

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE



2022 WAKE COUNTY SHERIFF CANDIDATES

The primary election for Wake County Sheriff on May 17 will help shape the county's priorities on issues such as immigrants' rights, improving jail conditions, protecting the rights of Wake County residents, and ending the school to prison pipeline.

To cast an informed ballot, make sure you know where the candidates stand on key civil liberties and civil rights issues. Some candidates' written responses have been clarified based on subsequent interviews.

Please note: This questionnaire was sent to all candidates running for Sheriff in the May primaries, from all parties. We have only included the responses of candidates who responded to our written questionnaire. If a candidate is not listed, it means that they did not respond to our request or declined to participate.

View the candidates' responses to those questions.



Disclaimer: Paid for by the American Civil Liberties Union of North Carolina. The ACLU of NC does not endorse or oppose candidates, but urges you to cast an informed vote. We have done our best to represent each candidate in a fair and reasonable way based on candidates' responses to our questionnaire and in public statements. These materials are not authorized by any candidate or candidates' committee.

2022 WAKE COUNTY SHERIFF CANDIDATES

Building Trust with Immigrant Communities



Randolph Baity



Tommy Matthews



Roy G. Taylor, Ph.D.



Willie Rowe



Gerald M. Baker



Joseph Coley



Cedric L. Herring

Will you commit to not enter into any contracts or 287(g) agreements with Immigration and Customs enforcement (ICE)?

Will you commit to decline ICE detainer requests in all cases unless ICE provides a warrant signed by a judge?

NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES

2022 WAKE COUNTY SHERIFF CANDIDATES

Improving Jail Conditions



Randolph Baity



Tommy Matthews



Roy G. Taylor, Ph.D.



Willie Rowe



Gerald M. Baker



Joseph Coley



Cedric L. Herring

Will you commit to ending solitary confinement as a response to all but the most serious offenses that inflict considerable harm?

Will you commit to making at least one free phone call per week available to each person held in your custody as soon as contractually permitted, and to not suspend phone privileges for disciplinary reasons?

Will you commit to placing and classifying all people in your custody in a unit aligned with their gender identity?

Will you commit to ensuring that those detained in the jail have access to at least three video visits per week, with at least one free of charge, during ongoing COVID restrictions, and to reinstate contact visits when COVID restrictions are lifted?

Will you commit to providing access to evidence-based substance use treatment and support, including medication assisted treatment (MAT) for all eligible people detained in the jail?

YES	NO	YES	NO	NR	YES	YES
YES	NO	YES	YES	NR	NO	NR
YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NR
YES	NO	YES	NO	NR	NR	YES
YES	NO	YES	YES	NR	YES	YES

Note: 'NR' stands for 'No Response'

2022 WAKE COUNTY SHERIFF CANDIDATES

Protecting the Rights of Wake County Residents



Randolph Baity



Tommy Matthews



Roy G. Taylor, Ph.D.



Willie Rowe



Gerald M. Baker



Joseph Coley



Cedric L. Herring

Will you implement a policy requiring deputies to use a written consent to search form prior to conducting a consent search?

Will you commit to barring the use of no-knock warrants?

NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO

2022 WAKE COUNTY SHERIFF CANDIDATES

End the school-to-prison pipeline



Randolph Baity



Tommy Matthews



Roy G. Taylor, Ph.D.



Willie Rowe



Gerald M. Baker



Joseph Coley



Cedric L. Herring

Will you commit to reducing the number of school-based juvenile referrals from elementary and middle schools by 50 percent in your first year?

Peacebuilders are crisis intervention workers placed in schools with the purpose of building positive relationships with students and the whole school-community. Their role is to keep schools safe without arresting students and making court referrals. **Would you endorse a peacebuilder program as an alternative to the SRO program in elementary and middle schools?**

NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NR	NR
NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	NR	YES

Note: 'NR' stands for 'No Response'



Expanded responses from Randolph Baity, candidate for Wake County Sheriff

Building Trust With Immigrant Communities

As Sheriff, I commit to:

Not enter into any contracts or agreements with ICE

Decline. I will not enter into a blanket binding agreement but will comply with reasonable request on a case-by-case basis

Declining ICE detainer requests in all cases unless ICE provides a warrant signed by a judge

Decline. A detainer is a 48 hr hold, I will adhere to the request so that the federal agency will do their due diligence, but I will NOT hold a detainee BEYOND the 48 hrs.



