



Meeting Title: TANC Meeting

Meeting Date/Time: October 20, 2022 at College Victory Prep

Attendees

In Person: Emily Djabi, Kelli Mirgeaux, Peggy Frame, Andrew Hayenga, Prosecutor Ryan Mears, Cindi Carrasco, Andrea Hunley, Evan Shearin, Justin Moed, John Schmitz, Mitch Gore, Michael-Paul Hart, Pastor David Bacon, Jen Guadarrama, Edgar Guadarrama, Cheri Mayer, Jonathon Marté, Tom Wade, Ralph Adams, Sabrina Phillip, Steve and Kathy Mandrell, Kira Graham, Tess Hoaglin

Via Zoom: James Wade, Caitlin Morgan, Carlie Turner, Rauf Khalid, John B. Webb

FB Live: As of 10/21/2022 there were 67 Views

Agenda Topic:	Notes:	Action Items (What, who, timeline, etc.):
Welcome	Kelli Mirgeaux introduced the candidates on the panel and Andrew Hayenga shared a little bit about Victory College Prep.	
State House and Senate Panel	<p>The following questions were asked during the panel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEI and Opportunity: The Southeast is an increasingly diverse community. We are of all races and ethnicities, documented and undocumented, speaking multiple languages. We are of all genders and sexual orientations, all ages, and abilities. How will you, as State Senator, support the well-being and equitable opportunity for each of our neighbors? • Infrastructure: Since 2017, Indianapolis has been engaged in a community conversation about how to Rethink the design of its downtown interstates. We need the next generation of our infrastructure to reconnect communities, improve access to opportunity, and spur new economic development—particularly here on the Southside. What are your thoughts on the future redesign of our downtown interstate system, and how would you hold INDOT accountable to work with the community and benefit neighborhoods that lie alongside the highway? 	We were unable to ask all submitted questions, so we provided candidates a chance to answer in writing their questions later. You will see all submitted answers in the attachment below.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing: Historically, efforts have been made at the State level to address increasing property taxes, and they have failed. How will you plan to effectively address issues like these and work to promote and support affordable housing? • Education: It's a known factor that high quality early education is an essential building block to a child's success in school. Yet, across the state families are on long wait lists for coveted spots in early childhood centers. What would you propose to increase and then stabilize a critical supply of seats in high quality childcare centers for our low-income families? • Do you think it is appropriate for religious views/beliefs to impact abortion policy? If yes, how does this not violate neighbors' rights to separation of church and state? <p>You can access the live feed for the conversation here.</p>	
Marion County Prosecutors Panel	<p>The following questions were asked during the panel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are elected, how will you use your position as Prosecutor to impact violent crime in Marion County? • Should the Indiana new abortion law go into effect, how will you pursue prosecution of those who would be considered violators of the law? • What is your stance on the decriminalization of marijuana? • It has been stated that Indianapolis is a safe city. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not? <p>You can access the live feed for the conversation here.</p>	<p>We were unable to ask all submitted questions, so we provided candidates a chance to answer in writing their questions later. You will see all submitted answers in the attachment below.</p>



State and House Rep Panel Written Answers:

Indiana State Senate – District 46

Andrea Hunley (DEM):

Q: Workforce Development: What is your plan to promote training and employment opportunities while removing non-academic barriers for Southeast neighbors?

A: We need to ensure that all members of our community have access to employment opportunities that pay a good wage. There are organizations in our city and state that are piloting programs to remove barriers and we should study their outcomes and work to scale these initiatives. For example, IndyGo is working to train folks who have been previously incarcerated, which can be a barrier to employment in some industries. They are providing new employees with mentors, on the job training and credentialing, and a high starting wage.

Q: Please indicate how you would vote on bills that would 1) ban abortion and 2) restrict contraceptives.

A: I will vote against bills that ban abortion or restrict contraceptives.

Q: What is your stance on the legalization of marijuana in the state of Indiana? Why do you think it should remain illegal/be legalized?

A: Marijuana is legislated at the federal level. It is time for the federal government to revisit marijuana legalization so that all states can be in alignment. Right now, residents in Indiana who are seeking marijuana for medicinal or recreational purposes are forced to purchase from a neighboring state.

Q: The health care industry, both in device production and development and research, has historically been an important part of our economy in central Indiana. What will you do to ensure these industries continue to thrive?

A: Our industries thrive when they work in partnership with the community. We must invest in workforce development and ensure our cities have the amenities that employees are seeking (ie, infrastructure development, free preschool, inclusiveness) so that we can retain and attract talent. At the same time, we must continue to hold the healthcare industry accountable for how our most vulnerable community members are impacted by their decisions (ie, high prescription drug costs).

