2019 Raleigh City Council and Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire

The Raleigh Police Accountability Community Taskforce (PACT), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of North Carolina, Carolina Justice Policy Center, and El Pueblo would like to provide voters with information about where Raleigh's 2019 Mayoral and City Council candidates stand on important issues of police accountability and oversight. Our goal is to educate voters about local candidates' positions on local policing issues.

All candidates for City Council and Mayor are receiving this questionnaire. Responses will be made publicly available in an effort to hold candidates accountable to their communities' fundamental need for justice, safety, and respect.

Please submit all responses on or before **August 27, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.**

Save a copy of this document and type your responses under each question, using additional space as needed.

Email your completed questionnaire to: **sbirdsong@acluofnc.org.**

Candidate Name: George Knott Mayoral Candidate

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1. PACT has called for the City Council to pass a resolution asserting the Council's public support for a Community Oversight Board of local police with investigatory, subpoena, and disciplinary power. We propose focusing our community's energy on securing Raleigh's authority to create a board with subpoena power and later convening dialogues with community stakeholders to discuss details of the board's structure. The Council's support of an external Community Oversight Board with meaningful authority would communicate that we want to work together toward a system where people's concerns would be justly investigated.

   Do you support the creation of a Community Oversight Board that has the power to investigate, subpoena, and discipline police officers when there is injustice?

   Response (Please give a clear "Yes" or "No" and any explanation):
   Yes.

   I unfortunately feel that a COB will not stop or even slow the trend of violent interactions between the police and the public but I do support Oversight boards if for no other reason that they will hold Police accountable and offer answers to families of the victims of police inflicted injustice. This is of course only a bandaid to already inflicted damage. To fix the bigger problem is something I don't have an answer for and if I did I wouldn't be running for mayor, I'd be advocating for it and looking for a noble peace prize nomination. I do believe our current system is dysfunctional to the point it needs to be completely torn down and rebuilt from the ground up

2. For so many people, particularly Black and Latino residents, a routine encounter with a police officer can become a traumatic experience that results in unnecessary, invasive searches. This happens because the individual doesn't know that they have the right to refuse a consent search of their person, vehicle, or home. RPD has created a consent-to-search form that states an individual's right to refuse a search, and RPD policy requires that an individual sign their consent before a vehicle or property search, but only requires written consent before individuals themselves are searched "where possible." It is unclear whether this policy is effectively enforced.

Are you in favor of requiring Raleigh Police Department to require and enforce the use of consent-to-search forms prior to <u>any</u> search and pat down that is not based on probable cause?

Response (Please give a clear "Yes" or "No" and any explanation):

Yes.

I support the Consent-To-Search form but compliance on the officer's part is a must for the policy to be effective.

3. While Raleigh has implemented a body-worn camera program, it lacks a key element to ensure it is fully implemented: disciplinary consequences for violating the policies. This was illustrated in the failure of the officer who killed Soheil Antonio Mojarrad to turn on his body-worn camera. In order to ensure proper use of body cameras, policies should specify additional training opportunities and disciplinary consequences for officers who repeatedly misuse body cameras and improperly handle recordings. Similar policies have been implemented in other cities, including Durham and Charlotte.

Do you support the development and implementation of an effective discipline policy to enforce the existing RPD body-worn camera program?

Response (Please give a clear "Yes" or "No" and any explanation):

Yes.

A body camera protects both the citizens and the Police, and by extension, the city. If an officer doesn't comply with policy it both opens the city up to liability suits, but more importantly, in the case of Police Brutality or the death of a Citizen at the hands of an officer, the victim or family of the victim will most likely not have an sort of satisfactory answer or closure regarding the incident and trust between the citizens and police is deeply damaged.

4. Another tool for ensuring the consistent use of body-worn cameras is to use a camera system that automatically turns on when officers draw their weapon from its holster. The body-worn cameras that Raleigh has purchased from a company called WatchGuard apparently do not support this feature, and are turned on by the officer clicking a button on the camera.

Do you support allocating funds to implement a holster activated body-worn camera system?

Response (Please give a clear "Yes" or "No" and any explanation):

Yes.

As Technology improves costs go down as capacity and features go up. Body cameras should be activated not only when the service weapon is drawn but also when other less than lethal alterative are unholstered (such as sprays or tazers). As I said before, if for no other reason, these systems should be implemented for police and city liability, and I believe that would justify the cost.

5. Wake County's jail has regularly been overcrowded, and at times as many as 90 percent of the people in the jail are being held before their day in court, and before being convicted of any crime. Studies show it can take months or years to recover from the job loss and other damage caused by even a day or two of incarceration. There are many ways to reduce the harm to the community of jailing people before trial. One option is to expand the use of citations in lieu of arrest for certain misdemeanor charges. This policy can not only prevent harmful pretrial incarceration, but it can also reduce jail overcrowding and save time and police department resources.

Do you favor expanding the Raleigh Police Department's use of citations in lieu of arrest for certain misdemeanor charges?

Response (Please give a clear "Yes" or "No" and any explanation):

Yes.

Jailing the nonviolent citizens who cannot afford bail or a lawyer is one of the greatest tools of class warfare our government has instigated. I fully support keeping non-violent people accused of misdemeanors in their homes and communities until their day in court. This includes charges involving personal amounts of Marijuana (I also believe marijuana should be decriminalized but that is a different issue that would also help to greatly reduce jail and prison crowding). The people who are cited must know that they have the right to a lawyer and will not stand before a judge alone or with a public defender who is stretched too thin to be an effective advocate for them.

6. *Are you in favor of requiring, and ensuring funding for, de-escalation training for <u>all</u> RPD officers? Do you support establishing consequences for officers who do not attempt to de-escalate prior to any use of force?*

Response (Please give a clear "Yes" or "No" and any explanation):

Yes.

ALL RPD officers who carry a gun and interact with the public must be de-escalation trained first, and the rest to follow as a matter of course.

7. *Do you support promoting police transparency by requiring that RPD make the pictures, names, and ranks of RPD officers available on the city website?*

Response (Please give a clear "Yes" or "No" and any explanation):

Yes.

Any RPD officer who is in uniform and deals with the public should not have an expectation of privacy or anonymity.