Expanded responses from Randolph Baity, candidate for Wake County Sheriff

Improving Jail Conditions

As Sheriff, I commit to:

Placing and classifying all people in custody in a unit aligned with their gender identity

Accept. Yes for safety protocols, detainees that self-identify as other than the two biological sexes assigned at birth may be assigned to a miscellaneous unit.

Ensuring that those detained in the jail have access to at least three video visits per week, with at least one free of charge, during ongoing COVID restrictions, and to reinstate contact visits when COVID restrictions are lifted

Accept. Due to staffing and equipment availability issues, I would limit to 2 per week with one possibly being free, once COVID restrictions are lifted one in person visit. Should our budget allow for more staff and equipment I will evaluate to possibly increase the number of visits.

Providing access to evidence-based substance use treatment and support, including MAT for all eligible people detained in the jail

Accept. Yes, detox / step down protocol and medications to assist will be used.



Expanded responses from Randolph Baity, candidate for Wake County Sheriff

Protecting the Rights of Wake County Residents

As Sheriff, I commit to:

Implementing a written consent to search form policy

Decline. Verbal consent is sufficient and documented by body cam. Superseded when probable cause is found.

Barring the use of no-knock warrants

Decline. I will add a provision to the no knock warrant stating that they will only be granted based on criminal behavior and seriousness of the offense prompting the warrant. This is to be applied to known subjects with a propensity for violence against LEO/ others, or those with an evasive nature. Securing a dangerous individual in a dynamic situation requires that we keep the general public safe while executing a warrant to detain a subject.



Expanded responses from Randolph Baity, candidate for Wake County Sheriff

End the School-to-Prison Pipeline

As Sheriff, I commit to:

Reducing the number of school-based juvenile referrals

Decline. While I cannot commit to a 50% reduction, I can commit to putting policies in place to help identify the most vulnerable and needy students who more often than not, need resources or access to food, shelter and a safe place versus penal action.

Endorsing a peacebuilder program as an alternative to the SRO program

Decline. Yes, minor children should have a parent or guardian present for an interrogation with a SRO.



Expanded responses from Tommy Matthews, candidate for Wake County Sheriff

Building Trust With Immigrant Communities

As Sheriff, I commit to:

Not enter into any contracts or agreements with ICE

Accept. Part of my platform states I will not participate in the I.C.E. 287g program. Wake County taxpayers funded the 287g program for many years through their local and property taxes. I do not see where the Warrant Service Officer program is significantly different from the former. The ability to confirm a person’s identity can still be accomplished even if an agency is not part of the 287g program. The sheriff’s office can and does supply bed space for federal prisoners in the custody of the US Marshals Service and F.B.I. who are awaiting trial on State charges and other agencies. This is done without the need for any contract.

Declining ICE detainer requests in all cases unless ICE provides a warrant signed by a judge

Decline. It is unwise to decline cooperating with any law enforcement agency. There are circumstances that are in the best of everyone for the sheriff’s office to work alongside and safeguard our communities from violent offenders. My views on this happened long before I.C.E. received new direction to now focus their efforts on individuals who pose a threat to both national and border security as well as public safety.
(See Sept. 20, 2021, Homeland Security press release entitled “Secretary Mayorkas announces new immigration enforcement priorities.” <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2021/09/30/secretary-mayorkas-announces-new-immigration-enforcement-priorities>).



Expanded responses from Tommy Matthews, candidate for Wake County Sheriff

Improving Jail Conditions

As Sheriff, I commit to:

Ending solitary confinement for all but the most serious offenses

Decline. That was always a goal I had while Assistant Director of Wake County Detention Services. I collaborated with staff in finding solutions that would reduce disciplinary issues by inmates and be a deterrent for others. Prior to my departure I tasked the jail's Disciplinary Unit to explore punitive measures that did not involve first using solitary confinement and be based on objective criteria. I look forward to seeing this goal achieved.