Q: What will you do to help expand affordable, accessible housing options (not nursing homes) for seniors?

A: Our seniors, especially those on fixed incomes, are seeking independence, safety, and affordability. Our state can allocate additional funds to support the federal Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program that expands the supply of supportive affordable housing.

Q: What will you do to advocate for those with mental disabilities and to ensure that their rights are protected?



A: I will continue to advocate for the vulnerable members of our community. As a teacher and principal, I have worked closely with members of our community with a variety of abilities and needs. Ensuring that we hold service providers accountable is key.

Evan Shearin (REP):

Q: Workforce Development: What is your plan to promote training and employment opportunities while removing non-academic barriers for Southeast neighbors?

A: We must reduce barriers to investment, leverage our natural advantages, and market Indiana as an attractive place to start and grow a business. We must minimize taxes, costs, and government restrictions so that investors see Indiana as an ideal place to invest. We must also invest in infrastructure such as roads, rail lines, and high-speed internet. At the same time, we must maintain a statewide curriculum that emphasizes life and job skills, and continue to support and expand programs such as NextLevel Jobs that helps young adults and career changers to learn new skills, earn new qualifications, and remain competitive in the job market.

Q: Please indicate how you would vote on bills that would 1) ban abortion and 2) restrict contraceptives.

A: I would resist any effort to restrict contraceptives beyond the restrictions and safety regulations that are in place for any pharmaceutical. However, I would continue to support efforts in Indiana to restrict abortion in cases where the fetus is viable, and the mother's life is not in danger. As the son of a single teenage mother, I saw first-hand the challenges that my mother faced, and the sacrifices she made to raise me and later my sister, and I would encourage any young person to think hard about the consequences of their decisions, and to be safe in those decisions. However, I don't think the pro-abortion lobby realizes how hurtful it can be when they tell individuals like me that our mothers would be better off to have killed us, and that the world would be better off without us in it. I was fortunate to be granted an opportunity despite the adverse circumstances of my conception, and I would seek, as a Senator, to protect that opportunity for others.

Q: What is your stance on the legalization of marijuana in the state of Indiana? Why do you think it should remain illegal/be legalized?

A: Ideally, I would like to see marijuana treated similarly to alcohol. As marijuana has become more socially accepted and less stigmatized, it's become apparent that not only has the threat of marijuana been vastly overstated, but that the War on Drugs has been an abysmal failure. I received the endorsement of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws of Indiana (NORML) earlier this year, specifically because of my support of marijuana legalization. As an experienced government operative and consultant, I can tell you that the primary blocker in the State House right now is Senator Mike Young, of Plainfield. He chairs the Senate Corrections and Criminal Law committee, and has blocked every single marijuana legalization bill that has been introduced, even those that have already passed the House. In order to legalize marijuana in Indiana, we will need to bring him around, or find a way to get around him.



Q: The healthcare industry, both in device production and development and research, has historically been an important part of our economy in central Indiana. What will you do to ensure these industries continue to thrive?

A: The healthcare industry, especially medical device development, is a core industry for Indiana, and this is a situation where we must listen to business leaders when they tell us what they need to grow and expand. So far, we've done very well, and the life sciences industry invested hundreds of millions of dollars in 2021 to expand, hire new talent, and develop new products. We must maintain an attractive business climate, continue to listen to industry leaders, and knock down barriers to further investment.

Q: What will you do to help expand affordable, accessible housing options (not nursing homes) for seniors?

A: During the forum, we discussed the out of state hedge funds, such as Blackrock, that are buying up properties and either turning them into rentals or, worse, letting them languish and crumble. These hedge funds and REITS have artificially driven up housing prices and property taxes, making it difficult for Hoosiers to buy homes, or even remain in the homes that they own. I would seek first to limit these hedge fund's abilities to gobble up all the available real estate, and shut out Hoosiers. But I would also like to see limits in place on property tax increases, (along with the cap on total property taxes) guaranteeing that no one is surprised by a massive increase from one year to the next. We also need to ensure that programs such as rental assistance, LIHEAP, and trustee's offices are fully funded, and that Hoosiers are fully informed of their options for seeking help.

Q: What will you do to advocate for those with mental disabilities and to ensure that their rights are protected?

