

20 Questions for Delaware General Assembly Candidates

CANDIDATE NAME: DEBBIE HARRINGTON (D)

CANDIDATE DISTRICT: STATE REP. DISTRICT 9

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

Delaware for certain deals with overcrowding issues. Pretrial detention and bail influence the number of people in prisons, but this is an area I would need further study.

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

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Over-policing and underserving communities of color is a national issue. It is important for legislators and others serving the communities to understand who they serve and their specific needs. As a member of the General Assembly representing District 9, I would consider the needs specific to my communities.

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

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Quality education is an effective deterrent to crime. Purposeful rehabilitation is an effective deterrent to crime. Jobs and an effective system that allows reentry to society deter crime. Longer sentences without the benefit of a constructive corrections system simply delay crime. Sentences should be based on the severity of the crime.

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 important that we invest in building the strength of our people, not just for individuals sake, but for the sake of stronger families. Ensuring access to quality education , drug treatment programs, and job training are all priorities in making certain that there are true alternatives to crime.

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

We will pay for recidivism one way or another. Either we constructively invest on the front end in resources that will help reentry to society and deter recidivism or we pay on the back end to build more prisons, add more correction officers, and feed, clothe and house more prisoners. The cost we pay to maintain a high rate of recidivism is better diverted by education, skills development and job placement.

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

Laws are not meaningfully based on a single occurrence.

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

Delaware must assure that its citizen's rights are protected under the constitution. For me, this question would require further study.

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

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

As a member of the General Assembly I would work towards ensuring that all

administrators of the law are culturally competent and committed to fair and equal justice.

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

If this statement is true I would make it a priority to work with the court system to enhanced programs designed to help people reenter and become productive members of society.

10. Delaware should reinstate the death penalty for murder.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

I do not support the death penalty at all.

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

I do not support the death penalty. We must build programs that deter such heinous crimes; however, if such crimes occur, they must not go unpunished.

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

An oversight board that has the investigative expertise, appropriate authority to intervene and is not persuaded by any kind of alignment to causes/groups/people would provide the kind of accountability and transparency that garners public trust, which is important to an effective police and community relationship.

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

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

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

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

The State's priority for juveniles should reflect the intent to give young people wherever possible the best opportunity to live a productive life despite their mistakes. I realize that there are juveniles who do adult things, such as get married, have children, and even commit crime, but the mind matures with time and experience. Moreover, I do not believe that young people should be expected to survive physically or mentally in an adult prison system.

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

This requires further study because there are so many factors to consider before one could take a position that ALL felony records should be expunged within a certain time period.

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?

The General Assembly should address racial profiling and create laws that prohibits targeting people of color including African Americans.

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.

I must have time to study this question.

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, I support transparency and accountability.

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?

Delaware fight gun violence with education, job training and placement, other economic opportunities, drug treatment programs and mental health resources.

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

I do not support arbitrary diversion.