Making at least one free phone call per week available

Decline. I am open to discussion regarding the "one free phone call per week," but only after discussion with the jail administration and vendor to resolve any issues and technical obstacles and have assurances there is no additional cost to the county and taxpayers. I will not remove from the table the possible restriction of telephone calls for disciplinary purposes.

Ensuring that those detained in the jail have access to at least three video visits per week, with at least one free of charge, during ongoing COVID restrictions, and to reinstate contact visits when COVID restrictions are lifted

Decline. The Wake County Detention Center and Public Safety Center has only video visitation and appointments are on a first come basis with exceptions for visitors coming from long distances. It is difficult to guarantee a minimum number of video visitations mainly because of the jail's large population. Inmates also have access to a messaging system (secure and monitored) to communicate with family and friends plus ability to make telephone calls and send/receive postal mail.

Providing access to evidence-based substance use treatment and support, including MAT for all eligible people detained in the jail

Decline. How inmates are medically treated should be based upon advice and recommendation of medical providers, in this case the jail's Medical Director. I have known Dr. Umesi almost 40 years since former John H. Baker Jr. hired him. His knowledge of treating incarcerated people is outstanding and I would without a doubt trust his judgement in this matter. I remain open to discussing such issues as this, but it would be unwise to commit to this.



Expanded responses from Tommy Matthews, candidate for Wake County Sheriff

Protecting the Rights of Wake County Residents

As Sheriff, I commit to:

Implementing a written consent to search form policy

Decline. I have used such documentation myself in past times, but not every time. I will not restrict a deputy's ability to search by requiring written and signed consent forms. With increased car and body cameras being utilized, there should be no dispute about whether voluntary consent is given.

Barring the use of no-knock warrants

Decline. In all my years in law enforcement, I know of only a few instances where a "no knock" warrant was obtained and used (following the requirements of § 15A-251. Entry by force). I understand well the danger in serving no knock search warrants, both to the occupant(s) and the officers alike. I will not ban their use, but I will require their use to be restricted and pre-approved by the division head or higher authority. Additionally, I would require documented briefing for all participants as to how that search warrant will be executed and/or terminated if needed.



Expanded responses from Tommy Matthews, candidate for Wake County Sheriff

End the School-to-Prison Pipeline

As Sheriff, I commit to:

Reducing the number of school-based juvenile referrals

Decline. I would like to see a decrease in juveniles being diverted to juvenile justice system as much as anyone else. However, no one can make such a commitment when you have no way of knowing just how many and how serious future incidents there may be. Each case is to be judged on its own merits while keeping in mind how similar events are managed. Reductions are possible, but not at the expense of safety within the schools.

As a parent of an 11-year-old son, soon entering the sixth grade, the data I see is genuinely concerning. I do not want to see unnecessary enforcement of criminal statues within the schools upon juveniles who are still maturing and have a long way in growing up to be a responsible adult.

As sheriff I will certainly devote as much time and resources as needed to improve how law enforcement works within a school setting.

As noted in the June 2021 WCPSS review of the School Resource Officer Program, consistency between the schools is a challenge, and it is one of the most important things to address.

Endorsing a peacebuilder program as an alternative to the SRO program

Decline. I would like to explore this program more, but it appears to be better suited to the students rather than relying on law enforcement to address the minor incidents. Law enforcement is there for those situations involving profoundly serious crimes against persons and keeping a watch for gang recruitment activities targeting school age children.



Expanded responses from Roy G. Taylor, Ph.D., candidate for Wake County Sheriff

Building Trust With Immigrant Communities

As Sheriff, I commit to:

Not enter into any contracts or agreements with ICE

Accept. Human trafficking and criminal gangs often involve undocumented people. These criminal organizations operate all across North Carolina and throughout the United States. To combat them requires partnerships with State and Federal Agencies to share information and resources. Therefore, having a working relationship with ICE is necessary for this purpose. I do not intend on voluntarily sharing information with ICE regarding residents in the Wake County Jail.

The enforcement of immigration laws rests with the Federal Government, not the Wake County Sheriff's Office. In my 40 years as a law enforcement officer, most of it here in North Carolina, I have never inquired about a person's immigration or naturalization status.



