

## 20 Questions for Delaware General Assembly Candidates

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**CANDIDATE DISTRICT: STATE REP. DISTRICT 31**

The Coalition for Smart Justice is committed to cutting the number of prisoners in Delaware in half and eliminating racial disparities in the criminal justice system. Elected officials are essential to achieving those goals. We have launched a campaign to communicate with voters about candidates' positions on issues related to criminal justice reform. This questionnaire is the focus of that effort. If you choose not to respond, we will indicate that in our public communications.

### Scale Questions

1. **Delaware sends too many people to prison with sentences that are too long.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

2. **Communities of color are over-policed and underserved.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

Police presence is not a negative. It should be based upon data. Crime fighting is about saving lives not political correctness and making criminals comfortable victimizing us.

3. **Prison time is an effective deterrent to crime. Longer sentences mean less crime.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

The majority of the crime is committed by the same people. Statistics show that longer sentences in violent crimes result in safer communities. The problem that occurred is we started tossing out longer sentences for everything. That exploded the prison population, made them training grounds for low level criminals to become mentored into worse criminals. We need an entirely different approach for nonviolent criminals especially those who are not habitual criminals.

4. **It is important to invest more state resources into diversion programs such as drug treatment and community supervision so that fewer people go to prison.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

It is cheaper and no less effective for many statistically. The key is how community supervision is designed. We need to accommodate those with jobs better. We can use technology for monitoring. Naturally, we need drug treatment, but a significant number of those addicts have real untreated underlying mental health issues that we should also address. We need to require they try to complete high school if they have not. We need to remove the foreign language requirement for GED's. and go back to 3 and 3 for Math and Science and it should be vocationally based with college prep for those capable and interested. We need to provide counseling, relationship skills training and soft skills training. We should get them involved with job training especially if they have high school but no job. We need to push community service. Probation should be a wakeup call to clean up, but it should also be a path to a better life. We need to break the cycle before they become career criminals. Don't coddle them, make them grow up and act like an adult.

5. **It is important to invest more state resources into services that will assist people coming out of prison to find a job and be successful as they re-enter the community.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

It is one of biggest scandals in our state that we fail so badly on reentry then wonder why we have high recidivism.

6. **When an especially egregious crime happens in Delaware, it is important to pass a law to make sentences harsher.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

It depends if we find a real lapse. Sometimes it is appropriate, but many times hard cases make bad law. We should not change laws on a whim based on once a decade cases.

7. **The state should retain the power to seize people's assets under current civil asset forfeiture laws even though no crime has been proven.**

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

It is unconstitutional. If the courts will not protect us from arbitrary state power the legislature must.

8. People of color are treated more harshly by the police and prosecutors than white people.

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

Same crime, different outcomes. Statistics do not lie.

9. Probation sentences are too long and there are too many obstacles to meeting the terms of probation.

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

I say neutral because I disagree with the question, but may agree with the intent. The problem is that we have the wrong requirements and needless obstacles. Many of them make little sense in 2017 and are not geared to rehabilitation. See above.

10. Delaware should reinstate the death penalty for murder.

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

It is unjust for someone to murder a family and still be able to eat our food and live out his/her life. Justice must have an element of retribution. It also prevents repeat offenders. 800 people a year are killed by people who were convicted of killing before. I think it should be more broadly applied to 1st degree murder then you have no disparities, which frankly are not as big an issue in Delaware statistically. It should have never been overturned. I disagree with the legal reasoning of the ruling for reasons too lengthy to type here. I have deep respect for the convictions of those opposed. I value life. I am uneasy with the concept, but both philosophical and life experience tells me that Bin Laden should not be protected while thousands of families are ripped apart forever.

11. Delaware should reinstate the death penalty only for murder of a police officer, prison guard or other first responder.

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

My life is just as valuable. It should be an aggravating condition so that one automatically qualifies.

12. The state should establish a civilian oversight board that would review incidences such as serious police brutality or when a police officer kills someone while on duty.

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

No more bureaucracy please. I think that the law should make excessive use of force that creates death or serious physical injury a dismissible offense in all police contracts. The police can usually do a better job of policing themselves than civilians as witnessed by some recent jury decisions. The PD recommended action, the civilians did not.

13. Bail reform is important so that a person's ability to access money does not determine who stays in prison a waiting trial and who goes home.

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

I am tired of repeat criminals being on the street faster than the officer who has to fill out paperwork. The reform is too broad. It should be based more on risk.

14. Juveniles should not be tried as adults no matter what crime they are accused of.

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

This is usually true. Murder and forcible rape are exceptions along with assault with a firearm.

15. People with a felony record should be able to have that record expunged by a judge, even for serious crimes, after a period of 5-10 years has elapsed with no further criminal activity.

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

I favor Clean Slate legislation after 10 years for most crimes, but serious violent crimes and mega thefts are another question.

## Open-Ended Questions

16. African Americans are 22 percent of Delaware's population and 51 percent of our prison population. What should the General Assembly do to reduce the racial disparities at various stages of our criminal process?

Lower disparity in sentencing for certain drug crimes. Push a rehabilitation agenda. People in minimum security should work 6 hours and go to classes 6 hours. They should receive treatment if needed for drugs or alcohol. There should be faith based options available such as the Prison Fellowship program, which statistically are far more effective for those so inclined.

17. The average length of stay in prison in Delaware is 50 percent longer than the national average. Will you pledge to advocate for the elimination of all mandatory minimum sentences? Please give a yes or no answer and any explanation you think is necessary. If there are mandatory minimums you support, please identify them specifically.

No. We have way too many mandatory minimums. I tend to think judges should be able to adjudicate based upon the facts of the case not a cookie cutter. I do favor mandatory minimums for crimes that are so dangerous to members of the community or are such a violation of civil standards that we cannot risk error. Murder, forcible child rape, terrorism, and intentional disfigurement are some that come to mind. I favor Jessica's law.

18. Do you support legislation and appropriation of funds requiring the collection, analysis and publication of statistical data in order to track prosecutorial decisions, evaluate the effectiveness policies and assess racial bias in the criminal justice system? Please give a yes or no answer and any explanation you think is necessary.

Yes

19. Other than gun control legislation. how can Delaware fight our gun violence problem? Are there specific proposals that you would offer as a member of the General Assembly to reduce gun violence in the state?

I support spotshotter. I believe we need a comprehensive approach to rebuilding the family by teaching how to have better relationships, coping, soft skills and valuing marriage and family. Children from stable homes with two parents rarely commit crimes. Dr. Glasser gave us a public mental health model.

20. Do you support diversion for people accused of some violent crimes such as offensive touching and assault in the third degree?

Yes for offensive touching. It should not be classified as violent. Assault is a violent crime and I am unsure if I support that change. If my idea of rehabilitation is adopted, it is irrelevant.