

Candidate Name: Barbara Strang

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1) Will you accept Political Action Committee contributions?

Yes, I will accept Political Action Committee's contributions.

2) Please provide your background and why you are running for office.

I have spent over fifteen years in the criminal justice system in various roles. Currently, I work for Wells Fargo as an AML/Sanctions Risk Officer in the Transaction Fraud Risk and Intelligence Group. I also hold a Juris Doctorate degree, and while attending law school I was selected to participate in the National Negotiations Competition held at William and Mary Law School. I am also a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC) and have bachelor's degrees in both Criminal Justice and Political Science.

While attending UNCC, I served as a North Carolina Student Legislature Delegate. In this capacity I drafted and presented two House of Representative bills in Raleigh dealing with child welfare and police safety, two issues very important in our community. I feel that my professional and educational background, as well as my understanding of laws and policies, will be an asset for the citizens of Concord.

As a community leader in Concord for over fifteen years, I have led and been involved in a multitude of community organizations, activities, and initiatives. I am a Guardian ad Litem for Judicial District 19A, the founder and president of the Winecoff Neighborhood Association, a former National Night-Out Chairperson, (an organization that raises community crime prevention awareness), aided in the Implementation of the Project SAFE program, and one of the former chairpersons of the Jimmy Murphey Christmas Program that provided Christmas meals and gifts for those less fortunate in our community, as well as a PTO/PTA for over 7 years at NW Cabarrus Middle and Winecoff Elementary schools. I also served as Assistant Scout Master, Boy Scout Troop 221 for 7 years. All of these groups have led to a better Concord for those who reside and visit here.

I am a strong advocate for our community who believes Concord is a great place to work, live and play in and will work tirelessly to ensure Concord will remain the best place to live and raise our families for generations to come.

3) What are the top three challenges your community is facing? If elected, how would you address those challenges?

- 1) Lack of infrastructure - Concord is continually growing, and I will work to ensure that this growth causes as little impact as possible on the quality of life of our citizens. We need to proactively address our city's infrastructure needs. I would work closely with our school board, county officials, and state officials to ensure all aspects of growth are examined before approving new development. Roads, schools, and waste management resources, as well as expanding our transportation alternatives must be considered.
- 2) Revitalization of lower income, and unused vacant homes and buildings - I plan to explore options that will better our city, including grant opportunities provided by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development to enrich our neighborhoods. I also plan to promote economic development more closely aligned with our small-town community values by supporting existing businesses and by encouraging economic diversity in new businesses.
- 3) Workforce Development - Workforce development is important to ensuring that residents can successfully compete for employment opportunities and that all residents have the opportunity to benefit from economic prosperity. The availability of a workforce with a wide range of skills and education levels can help local businesses grow and attract new businesses. By offering our residents opportunities to learn skills for a wide range of jobs, workforce development efforts might also reduce the need for our residents to commute long distances, therefore generating tax revenue from current and new businesses. I plan to work with our local community colleges, and current businesses to build programs for workforce development in Concord.

4) Give an example of how the city could play an active role in economic development and land use/smart growth, including job creation and work site development.

The City of Concord needs to invest in existing neighborhoods, providing better services and improved access for residents. By directing infrastructure and investment dollars into existing neighborhoods, past investments in infrastructure such as roads, water and sewer systems, and schools are utilized, and the need for costly new infrastructure on the urban fringe is reduced. Reinvesting in our city means improved services for existing residents, the retention of property values for owners of older homes, and stronger communities.

Smart growth promotes mixed-income communities and connects the development of affordable housing to jobs, services, commerce, transportation, and recreation. When housing, particularly affordable housing, is dispersed throughout a region and connected to other land uses, the need for long commutes to work or shopping can be reduced.

The City of Concord needs identifying opportunities for development in our existing neighborhoods and encouraging the reuse and renovation of existing structures as viable affordable housing units can reduce this need and provide economic stimulation to existing communities.

5) What plans or policies should be in place to grow affordable housing at all income levels of income?

Providing quality and affordable housing for people of all income levels is an important part of my smart growth strategy. Housing growth is critical to community growth because it tends to make up the majority of new construction and development. Additional benefits over time will include using infrastructure resources more efficiently, ensuring a more even balance between available jobs and housing, and generating support for neighborhood transit stops, commercial centers, and other services. I would support integrating single and multi-family structures in new housing developments that can support a more diverse population and allow for residents of all income levels to thrive within our neighborhood. I would also support and implement policies that requires the utilization of different forms of housing options within our neighborhoods, such as multi-family dwellings, and mixed land use plans. By doing so this will create opportunities for communities to slowly increase density without radically changing the landscape, and more importantly affordable housing for everyone in our community.