



## 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](mailto:sbirdsong@acluofnc.org)**.

**Candidate Name: Charles Francis**

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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):**

No. I took a leadership role in calling for a civilian review board in the 2017 election. As in many other areas, other candidates have followed in adopting my position. I am in favor of a civilian review board without subpoena power. People serving on the board should represent a cross section of the community and be required to undergo substantial training. Beyond a civilian review board the city needs to take a number of steps to strengthen public safety and RPD/community relationships. These include:

- Increasing force strength to keep pace with growth in the city's population
- Ensuring that the officers have modern equipment and adequate training, including in mental health incidents
- For the fire department, fixing payscale discrepancies and increasing the number of firefighters on each engine to the industry standard of four
- Recruiting and properly compensating a diverse police and fire fighter force for our diverse 21st century city

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 any search and pat down that is not based on probable cause?*

**Response (Please give a clear “Yes” or “No” and any explanation):**

No. The Police should not require a signed form to stop an officer from searching their personal belongings.

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.

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, we would first have to determine the cost of the camera that supports the WatchGuard feature. Once, we can allocate funds for this we should be able to. An officer may not remember at the moment to click on their camera if they are in a life or death situation. If the effectiveness of this feature is high and we can afford it, yes.

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, I am in favor of expanding the Raleigh Police Department's use of civil citations. We should decriminalize the use of marijuana and end cash bail. This would save time and police department resources.

6. *Are you in favor of requiring, and ensuring funding for, de-escalation training for all 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, we need to have de-escalation training for all RPD officers. We can use the task force to determine if the officer did not attempt to de-escalate before the use of force. We must take it a step further by increased oversight of police training in Raleigh.

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, the Police Department is a public department that should have police officers and ranks on their website. Police Officers that are actively undercover will not be able to have their face and information online. We must examine how this will be conducted before fully supporting this idea.