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CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Jeff Nieman

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Jeff Nieman, candidate for Dist. 18's District Attorney.
COURTESY OF THE JEFF NIEMAN FOR

Posted Wednesday, April 13, 2022 10:28 am

Candidate Biographical Information

Name: Jeff Nieman

Office you are running for: District Attorney

Current Home Address: 114 Hillspring Lane, Chapel Hill, NC 27516

Home telephone and/or Work Telephone: (919) 360-5651

Best daytime number: (919) 360-5651

E-mail: jeff@jeffnieman.com

Cell phone: (919) 360-5651

Date/place of birth: 12/07/76, Greensboro, NC

Current occupation: Senior Assistant District Attorney, District 18

Family (names & ages, as of Election Day, of immediate family members): Wife – Stephanie Nieman, 37; Son – Burke Nieman, 9; Daughter – Larkin Nieman, 6

Party affiliation (if applicable): Democrat

Current and previous elected offices held or sought & terms of service: None

Campaign manager (if applicable): Samuel Lynn

Campaign treasurer (if applicable): Maggie Barlow

Now that you're seeking office...in about 100 words or fewer.

Why are you seeking this office?: The District Attorney has the ability, perhaps more than any other actor, to move the local criminal justice system in a positive or negative direction. Chatham and Orange counties deserve a DA with years of experience in the criminal courts, deep roots in the community and a proven track record of utilizing a progressive approach to criminal justice. I am running to bring those attributes to the community in which I have lived my entire life.

What is your understanding of the responsibilities of the office you seek, and in 100 words or less, why do you believe you're qualified to fill that role?: The District Attorney is sworn to seek justice, not necessarily convictions. Our next DA should not only bring sufficient experience but also a demonstrated track record of leveraging rehabilitative and alternative approaches to achieve better criminal justice outcomes for all. The DA is responsible for setting policy for our two-county district and overseeing the assistant district attorneys (ADAs) and staff. I currently serve as Senior Assistant District Attorney and have undertaken multiple policy initiatives on behalf of the DA's Office. I also have prosecuted cases of every type of offense from DWI to First Degree Murder over my 16-year career.

Give us three goals that are specific, measurable and attainable you would have if elected.:

- 1) Effectively decriminalize personal use marijuana in our district
- 2) Expunge every juvenile criminal record eligible in our district under the Second Chance Act
- 3) Set official policy eliminating the death penalty in the district.

What are the biggest challenges in Chatham and North Carolina right now and how would you address them?: Systemic racism affects nearly every aspect of our lives, including the criminal justice system. As DA, I will make implicit bias training mandatory for all DA staff. I also believe hiring decisions should be made with an appreciation of the community served. I will make intentional recruiting efforts to encourage more applicants from underrepresented communities to consider future careers in a district attorney's office, especially in our district. I've also seen how the court system places a disproportionate burden on the poor. As DA, I will work to ensure that courts treat all people fairly regardless of their race, identity and socioeconomic status.

What's your overall view of the role of government? Is it fulfilling its mission at present?

If not, what needs to change?: I believe a strong and effective government is a critical institution in our society and can improve the lives of all citizens. Unfortunately, extreme partisanship and current political behaviors are preventing many of our government institutions,

particularly at the state and national levels, from strengthening our democracy and instead are losing trust from the general public. I believe our local government systems can and should set an example for civil discourse and effective decision-making in our community for other state and national leaders to follow.

What differentiates you from the other candidates, and ultimately, why should voters choose you?: Our community deserves a DA with not only sufficient experience but also a strong track record of seeking progressive approaches to criminal justice. I have over 16 years of experience as an ADA in our district and have launched multiple initiatives to reduce the criminalization of poverty, mass incarceration and school-to-prison pipeline. I created Outreach Court in our district, co-founded the Driver's License Restoration Project, volunteered in Teen Court programs and held leadership positions on local homelessness, juvenile crime and NAACP committees. I'm proud to have earned public endorsements from 34 current and former public officials as well as the support of 68 local attorneys.

Biographical Facts

Political/government hero: Barack Obama

Favorite book: 1984

Book most recently read: The Plot by Jean Hanff Korelitz

Favorite film: The Dark Knight

Hobbies: Running, movies, I was a DJ once upon a time

Church/civic involvement: United Church of Chapel Hill (have served on Church Council, Youth Board and as a Sunday School teacher), Life Member of NAACP, YMCA youth basketball coach, Teen Court Judge

Personal motto or one-line philosophy: "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life."

Strongest childhood ambition: Professional soccer player

Most significant life goal you've accomplished: Marrying Stephanie

Goal you haven't accomplished yet: Raising our children to be responsible, thoughtful and compassionate adults (working on it).