



## 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: Corey Branch**

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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):**

The General Assembly of NC would have to approve a board with the powers requested. In the meantime, I am willing to work with ensuring we have a Civil Service Board that reflects our city. I am interested in a board that can investigate and provide recommendations back to our police chief. A Civil Service board is currently established in Raleigh and any decision made by the chief can be appealed to this board. Changes would have to be made to the Civil Service board, which has citizens representation, and this would have to be modified as well to work with another board.

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):**

- Yes, the form should always be used since it states a resident can refuse a search.

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, I support the review and modification of policies to enforce our existing RPD body-worn cameras. We must continue to evolve with proven changes in technology.

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, I support the concept, and will need more information on effectiveness, feasibility and amount of funding.

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, in compliance with General Statute 15A

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, I support de-escalation training in compliance with RPD policy.

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):**

- I promote officer interaction with citizens and having opportunities to know the citizens in the area they patrol. Due to the nature of officers' duties and assignments, the publication of their picture could compromise their current and future investigations as well as putting them and/or their family at risk of harm.