



2019 Charlotte City Council and Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of North Carolina, Action NC, and the NAACP Charlotte-Mecklenburg Branch would like to provide voters with information about where Charlotte's 2019 Mayoral and City Council candidates stand on important issues of police accountability and oversight, particularly in anticipation of the 2020 Republican National Convention (RNC). Our goal is to educate voters about local candidates' positions on addressing the immediate and lasting impacts of the 2020 RNC on the residents of Charlotte.

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 15, 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: **awebb@acluofnc.org**.



2019 Charlotte City Council and Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Brandon Pierce

1. On July 22, 2019, the City Council passed a resolution condemning racism and xenophobia following President Trump's campaign rally in Greenville, North Carolina. The resolution quoted the City Council's May 26, 2015, Resolution on the Protection of Civil Liberties, in which the City Council “recognizes that the community is comprised of a diverse population, which is vital to the City of Charlotte,” and that “the Council seeks to foster trust with all members of our community.”¹ Do you support the 2015 Resolution on the Protection of Civil Liberties, and how would you protect the civil liberties of all Charlotte residents and visitors before, during, and after the 2020 Republican National Convention?

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

Yes, I support the resolution on the Protection of Civil Liberties. As far as the RNC 2020 coming to Charlotte, I think Charlotte is in a prime position. This is our time to show the world what a first-class city looks like and we are leaders in Unity, Peace and Change not just bystanders or onlookers. Many people are opposed to the RNC coming due to the current administration. I think this is a great chance for Charlotte to meet hate with kindness, not hate with hate.

2. In 2018, the City signed contracts with the 2020 RNC Host Committee, but only a summary of those contracts has been released to the public. Public records law generally presumes that public records are the property of the people. Will you commit to supporting the public release of the full RNC contract agreements with only limited redactions to protect individual privacy as permitted under the NC Public Records Act?

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

Yes.



¹ <https://charlottenc.gov/CityClerk/Resolutions/June%208,%202015.pdf>

The City of Charlotte is expected to spend a large portion of a fifty million dollar federal grant on security-related purchases for the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) in advance of the 2020 RNC. We also expect that most, if not all, of these purchases will be retained by CMPD and used in local policing long after the 2020 RNC has concluded.

The use of military and surveillance technology by local police creates oppressive environments in our communities and disproportionately harms people of color and low-income neighborhoods. In particular, members of the community are deeply concerned that the 2020 RNC will result in CMPD subjecting residents to even more surveillance technology, such as facial recognition tools, beyond the many cameras already used to monitor Charlotte residents.

3. Do you agree that local acquisition of military equipment designed for the battlefield, not neighborhoods, and its deployment in our communities adversely impacts Charlotte residents' welfare, including creating significant risks to their physical and psychological well-being?

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

No, I do not agree with the statement above. As a Black man raising a black family in Charlotte (including my baby girl), I want this city to be as safe as possible. And as long as these crazy people can go into Walmart, Churches, Schools and Malls with fully loaded Assault Rifles then our CMPD should be fully equipped to handle these situations. But since the point about adverse impacts to Charlotte residents was brought up, I will also address it. If oppressive environments due to surveillance technology is truly an outcome that can happen, we need to address it head on through regulation. The answer should not be “let’s not use it” the answer should be “let’s not abuse it”.



4. Do you agree that local acquisition of surveillance technology and tools and their deployment in our communities adversely impacts Charlotte residents’ welfare, including creating significant risks to their physical and psychological well-being?

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

No, I think we need to have clear guidelines and regulations in place to prevent the abuse of the system but with the way our world is trending we need to invest in this. A better call out is; we need more resources for our community who are/is dealing with physical and psychological well-being issues.

5. Do you agree that legally enforceable safeguards, including robust transparency, public oversight, and accountability measures, must be in place to protect the public's welfare, civil rights, and civil liberties before any military or surveillance equipment is funded, acquired, or deployed?

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

Yes. Now we are talking my language. Great question. Yes, I agree. This should be a focus of our Comprehensive plan with a focus to start this phase in early 2020.

