

## 20 Questions for Delaware General Assembly Candidates

**CANDIDATE NAME: C. LINWOOD JACKSON (D)**

**CANDIDATE DISTRICT: STATE REP. DISTRICT 16**

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

Under mandatory sentencing laws, if you are caught with a small amount of drugs you could be sentenced to life in prison. These laws need to be changed.

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

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

Because of our failing school systems, the lack of economic opportunities, and a criminal justice system that is sometimes criminal itself. We need to get the funds to expand afterschool and early education programs, create apprenticeship programs for our veterans and incarcerated citizens reentering society, and criminal justice reform.

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

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

Longer sentences doesn't necessarily mean less crime, we still have a very high homicide rate in Wilmington for example, and we have longer sentences now than we did in the past, and the crime rate hasn't gone down.

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

Investing resources into drug treatment and community supervision saves the state money and helps people. It's better than sending people to prison.

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

Investing resources into teaching trades / skills while they're serving their time, so that when they reenter their community they'll be better prepared to get a good paying job to support their families and be a contributor to our society.

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

We already have tough sentences.

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

We need to reform our civil asset forfeiture laws because right now I believe they are enforced disproportionately against African Americans, and too many were never even convicted of a crime.

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

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

The war on drugs, longer sentences for similar crimes, more likely to be searched at traffic stops, students face harsher punishments at school on and on. Unfortunately in America people of color still suffer from oppression and racism that has created a disproportionate number of mass incarceration for men and women of color. We need to reform our criminal justice system.

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 you get a strict or inappropriate probation sentence, and you messed up it can ruin an otherwise stable, nonviolent person and his family's life forever. Happens all too often.

10. Delaware should reinstate the death penalty for murder.

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

On July 1, 2016, I spoke at the 23rd annual fast and vigil to abolish the death penalty on the steps of the United States Supreme Court. The death penalty is plagued with racial disparities. Innocent people have been sentenced to death and executed, and it consumes an enormous amount of state resources without improving safety.

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 disagree. Why should one's job description be the deciding factor on who gets the death penalty or not. My daughter gets killed, but because she's a doctor her killer gets life. My son gets killed, but because he's a cop his killer gets the death penalty. The death penalty should not be reinstated under any circumstances.

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

Police shootings should be investigated by entities independent from the police department and prosecutor's office where the shootings occurred. We should have an Independent review of all police shootings. And a US attorney general should automatically investigate whenever someone is killed while in police custody.

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

We have too many people incarcerated because they can't afford the bail. It drains valuable resources from other social programs.

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

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

I agree, no child should be tried as an adult.

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

Yes, it makes it easier and saves money all the way around. A person should not be punished this whole life after he paid his debt to society.

## 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?

We need to see nonviolent offenders freed and given a chance to become productive members in our society. They should eliminate prison for lower-level drug crimes, and eliminate the maximum and minimum sentencing laws too. And those changes should be retroactive.

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.

Yes, I am an advocate for the elimination of all mandatory minimum sentences. I believe mandatory minimum sentencing laws have contributed to the prison-overcrowding problem that we have in Delaware.

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 the appropriation of funds for full data reporting that would enhance transparency and accountability. It would show that coming up against the "Blue Line" does not automatically mean that justice won't prevail and that our law enforcement officers have a desire to strengthen relationships in our community.

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 would propose a requirement that every gun buyer obtain a gun license and register all gun purchases. And ban assault weapons like the AR-15 and bump stocks altogether.

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

Yes, I believe diversion programs should be for people with low-level offenses. Prison sentences should be reserved for our most dangerous offenders.