

Dane Dems Endorsement Questionnaire

Thank you for seeking an endorsement from the Dane County Democratic Party. You do not need to answer all of the questions below, but please answer all of the ones you feel are pertinent to your campaign. We will ask more detailed questions and followups during our interview, if we choose to have one, so feel free to answer these questions as briefly or thoroughly as you desire. These answers will be shared in full with our membership before they vote on your endorsement.

Email *

chris@chrisforjustice.com

Candidate name *

Chris Taylor

Position you are running for (include municipality) *

Court of Appeals

Campaign website

chrisforjustice.com

Professional Experience *

I currently serve as a Dane County trial court judge. I was appointed by Gov. Evers in 2020, and elected to this position in 2021. I am a graduate of UW Law school, practiced law for several area law firms for six years, served as the public policy director for Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, and served as a State Representative in the State legislature for 9 years in the legislature.

Political/Service Experience *

I have been volunteering for political campaigns for the last twenty years, starting with Tammy Baldwin's race for Congress. At Planned Parenthood, I revitalized our electoral program and focused on supporting pro-choice, progressive candidates through independent expenditures. I successfully ran for the State Assembly in 2011, in a competitive, six-way primary. I served on various committees, including the powerful Joint Finance Committee, Health, and Labor Committee.

Why are you running for this seat? *

I am running for the Court of Appeals to ensure fairness, impartiality and justice at this important level of judicial review, to which every litigant has a right to appeal. I bring a diverse wealth of legal and professional experience to this position which makes me uniquely qualified, including my former experiences as a practicing attorney, policy director for Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, my service in the state legislature and as a current trial court judge. I also bring a life-time commitment to ensuring equity and justice in the law and government.

What are the three most important issues in your race? *

1. Making sure every litigant has the opportunity for a fair, impartial judicial proceeding, with the consistent application of the law; 2. Making sure constitutional rights are respected and upheld, and 3. Holding other branches of government accountable.

What are the largest environmental concerns you aim to deal with in office?

I have a history of advocating to protect and preserve our precious natural resources. It is possible that case concerning environmental protection could come before me.

How will you use your position to create more equitable opportunities and help those living in poverty?

I am very aware that many individuals end up in the judicial system because of historical and persistence practices of racial discrimination and barriers. I always balance the experiences and needs of individuals before me with my duty to protect the public. One of the best ways of protecting the public is to make sure individuals being charged with crimes receive the support and services they need, which often includes economic supports, mental health and/or addiction treatment, and conflict resolution counseling. I utilized a host of diversion options and probation treatment options to make sure that I am only opting to incarcerate someone as a last resort with the least amount of confinement needed. Probation is always the first option trial courts must consider, and in the majority of cases, this is what I order. Other options I use include recommendations for community contacts and support, expunction for young adults, reduced probation periods to reward cooperation, and diverting individuals to the community service program instead of serving jail time. I believe that this approach helps create a system that treats people fairly, gives people chances with access to resources while continuing to protect public safety.

What will you do to address racial inequality?

Please see answer above. This is a huge issue in the judiciary and I work everyday to not perpetuate a system of racial inequality by utilizing alternative resources available to me so that incarceration is a last resort.

How will you promote restorative justice and address racially biased policing?

I have a history of working to hold law enforcement accountable. I was the lead co-sponsor of the first law in the nation, passed on a bipartisan basis in 2013, to require independent investigations of officer-involved shootings. I worked for years in the legislature to reform standards for when police use deadly force. As a judge, I hold law enforcement accountable every day by making sure they are respecting individual's constitutional rights, and not exceeding the scope of their constitutional authority.

How will you improve the public health of our community in your position?

I have worked my entire life to make sure that women's health and safety are respected and enhanced. I believe that constitutional principles encompass every individual's right to make their own personal, private health care decisions.

What are the largest transportation issues you wish to work on and how will you address them?

I have supported investing in public transit in the past. There could be cases concerning these issues that come before me.

How have you elevated diverse voices in government and public discourse? How would you continue to do so if elected to this office?

Yes, I have routinely sought student interns of diverse backgrounds, to provide opportunities historically denied. I believe that our entire community benefits with a diverse array of individuals at all levels of government and decision-making.

Any other issues/topics you wish to discuss?

It is more important than ever that progressives work to build a judicial bench. At this time, many important decisions will be decided by state courts.

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