6. Will you commit to supporting a transparent process by which all CMPD and City purchases of the following items for the 2020 RNC or at any other time are made available for public comment at least 30 days in advance of purchase?
 - Crowd-control equipment (including, but not limited to, Tasers, tear gas, pepper spray, and Long-Range Audio Devices);
 - Surveillance equipment (including, but not limited to, electronic body scanners, drones or unmanned aerial vehicles, license plate scanners, facial recognition software, Stingray devices, and cameras), and
 - Militarized equipment purchases (including, but not limited to, automatic assault rifles, body armor, mine resistant armored vehicles, grenades, flash bang grenades, or similar explosives and grenade launchers).

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



Yes, I support a transparent process. I am not sure where the 30 days came from and if it is realistic or whether or not it will impede the process of keeping our citizens safe. Here is what I will say, as a City Council Member I will do my best and strive for transparency at every turn. If there is a genuine safety concern I would like to see the courts and city attorney weigh in on how long we should vet purchases.

7. Will you promise to work for, and demand, if necessary, a policy under which City Council must be notified and affirmatively approve every acquisition by CMPD or another municipal entity of crowd control, surveillance, and militarized equipment for the 2020 RNC or at any other time?

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

Yes, I think this is a good check and balance that can set some great precedence for future events like this. It is my hope that this does not become a political war ground where the approvals have nothing to do with safety and everything to do with the disdain of the actual RNC.

8. Do you commit to establishing, as part of a mandatory City Council approval process for all military and surveillance equipment acquisitions, a requirement that the agency acquiring or using the equipment shall make publicly available a Military/Surveillance Equipment Public Impact Report and a Military/Surveillance Equipment Use Policy concerning the equipment at issue prior to an opportunity for public comment and City Council approval?

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

Yes, I support reasonable measures like this to prevent Government and Law enforcement overreach.



9. The 2020 RNC will bring thousands of people to Charlotte to engage in First Amendment-protected activity; mass arrests have been made at similar past events.
 - a. Do you agree that the Constitution requires that any arrest of a person must be based on specific articulable facts supporting probable cause to believe that the individual arrested committed a criminal offense?
 - b. Do you agree that CMPD should not arrest anyone for whom they lack specific articulable facts supporting probable cause to arrest that individual, and that no one should be arrested based only on their presence in a particular location at a particular time?
 - c. Do you agree that if CMPD restricts the time, place, or manner of speech or other activity, CMPD officers should clearly communicate and provide a reasonable opportunity for individuals to leave the restricted area before making any arrests?

Response (For each sub-question, please give a clear “Yes” or “No” and any explanation):

- a. **Yes.**
- b. **Yes, but I think if there is a legit threat to safety CMPD can detain and question as long as they follow the current due process.**
- c. **Yes, Absolutely, and if CMPD is not doing this then City Council and the Chief and the City Manager all need to have an awakening.**

10. Do you pledge to support a binding City Council resolution adding the requirements and principles in questions 3 through 8, above, to the 2015 Civil Liberties Resolution, as proposed by the Safety Accountability Fairness Ethics (SAFE) Coalition NC?

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

Yes, if they follow the concerns and guidelines I listed above in my replies.



11. Will you commit to oppose any resolution before City Council to revive all or part of the 2012 Extraordinary Events ordinance, or any similar ordinance that would expand the use of stop and search, and put in place sweeping police powers?²

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

Yes, I will oppose any such ordinance that does not explicitly spell out the protections of liberty for the people. But if the ordinance is able to do that while also expanding additional safety measures I think it warrants a look through.

12. On July 11, 2019, Governor Cooper signed into law Senate Bill 191, Out-of State Law Enforcement/2020 Republican Convention.³ The law allows CMPD to enter into temporary intergovernmental law enforcement agreements to bring in additional officers during the 2020 RNC. Do you pledge to hold CMPD accountable for ensuring that all officers hired during the RNC are trained in CMPD policies, including limits on the use of force, and that any temporary officer who fails to comply with CMPD policies is immediately removed from duty?

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

Yes, absolutely. This answer needs no explanation, it’s just good common sense governing.

² <https://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/politics-government/article158355864.html>

³ <https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2019/Bills/Senate/PDF/S191v6.pdf>