutors to provide individualized consideration to the character and background of each person and to the circumstances surrounding the commission of the offense. It also is critical for elected prosecutors to promote opportunities for release, through parole or clemency, and to help remove barriers to reentering society for those who are released from incarceration.

Will you pledge to establish an office policy against increasing or threatening to increase the number or severity of charges in order to secure more favorable plea dispositions or waivers of rights?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

I will also provide prosecutors working the Intake section with strict guidelines, instructing them to refuse any charge that cannot be proven beyond a reasonable doubt at the time of filing and with instructions not to overcharge cases in any respect.
Will you require prosecutors to justify departures to their supervisors, and require that the chief assistant prosecutor approve all maximum sentences sought?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

I know that for most defendants, excessive prison and other punishments have no relationship to the safety of our communities. Instead, appropriately lenient sentences and rehabilitation of defendants will bring families together so that children can be united with their parents, thereby strengthening the long-term stability of our communities. I will train prosecutors about appropriate punishment for cases so that the focus is on the rehabilitation of offenders and/or sentences that are appropriately lenient and not excessive and require higher approval for charges outside the norm or requests for maximum punishment.

Will you pledge to support second chances by both limiting parole opposition and committing to affirmatively advocate for parole on behalf of those who demonstrate growth and maturity during their incarceration?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

With information from the defendant and his counsel to demonstrate his substantial growth. Including, but not limited to, furthering of education, no violent disciplinary actions, work programs, drug treatment, and a commitment to establishing an exit strategy.
Will you pledge to adopt an evidence-based probation policy, that includes limiting term limits of supervision, and agreeing not to ask for jail or prison when there is a technical violation of probation?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

We should limit probationary term unless there is a complying reason for a longer term and only after approval from the prosecutor's supervisor. When longer terms are imposed we would not object to people who have fully complied with the terms of their supervision for at least two years. Technical violations will not be the basis of revocations.

Will you publicly oppose any proposed legislation that would create new mandatory minimum sentences or lengthen existing minimum sentences?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

I will oppose legislative efforts to create minimum sentencing laws in Texas.

Will you pledge to support second chances by both limiting parole opposition and committing to affirmatively advocate for parole on behalf of those who demonstrate growth and maturity during their incarceration?

- Yes
- No
Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

I will support legislative efforts to expand second chance review authority to local district attorneys and local courts rather than the Governor. However, until that happened, I plan to expand opportunities to undo the harm caused by old convictions. Post-conviction matters are at the forefront of the future of criminal justice reform that is needed to undo decades of mistaken convictions and excessive sentences. I will request that a trial court appoint legal counsel for indigent defendants who we discover may have arguable claims for habeas relief. Additionally, I will have free public events like those in Dallas County to clear the criminal records of eligible people through Petitions for Non-Disclosure and work with local judges and nonprofits like the Beacon Law group. Many people who are convicted of crimes either don’t know they are eligible for nondisclosures or they cannot afford to hire an attorney to start the process. The District Attorney’s Office should welcome and not oppose nondisclosures for eligible people whose lives are negatively impacted by old, past mistakes and who are eligible, by law, to have their records cleared.

Policies That Aid Undocumented Communities

Texas is home to a large and diverse immigrant population. In the last year, undocumented communities have come under increasing attack because of increasingly vicious federal immigration laws. These policies not only allow for deportation because of minor allegations like possession of drugs, but they also make communities less safe, as undocumented victims fear going to court or speaking to law enforcement.

Will you implement an office-wide policy requiring prosecutors to consider immigration consequences in charging, plea, and sentencing decisions?

