

## FAQS

### 1. What is your approach to Justice?

There are many approaches available to consider for example: Legal Model, Attitudinal Model, Strategic Model, Procedural Justice, Distributive Justice, or Restorative Justice. Models serve as guides to know how a future Judge will frame Justice in their courtrooms and decided cases. My approach seems to attempt to integrate features of some of these models to bring about the most accurate justice one can bring with the greatest impact to deter reoffending. From attitudinal approach to justice, it will frame the lens of how as County Judge I will view each case, for example:

“And said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for **ye judge not for man, but for the LORD**, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.” -2 Chronicles 19-6-7

The attitudinal approach reminds me that I am not judging for man but judging for the Lord and my center is to 1) fear the Lord, 2) have no respect of persons (no bias), and 3) to not take any bribes. The attitudinal approach also reminds me to execute judgments speedily and not to take unreasonable amounts of time to bring about justice, for example:

“And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that is in thine hand, set **magistrates and judges**, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not. And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be **executed speedily upon him**, whether *it be* unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.” -Ezra 7.25-26

With these attitudinal principles in mind I would combine two other models of justice 1) Legal model which essentially view the law as it is written and previously established precedents to the facts, along with the strategic model which emphasizes a weight of impact a decision will have on the people, other forms of government, etc. The weight that I feel will be the most pull upon me is what sentence will be enough to deter evil and protect the good. This brings the final model which is the restorative justice focusing on the punishment of the offending party and the repairing of harm done to the victims. This would be the framework of how I will approach justice as Nolan County Judge.

2. How do you balance judicial discretion with legislative intent?

Job desired in his suffering to be weighed in an even balance (cf. Job 31.6-), so that God may know his integrity. Job will go on to demonstrate what an even balance would look like for his case at that moment. Judicial Discretion is weighing in the balance “the spirit of which the law is written” and Legislative intent is the law as it is written.” What does this mean? The bible frames that we should never go above that which is written, but rather within the law there is a spirit that some things maybe more expedient to do than others. (cf. Matt. 12.1-7; 1 Cor. 6.12; Isa. 28.13) It is this balance that will be weighed carefully. How to navigate these two principles is a careful study of law and the spirit of the law within each case and bringing about the balance of justice case by case.

3. How will you address bias in the court?

The basic definition of “bias” is a particular tendency, trend, inclination, feeling, or opinion, especially one that is preconceived or unreasoned.<sup>1</sup> A synonym to bias is partiality which is defined as “unfair bias in favor of one thing or person compared with another; favoritism.”<sup>2</sup> The notion of partiality in the scripture is that one should never show partiality or respecter of persons (cf. James 2.1-; Col. 3.25; Eph. 6.9). Since our Master in heaven demonstrates no respecter of persons nor any partiality as some might believe, then a court shouldn’t either for it would be unjust. Therefore, the pattern demonstrates that I should look at the case with no respect to persons and judge accordingly.

4. What criteria do you use for sentencing?

In principle sentencing is done according to the law, the severity of the offense, at an amount whether in time or monetary restitution to protected the good and punish the evil (cf. Deut. 17.9-13; cf. Rom. 13.3-4) and to do otherwise is to be presumptuous and that would lead to one’s own death (or in modern times my own punishment whether internal or external which would be just).

5. How will you serve as the county's executive and presiding officer for the Commissioner's Court?

An executive is a person that has the power to put plans, actions, or laws in effect (“laws in effect” in this context is administrative not legislative). The skill of an executive is having the ability to put the right people in the right positions to be

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<sup>1</sup> Dictionary.com

<sup>2</sup> Yahoo.com

successful both individually but also successful collectively. What my undergraduate experience in administration taught me was to identify the bottleneck of production and not necessarily replace them, but rather identify what their strengths are and find the place where they will excel. The second but not in order of importance but rather side by side to the first is the ability to train them and teach them how the job can be done the most efficiently as possible. As the county executive it will be the same premise in diagnosing inefficiency quickly and make change sooner rather than later to help everyone be more successful. The notion of this wisdom did not start with undergrad it has been a long-standing biblical principle among how God chose which prophet to send where? Or what evangelist to send to effect the most change in a congregation. For example: We ask why a cupbearer to the king would be the most fitting executive prophet for rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 1.1-), but yet he was. Or a lowly shepherd to be the unifying king over Israel. Or a Paul sending Timothy and then later sending Titus to a divided Corinth. Or a Moses teaching the laws to others that they might judge the smaller matters, allowing for him to address the greater issues. Therefore, the Commissioner's Court outlines a plan for the county and it is the job of the executive to carrying out that plan as efficiently as possible putting the right people in the right places with good fiscal management. The service is to do all of this with the utmost integrity and that's how I will serve in this capacity.

6. What are the biggest obstacles to justice in our county, and how will you tackle them?

The biggest obstacles to justice having worked in the Mental Health field for nine years is the **time** from case inception to case closure takes to long. An adjustment disorder, is a preliminary diagnosis until six months and the wheels of justice for a variety of reasons controlled or out of control takes longer. Justice has become traumatic (painful) and causes more rebellion than the desire to do right when cases go beyond six months. This doesn't mean that cases should go beyond six months if the parents are participating or the need to gather evidence takes longer (this would be the out-of-control point) on both sides. The best way for the county judge to tackle these obstacles is to demonstrate them in the county judge's court. The more efficient the court is the more time that can be spent on ways to make the county better. That's the job.

7. What demonstrates a good judge?

There are I believe 11 qualities that make a good judge based on the scriptures

- Be capable, wise, and knowledgeable
- Fear God
- Be truthful
- Hate greed
- Read the bible regularly
- Not be prideful
- Be obedient to God's word
- Possess a strong sense of justice
- Resist lies
- Remain unaffected by those who seek to bias them or gain their favor
- Promote what is right, discouraging sin in the land and contending with the wicked

8. What are your views on judicial conduct and out-of-court behavior?

I believe as county officials we all are the picture of leadership that the people ought to see in themselves or strive to become. When the choice is made to become a leader as a city official it is no longer about you but about the people. Therefore, the behavior in or out of office is always on display, that is, my integrity never turns off and my compassion never turns away the people. For example, if I came into work drunk then there is a statute that can remove me from my position. I believe in integrity and holding a higher standard giving people something to reach for in themselves. This is what makes counties great holding to the highest standard available. However, I also believe that people have the potential to make mistakes and honesty goes further than cover up. Humility is the ability to admit those mistakes and find the best path forward.