

20 Questions for Delaware General Assembly Candidates

CANDIDATE NAME: KRISTA GRIFFITH (D)

CANDIDATE DISTRICT: STATE REP. DISTRICT 12

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

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

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

However, long sentences for certain violent crimes may be necessary for the protection of the community.

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

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

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

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

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

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

When I served as a Deputy Attorney General, I never treated anyone differently based on his or her race or national origin.

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

10. Delaware should reinstate the death penalty for murder.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

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

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

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

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 believe certain violent convictions should not be expunged due to my concern for the safety of children, vulnerable adults and other members of the community.

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 undertake a comprehensive study to determine at which stage(s) the racial disparities exist. Then actions should be taken to correct the disparities as part of a greater effort to reform the criminal justice system.

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. There are some crimes that are so egregious that mandatory minimum sentences are appropriate for the protection of the community. This includes first-degree murder, first-degree rape, rape of a child by a person in a position of trust or authority, etc. I do not support mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent crimes.

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?

Beyond gun control, ensuring that all communities have economic opportunity will truly address the underlying reasons for gun violence and other crimes that arise from the desperate conditions many Delawareans face. Key to fostering economic opportunity of course is investing in our educational system. The voters of the 12th District can be certain that I will be a leading advocate of funding public education in every community of our state.

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

Yes, depending on the crime and its circumstances including the vulnerability of the victim.