- Yes
- No
Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

I will pay attention to the special needs of immigrants in jail who have INS holds and may not be released from prison. I will offer innovative diversion options for people who are in jail so that they may receive the benefit of those alternative options. I would pledge to train prosecutors to know, understand, and consider the collateral consequences of their decisions for all people accused of crimes, especially when the consequences are so severe like deportation. I will consult with immigration and family law attorneys as part of the training for prosecutors and will conduct training sessions on the immigration and family law consequences that flow from criminal convictions. Furthermore, as stated above, I will work with justice partners to establish pre-charge diversion programs. For example, if a non-citizen individuals with federal immigration holds have domestic violence charges, I will work with Sheriff Gonzalez to provide those classes for those individuals while they are in custody, so they are not deprived of the opportunity to participate in classes that would, if taken, lead to the dismissal of their charges. Furthermore, I will change the current U-Visa process at the District Attorney's Office to more expansively apply regardless of whether charges were brought, a conviction was achieved, or the case has concluded. I believe the policy of the current District Attorney is narrow in that it reviews law enforcement certification requests for active criminal cases pending in a county, district, or juvenile court or for up to five years after the resolution of the case. This method restricts victims of crime to obtain U-visa certification only up to five-years after the case is disposed. This policy hinders vulnerable immigrant victims who may not know or understand their options in obtaining a U-Visa. In addition to expanding my internal policies about the U-Visa process, I will work with organizations like DAYA, Tahirih Justice Center, Houston Immigration Legal Services, and the Immigration Clinic at University of House Law Center to help educate victims, social workers, and prosecutors on how to utilize U-Visas certifications, T-Visas, and VAWAs, which is a form of cancellation removal designed to keep victims of abusive partners or parents from being deported.

Will you support suits against SB4? If no, why not?

- Yes
- No
I support the lawsuits against SB 4 and efforts by federal authorities to use local government for immigration enforcement. I stand with Sheriff Garcia in his position that county government should not detain individuals subject to deportation past their release date. I also agree with the Harris County Commissioners Court’s development of a Managed Assigned Counsel to ensure that attorneys appointed to indigent defendants are qualified and that advice from immigration attorneys is made available to accused people.

Will you decline to require a guilty plea or any other admission of guilt before admission to a diversion program?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

Under the current administration, marijuana cases are being filed in Harris County even though they cannot be proven beyond a reasonable doubt due to the lack of laboratory testing to rule out hemp. I will not file marijuana cases because we lack the testing equipment to prove the case beyond a reasonable doubt. I will offer diversion in some cases prior to filing and will also permit diversion without a plea of guilty or stipulation of guilt.

Will you implement an office-wide policy that Padilla Writs should be agreed to unless there is affirmative evidence that the attorney gave correct and complete immigration advice to the person?

- Yes
- No
Historically and today, Harris County has not been particularly concerned with the rights of immigrants confined in jail who cannot be released from jail due to immigration holds. I will agree to relief under Padilla unless the record clearly shows the accused person was properly advised of immigration consequences.

Policies that Promote Police Accountability

Although charged with serving and protecting, police officers are too often the perpetrators of violence against our communities. Enhancing transparency and accountability is crucial to promoting trust between the community and law enforcement. In the wake of the flood of police misconduct, especially violence against people of color and children, the district attorney must be committed to rigorously and independently investigating and prosecuting police misconduct.

When legally able to do so, will you release any dash-camera, body-camera, or other audio or video footage related to police-involved misconduct within 24 hours of any charging decision?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

Body camera footage is the property of a law enforcement department. The District Attorney does not have the access or authority to make this pledge.

Will you decline to use testimony from officers known to have committed misconduct in the past, including, but not limited to, perjury, making false allegations, withholding exculpatory evidence from the defense and making statements evidencing racial bias?

- Yes
- No
Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

Will you maintain a list of police officers who are known to have committed misconduct in the past including, but not limited to, perjury, making false allegations, withholding exculpatory evidence from the defense and making statements evidencing racial bias?

- Yes, and I will make that list available to the public
- Yes, but I will not make that list publicly available
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

For officer and community safety purposes, I will not release the names of officers in the database. That information will always be available to the accused persons as their case comes up for trial due to our Brady obligation. I am willing to release the number of officers, per agency, who are included in the database.

Will you commit to the creation of a special prosecution unit to investigate and charge allegations of police misconduct, including police-involved violence and corruption?

