

RICK HILL

Candidate for Brazos County Justice of the Peace Precinct 3
2014 Election Cycle

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

1. Please tell us about yourself, why you are running for Justice of the Peace; and, what background, education and experience you have had to prepare you to execute the duties of Justice of the Peace.

I grew up in Lake Jackson, Texas and graduated from Brazoswood High School in 1976. I enlisted in and served honorably in the United States Air Force for six years. Upon my discharge, I came to Texas A&M in the Fall of 1984 and never left. My wife, Donna, and I have two grown daughters, a son-in-law, and two grandsons. I have a B.S. degree from Texas A&M in Curriculum & Instruction and a M.S. degree from Texas A&M in Educational Administration. I spent 22 years as a teacher and administrator in College Station I.S.D. I have been the Public Address Announcer for Olsen Field @ Blue Bell Park and Aggie Baseball for 21 years. I also announce Aggie Indoor Track, A&M Graduations, and CSISD sporting events. During my years in College Station, I have been involved in Junior League, Health for All, and the CSISD Education Foundation. Since my retirement from CSISD in July of 2011, I have been very involved in the community. I currently serve as the President of the Pebble Creek Owners Association, as a member of the Campus Improvement Planning Committee of College Station High School, as a member of the Board of Trustees of St. Thomas Early Learning Center, and serve as an Advisor in the Health & Kinesiology Department at Texas A&M. For two years, I have volunteered at my grandson's school, College Hills Elementary. My greatest joy recently, however, has been my opportunity to coach my grandson's College Station Soccer and College Station Little League teams. I believe that I have a unique set of skills that will allow me to be an outstanding Justice of the Peace. My 14 years of experience as a CSISD Assistant Principal and Principal allowed me to be the arbiter of a large number of decisions requiring a common sense approach, thoughtful decision-making process, fair response, and a compassionate, but firm outcome. If elected, I will be committed to the following:

- Enhancing communication and cooperation with schools, law enforcement, and the community
- Developing court sponsored, positive-impact youth programs
- Updating technology to improve efficiency of the court
- Resolving cases in a timely and effective manner
- Working diligently to render consistent and just decisions

Over my 22 years in CSISD, I was able to have a positive effect on thousands of students, parents, and community members. Citizens who think I was an outstanding educator in CSISD will know that I will be an outstanding Justice of the Peace.

2. Have you read and are you familiar with the Texas Republican Party Platform? Reference pages 4-5 of the RPT Platform (Reforming the Judicial system), do you agree or disagree? Explain differences you hold.

I have read the portions of the Texas Republican Party Platform that reference Reforming the Judicial System. I agree with the portion concerning Visiting Judges. Judges who were defeated by the electorate, should not be allowed to serve as visiting judges, or acting judges in any capacity, unless they are reelected through a subsequent election. I also support the principle of judicial restraint. Judges should interpret and apply rather than make law. I oppose judges who assume for themselves legislative powers. I support Congress and the President to use their constitutional powers to restrain activist judges. I have long held a belief that judges in the United States have continually overstepped the boundaries of their powers.

3. How do you plan to handle truancy cases in the J.P. position?

A key factor in handling truancy cases is to handle them in a timely fashion. Another key factor is the support that the JP can give to the schools to help with truancy issues. As JP, I will set up a calendar of filing dates with corresponding court dates with the local schools. It is essential to have students and parents before a judge as soon as possible after being filed upon. Students who stay in school and finish their education have a better opportunity to become productive citizens. There are some students who, for various reasons, aren't truly able to attend a normal classroom setting each and every day. Students are sometimes faced with circumstances in their lives such as having a child or being a major contributor to the home finances. In these cases, alternatives to the regular school day need to be explored. There are numerous non-traditional methods of earning a high school diploma. I will work with the schools to help students complete their education. In some cases, a student may not be attending school due to a parental issue. It is important for a JP to ascertain what obstacles a parent feels are preventing them from sending their child to school and work with them to understand the importance of education. I will also hold court sessions in schools. Conducting court within the school setting imparts to a student and parent the importance of attending school. Students will be called out of class for court and then sent back to class afterwards. I will also propose that school administrators get parental permission to have students who are in danger of being filed on to attend my court sessions. This will give them an opportunity to see what happens and also have a first contact with me, as JP, before truancy charges are filed. I will also use the resources available to me as JP to ensure that students continue to attend school. Some students who are ordered to attend school, may fail to do so at some point in the future. All a school will need to do, at that point, is to contact the JP office. As JP, I will send constable deputies to the student's house to inquire as to why he/she is not attending school. The student will be given a ride

to school that day by the deputy. In essence, I will take a pro-active approach to dealing with truancy cases while also supporting the schools in keeping kids in school.

4. What criteria will you use in determining appropriate bond?

As Justice of the Peace, I will follow the criteria set forth in the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure – Article 17.15 – Rules for Fixing Amount of Bail. Article 17.15 states that the amount of bail to be required in any case is to be regulated by the court, justice, magistrate or officer taking the bail; they are to be governed in the exercise of this discretion by the Constitution and by the following rules:

1. The bail shall be sufficiently high to give reasonable assurance that the undertaking will be complied with.
2. The power to require bail is not to be so used as to make it an instrument of oppression.
3. The nature of the offense and the circumstances under which it was committed are to be considered.
4. The ability to make bail is to be regarded, and proof may be taken upon this point.
5. The future safety of a victim of the alleged offense and the community shall be considered.

I am also aware of a guideline for threshold bails that is used by Justices of the Peace in Brazos County to help with the consistency of bails set. Those guidelines are in place to ensure that Brazos County Justices of the Peace set bails for various misdemeanor and felony crimes that are fair and consistent. As Justice of the Peace, I will follow the criteria set forth in the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure as well as the guidelines agreed upon by the Brazos County Justice of the Peace Courts to ensure that bails are set appropriately.

5. How do your personal principles and family values align with most of the Republican principles outlined in the Republican Party of Texas Platform?

I was raised in a conservative, Christian home. My parents believed in hard work, education, and determining your own destiny. We are a very patriotic family. My father served in the United State Marines during World War II and instilled in his children an honoring for all of those who serve and protect our freedom. After graduation from high school, I felt the call to serve my country and enlisted in the United States Air Force. I served honorably for six years. While a Principal at Cypress Grove Intermediate, we held yearly Veteran's Day celebrations honoring veterans in our community. I also firmly believe in our 2nd Amendment right that Americans have the right to be safe in their homes, on their streets, and in their communities, and have the unalienable right to defend themselves. I have also always been a firm believer in limited government and a free enterprise society unencumbered by government interference or subsidies. Governments do not create jobs; private individuals using their entrepreneurial spirit create jobs. My parents also taught their five children the importance of personal accountability and responsibility. Along with this importance of personal accountability and responsibility came an understanding that education was paramount to

achieving success in the future. At 56 years of age, I can say that I have lived a life that reflects the true nature of traditional Texas conservative principles.