

TOMMY MUNOZ

Candidate for Brazos County Justice of the Peace Precinct 2
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.

Background

I've been married to my wife, Margaret, for 40 years and we have a son and a daughter. I am a 1965 graduate of Stephen F. Austin High School, which is now a middle school. I attended Allen Academy Junior College and the Community College of the Air Force, Montgomery, Alabama. I enlisted in the USAF and served honorably for 21 years. During my service, I was a member of the staff at Southwest Texas State University, AFROTC Detachment 840 in San Marcos, Texas and a member of the staff at Texas A&M University, AFROTC Detachment 805. I have numerous awards and decorations while in the Air Force to include being recognized as Outstanding Administrator – Staff Support for Air University in 1983 and Outstanding Administrator - Headquarters Air Force ROTC in Maxwell AFB, Alabama in 1983 and 1984. I was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters and the Air Force Commendation with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster. My last duty station was at Randolph AFB in San Antonio, Texas, where I was a member of the staff to the Inspector General of Headquarters Air Training Command, Education Division. Upon my retirement from the USAF, my family and I returned to Bryan in 1990 and I began my community involvement. I have served as a Board Member of the Bryan Education Foundation, the Brazos County Legal Aid Referral, Inc., the Dispute Resolution, Blinn College Advisory Board, Bryan High School Viking Club, and a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission for the City of Bryan, and the Charter Review Committee for the City of Bryan. I also devoted many hours working with our youth, as a coach in the Senior Girls' Softball Division with Little League North and as a coach with the Little League West Junior All-Stars. Recently, I was honored to be selected by Congressman Bill Flores to serve on his Service Academy Nomination Review Board. Within the first 15 years of employment with Brazos County, I have held positions as Court Bailiff, Court Interpreter, Court Coordinator and have held the office of JP for Pct 2 Pl 2, for the last 7 years. I have a high energy level and strong work ethic. In 2004, as Court Coordinator for County Court of Law 2, I graduated from the Court Management Program (CMP), Williamsburg, Virginia, and was nationally certified to

be a court coordinator. I was a faculty member for the Texas Center for the Judiciary, where I instructed other court coordinators in the state. I was instrumental in instituting a language line, for Court Interpreters, for the County and District Courts in Brazos County. I am the recipient of the Chief Justice Charles B. Barrow Award, which is the most coveted award in the state for promoting court administration throughout the State of Texas. As Justice of the Peace, I have over 340 hrs of training and was inducted as a “Distinguished Member” of the Texas College of Justice Court Judges.

I am running for this office because I know that I am the most qualified for this position and I want to continue my service to the citizens of Pct 2. My job as Justice of the Peace is not an 8 to 5 job. I’m required to be on call and available at all hours of the day or night, to assist 911, St. Joseph Hospital, Hospice and local Law Enforcement Agencies with inquests, and or arrest warrants and search warrants. I preside over criminal and civil cases and magistrate individuals that are incarcerated in our county jail. I am the only candidate that has experience with Failure to Attend School and Parent Contributing to Non-Attendance cases. I’m also the only candidate that has experience presiding over Administrative Hearings. I’ve always strived to do the best job possible and what was is best for the community, such as implementing the Electronic Monitor Program, at no cost to the citizens. At present, I am a member of a committee that is working with the Brazos Valley Council of Governments, on my recommendation, for the institution of a Regional Medical Examiner’s Facility. I feel that this project would not only be a cost savings but would generate revenue for the county. My 22 years of knowledge and experience, working within the court system, makes me the most qualified for this office.

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 am familiar with the Texas Republican Party Platform and agree that registered voters should be the ones to serve on jury duty and every juror has the right to privacy and security during voir dire examination. I support the right to select judges by direct vote. I believe that every citizen should have the right to full participation in the administrative law process. I am in complete agreement to the judicial restraint, as a Justice of the Peace, I have learned to apply the law rather than make the law.

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

Since taking office in 2007, I have presided over 7,180 school cases filed by the Bryan Independent School District. Of those filed, my office has disposed of 7,697 cases, to include cases that were pending, when I took office. When the Commissioners announced the abolishing of my office, I agreed to and continue to be the only JP to preside over all cases filed in Pct 2 with concern to Failure to Attend School and Parent Contributing to Non-Attendance. I have had a good rapport with the schools and welcomed the opportunity to continue that relationship. I will continue to handle these cases as I have done in the past. I believe that education is important and I stress this to all of the students that come before me. Every case has its own set of issues. In following the rules and regulation in the Education Code, I know that I am making a fair determination of what is in the best interest of the child and the family unit. I believe that everyone should be given a second chance. So rather than sending them to juvenile, jail, or assessing fines, I begin by placing them on probation, giving them time to modify their behavior and attendance. I assign the student tutorials or community service and family counseling for the parents. I have them return to court for a show cause hearing in 4-6 weeks and provide proof to the court, of completion of what I have court ordered them to do. My second year in office, I implemented the use of Electronic Monitors, at no cost to the citizens of Brazos County. The program has been successful and was recognized nationally on CNN Broadcast News. Last summer, I assisted the BISD, in securing a grant, obtaining the funds needed to continue the program. As of the beginning of this school year, I handed the program over to BISD.

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

A crime by itself does not determine the amount of bond. The local JPs, in conjunction with the District Attorney's office, established a threshold bond schedule, to be used as a guideline when setting bonds, but it is ultimately at the discretion of the presiding magistrate to determine the bond amount. Using a common sense approach and the threshold bond schedule; I consider the crime committed, the person's criminal history, whether or not he is a flight risk, and whether he is a danger to himself or the community before setting bonds that I feel are fair and just. The crime committed can also impose additional bond conditions such as, an ignition interlock and a SCRAM ankle bracelet, or in cases involving Family Violence, a GPS Tracker.

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

As a young boy, I remember my parents to be hard working and they always told me to work hard and do the best that I could at everything that I did. But it was my mother, who told me to set goals

and dedicate myself to achieve those goals. She was a devout Catholic and she instilled in me, many of the principals outlined in the Republican Party of Texas Platform. I believe in the sanctity of human life. I believe that education is important and I stress this to all of the students that come before me. I believe in the traditional marriage, as noted by being married to my wife, Margaret, for 40 years. Sadly, my mother did not live to see me take office but I know that she is proud of me. As a retired military person I have a strong belief in honoring all those that have served and continue to serve to protect our freedom. My family has a long history in the military. I'm very proud of my father, who as a WWII combat veteran, is a recipient of the Bronze Star Medal. I have three uncles who also served honorably in the Navy, Army, and Marines. Margaret and I are extremely proud of our daughter, who is a 2003 graduate of the US Military Academy at West Point and is a decorated combat veteran for her service in Korea, Kuwait, and Iraq.