- Yes
- No
Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

I will not condone or attempt to justify police officer misconduct. My office will be an honorable and effective prosecutor for those offenses. However, if there are specific instances of bias, conflicts of interest, or concerns about public trust, I will support the appointment of outside prosecutors.

Policies that Promote Transparency and Accountability to the Community

Enhancing transparency and accountability within the district attorney's office is critical to ending the win-at-any-cost pursuit of high conviction rates that is failing our communities. Our elected prosecutors must build a culture focused on seeking justice for victims and ensuring that justice is equal. This requires openness to community scrutiny and feedback, paying close attention to racial disparities, and prioritizing the needs of victims and their families.

In order to measure the effectiveness of policies and reforms, will you maintain and publish regular statistics about prosecutions, including the number of misdemeanor and felony cases filed each month, disposition statistics, pretrial incarceration rates and length of stay by offense category, average bond for each class of offense, and caseloads of prosecutors?

☐ Yes

☐ No
Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

I believe that it is important to allow sun into the office because that is the best disinfectant. I will be open in the information provided to the public. I believe that the current DA's office over spends and under produces. The office recently requested an additional $16 million dollars for the expansion of an already bloated office by claiming that the prosecutors are overworked and quitting the office in large numbers for that reason. I believe that this is a leadership problem rather than a funding issue. My years as an experienced prosecutor will enable me to bring stability to the current district attorney's office plagued by misdirection and dysfunction. I am a consensus builder who possesses the experience, knowledge, and temperament to lead. One of the best way to lead is with candor and honesty within the office and with the public outside of it.

Will you include racial information at all steps, committing to publicly report any significant racial disparities at any stage of the process?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

Will you build a staff that reflects the diversity of the community the office serves?

- Yes
- No
Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

I am pledging to develop policies and programs to make the Harris County District Attorney's office inclusive and nondiscriminatory. As a black woman who grew up in poverty, I have felt the sting of discrimination. I pledge to provide opportunities to everyone at the office without any discrimination of any kind.

Will you commit to regular communication with community members and organizations, including regularly scheduled open sessions and regular meetings with civilian oversight boards to listen to and then address concerns over police-community relationships and allegations of police brutality?

☐ Yes

☐ No
I would be a public servant for the people. It’s important to me that all communities have multiple avenues to voice their concerns and I will ensure that there is always a member of my staff available to speak with the community about any concerns. To demonstrate my commitment to the community and my goal to restore people’s faith in the criminal justice system, I will reallocate existing personnel resources to establish a Community Prosecution Unit, which would be a program unique to Harris County and Texas. My initial Community Prosecution Unit will be comprised of no less than four (4) prosecutors – one assigned to each Harris County Commissioner’s Precinct. Law enforcement, victims, residents, and community agencies will have immediate access to their precinct community prosecutor to ensure their voices are heard, but that their concerns are addressed in a timely and respectful manner. Community prosecutors will hold monthly meetings with stakeholders and keep the lines of communication open so the public has trust in the District Attorney’s Office.

I would create civilian review boards for the benefit of the victim, the community, and law enforcement. This type of board can be utilized to give any aggrieved person a forum outside of a law enforcement agency, which increases community faith in the process. Additionally, this type of board can make needed recommendations to law enforcement to form better relationships with the people they are protecting and serving. Furthermore, this type of board may be helpful in educating the community on law enforcement policy, procedures, and how the law applies.

Will you prioritize the needs of the victims of violence by expanding support of victim/witness service programs and improving communication with victims and family members?

- Yes
- No
I know people close to me who have been on all sides of the criminal justice system, as victim, as an accused, and a convicted person. I have witnessed the struggles their experiences have had on their lives and I acknowledge the balance between the effects of the system on the victim and the accused. I will ensure that victims are treated respectfully and awarded restitution to the fullest extent reasonably possible under the circumstances of the situation. In any event, we will communicate with victims fully and respectfully at all times.