Expanded responses from Roy G. Taylor, Ph.D., candidate for Wake County Sheriff

Improving Jail Conditions

As a Lt. Colonel in the Army Reserve, my second to the last command led a specialized team of soldiers tasked with evaluating the conditions and adherence to the Geneva Convention of prisoner of war camps and military corrections barracks. As Sheriff of Wake County, I will commit to abiding by the NC Division of Health Services Regulations regarding jail and detention facility operations and other nationally recognized standards and best practices. Providing the best treatment and educational programs will help reduce recidivism, the first step in proactive crime prevention strategies.



Expanded responses from Roy G. Taylor, Ph.D., candidate for Wake County Sheriff

Protecting the Rights of Wake County Residents

As Sheriff, I commit to:

Barring the use of no-knock warrants

Decline. A no-knock warrant is rarely used but may be necessary in some high-risk situations where human lives are in danger. So, I will not bar them but will commit to only use them with a Judge's court order and my express authorization.

End the School-to-Prison Pipeline

As Sheriff, I commit to:

Reducing the number of school-based juvenile referrals

Decline. I cannot commit to reducing juvenile referrals by 50 percent until I have more data. In my experience, there should not be a large number of juvenile petitions sought for the children in this age group. I believe that disciplinary issues should be the responsibility of the school administration and parents, not the criminal justice system.



Expanded responses from Willie Rowe, candidate for Wake County Sheriff

Building Trust With Immigrant Communities

I am committed to equal protection for all and creating opportunity by focusing on community engagement that results in trusted relationships and open and honest communication. I do not believe that there's a one size fit all approach, in every case and with every individual a thorough and objective assessment must occur to ensure that all decisions are made based on facts and careful consideration. I'm committed and determined to work equally with all stakeholders to build a consensus and mutually beneficial relationships between all communities and law enforcement.



Expanded responses from Willie Rowe, candidate for Wake County Sheriff

Improving Jail Conditions

Humane treatment and the overall safety of the staff and inmates are the top priorities along with providing services to enhance life skills and equip inmates transitioning from the Jail to live a crime free and productive life.

Protecting the Rights of Wake County Residents

I'm committed to reducing crime and enhancing public safety through community engagement and improved relationships that result in community and law enforcement accountability, ownership and shared vision for safe and equitable outcomes.



Expanded responses from Willie Rowe, candidate for Wake County Sheriff

Ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline

I'm committed to working with students, staff, parents and the School Board to find the best solutions for providing a safe and quality learning environment. I believe a thorough review of the data must be conducted and incidents that are behavior issues should be handle by staff and crisis intervention professionals and law enforcement notified only when criminal activity occurs or suspected and the potential for threats of violence.



Expanded responses from Joseph Coley, candidate for Wake County Sheriff

Building Trust With Immigrant Communities

As Sheriff, I commit to:

Not enter into any contracts or agreements with ICE

Accept. I will commit to not participating in 287G.

Declining ICE detainer requests in all cases unless ICE provides a warrant signed by a judge

Decline. Although we are talking about 2 different processes, I commit to making Wake County safe for all residents.

Improving Jail Conditions

As Sheriff, I commit to:

Placing and classifying all people in custody in a unit aligned with their gender identity

Decine. This is a multifaceted question that is not answered with a yes or no. However, dignity will be show to all.



Expanded responses from Joseph Coley, candidate for Wake County Sheriff

Protecting the Rights of Wake County Residents

As Sheriff, I commit to:

Barring the use of no-knock warrants

Decline. There are situations that necessitate a no-knock warranty for the safety for all persons involved including the general public.

End the School-to-Prison Pipeline

As Sheriff, I commit to:

Reducing the number of school-based juvenile referrals

No Response. Sheriff does not control the actions of the students

Endorsing a peacebuilder program as an alternative to the SRO program

No Response. Not as an alternative, but in conjunction with an SRO



Expanded responses from Cedric L. Herring, candidate for Wake County Sheriff

Building Trust With Immigrant Communities

Within the guidelines of the sheriff having to support a judge's order as it relates to immigration's I can not oppose a court ruling. As Sheriff of Wake County, I would not support the 287G bill in any way to detain any individual nor would I be willing to allow my deputies to be trained to serve any ICE warrant to intercede in the process for ICE.

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE



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