Policies that Guard the Community Against Abuse of Power by Officials

Fraud and public corruption undermines public trust in government. There are also inevitable mistakes that have life-altering impacts. It is crucial that elected prosecutors serve as one of the first lines of defense to protect the less powerful in our society from exploitation, especially when it comes to abuse of power by those in government who are supposed to act in the public interest.

Will you end the process of abusive civil asset forfeiture wherein the county seizes cash or possessions before there has been conviction or in instances where there is not even proof of criminal activity?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

I support ending civil asset forfeiture where there is no criminal conviction against the person whose assets may be seized.

Will you commit to use asset forfeiture in criminal cases only after obtaining a conviction, and ensure members of the community have a meaningful opportunity to contest seizure when it happens?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.
Asset forfeiture has been historically overused and abused. There should be limits to its use only after a finding of guilt and only as against the convicted person.

Will you support statewide legislation to end the use of civil asset forfeiture?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

Will you create mechanisms for a second look at charging decisions, plea bargains and convictions, because mistakes are inevitable and the consequences life-altering?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

Under current law, only the Governor may grant clemency after a conviction is final. However, in instances where the court regains jurisdiction over a case, we would be willing to reconsider the charge and sentence within the parameters of the law. I support legislation to expand our authority post-conviction to reconsider guilt and sentences more liberally.
Will you create a conviction review unit, complete with an independent panel to review the unit’s findings? Will you operate that unit transparently and publish regular data summarizing the unit's findings?

- Yes
- No

Please provide any explanation you would like in the space below.

Historically, Harris County has wrongfully convicted innocent people and people who should not be on death row due to constitutional violations that occurred during their prosecution. I will develop a criminal integrity unit that will be instrumental in correcting those injustices and lead events to clear the criminal records of eligible people.
I’m a lifetime Houstonian committed to make the lives of every person safer and fairer, from River Oaks to Acres Homes where I was raised. I grew up in the inner city in the late eighties and early nineties, raised as the oldest of three children by a single mother. Like so many people then and now living in the Houston area, our family had economic challenges that required us to live in what police officers refer to as a high crime area. As a young child in the 1980s, I saw drugs sold openly in the streets. By the time I graduated from high school in 1995, our house had been burglarized over half a dozen times. After I left Houston for college, I returned to our hometown so I could make a difference as an attorney in the communities like the one that I grew up in.

I have been a trial attorney across both ends of the aisle, working as a high-level prosecutor and as a criminal defense attorney. In total, I was a prosecutor at the Harris County District Attorney’s Office for over six years under different elected district attorneys. My time at the district attorney’s office was divided into two periods that were separated by an eight-year stint as a criminal defense attorney. While I was at the district attorney’s office, I was the first female African-American Bureau Chief. During my career as a prosecutor, I have handled thousands of cases where I brought justice to victims and their families, while also maintaining the rights of the accused. Between 2009 and 2016, I worked as a criminal defense attorney under my own law firm, The Cloud Law Firm, which focused on both indigent criminal defense and immigration law. Being fluent in Spanish tremendously helped me communicate and understand the concerns of those facing criminal charges and/or deportation. I witnessed, first-hand, clients who were accused of crimes who were too poor to bond out or because they had an ICE hold due to pending charges. My career as a defense attorney was rewarding and made me even more cognizant of the rights of the accused. I am qualified and comfortable in every courtroom regardless of which side of the aisle I am on. As a black woman who grew up in poverty, I embraced criminal defense work because I understood that people who were driven to criminality often did so because of a lack of opportunity. Furthermore, I will also work with my leadership team and county officials to evaluate and reallocate existing resources to ensure we are using our current resources in the most efficient manner to avoid the expansion of an already bloated District Attorney’s Office yet provide overburdened prosecutors with the resources they need to seek justice. As a person who was raised in a financially challenged household, I know that more is not always better. Better is better. Better use of limited resources by a caring leader is more effective than the addition of more prosecutors, which can mean more prosecutions. I believe that totality of my professional and personal experience makes me the most qualified candidate to be Harris County District Attorney.