A: Senator Mike Crider has done some great work on this, and he commissioned a report from the Indiana Behavioral Health Commission that came out this year that has bipartisan support across the state. That report outlined many encouraging recommendations for improving mental health services in Indiana. I would like to follow those recommendations exactly as presented, such as creating crisis response teams, implementing 988 call centers (perhaps in conjunction with Indiana 211) to route individuals to available services and aid, and implement stabilization teams to provide people suffering from mental illness with a safe place to find treatment and assistance. I would also like to see the creation and/or expansion of mental health courts, and better resources for courts regarding mental illness, to help ensure the rights of the mentally ill are protected in those courts. Also, I would like see an expansion of medicaid spending to allow more mental health counselors and professionals to be hired at those assistance sites.

Indiana State House 97:

Justin Moed (DEM):

Q: Workforce Development: What is your plan to promote training and employment opportunities while removing non-academic barriers for Southeast neighbors

A: We need to build partnerships with our local skilled trades programs. All our our state union trades have programs where a person can learn a specialized construction trade and receive at a 2 year



associates degree from Ivy Tech. When they graduate they'll have a degree, a trade, and a high paying job with benefits. Let's grow these programs and help residents get access to them.

Q: Please indicate how you would vote on bills that would 1) ban abortion and 2) restrict contraceptives.

A: I voted against Indiana's extreme abortion ban bill and would oppose efforts to make it even more restrictive. I would oppose efforts to restrict contraceptives.

Q: What is your stance on the legalization of marijuana in the state of Indiana? Why do you think it should remain illegal/be legalized?

A: I support the legalization of marijuana.

Q: The health care industry, both in device production and development and research, has historically been an important part of our economy in central Indiana. What will you do to ensure these industries continue to thrive?

A: We need to make sure Indiana and Indianapolis is a place that people want to live and work. The biggest challenges facing these industries is attracting and retaining talent. We need our city and state to be a welcoming place that has a strong quality of life. That means investing in our parks, schools, arts programs and opposing radical and divisive legislation that pushes people to move to other cities and states.

Q: What will you do to help expand affordable, accessible housing options (not nursing homes) for seniors?

A: We need to ensure our seniors aren't being taxed from their homes. The redevelopment and gentrification has come at a high price for our long-time residents in neighborhoods. We need to expand the senior property tax break to ensure all seniors are protected from drastic increases in their tax bills. Furthermore, we need to incentivize the development of more affordable senior housing in our city.

Q: What will you do to advocate for those with mental disabilities and to ensure that their rights are protected?

A: I think it is important to keep an open dialogue and communication with advocacy groups for those with mental disabilities to always strive to improve access and care. I'll continue to fight to make sure they have access to social workers, job training, affordable and safe housing and healthcare.

John Schmitz (REP):

Q: Workforce Development: What is your plan to promote training and employment opportunities while removing non-academic barriers for Southeast neighbors?

A: My plan is to work with unions and employers to recruit people that have not chosen an academic path to invest in themselves to learn skills and fill needed positions. We have a state run workforce development program currently that I would like to see improved through additional communication with community partners. As a business owner and employer, I will use my experience to serve as a liaison between employers, employees, and workforce development officials. I would continue to draw upon relationships that I have built in the community to hold local leaders accountable in how they spend



our infrastructure funding so that we have better roads and efficiently managed public transportation options.

Q: Please indicate how you would vote on bills that would 1) ban abortion and 2) restrict contraceptives.

A: I would vote NO on a bill that would ban abortion, nor would I vote to restrict contraceptives, I will work hard to overhaul the Department of Child Services, expand options for adoption and foster care, support increases to child tax credits, and thoughtfully work on health measures which would reduce Indiana's unacceptable infant mortality rate.

Q: What is your stance on the legalization of marijuana in the state of Indiana? Why do you think it should remain illegal/be legalized?

A: I believe in freedom to choose if you wish to use marijuana. I would vote in favor of decriminalization and legalization. I believe that legalization of hemp and marijuana products could represent a massive opportunity for Indiana's agricultural economy.

I would advocate with our federal elected officials to legalize marijuana on the federal level and allow us to decide how we want to handle this issue at state and local levels. The federal classification of marijuana as a schedule I substance is arbitrary and was historically implemented to target minorities.

Q: The healthcare industry, both in device production and development and research, has historically been an important part of our economy in central Indiana. What will you do to ensure these industries continue to thrive?

A: Any business welcomes lower taxes and good infrastructure. My experience in construction and system efficiency allows me to address both of these factors in how I would craft or evaluate policies in the legislature. Living and serving in Mars Hill has also taught me that we have more work to do to improve quality of life. I would work to address quality of life issues in our community by helping neighborhood groups and nonprofits navigate our state and local government to achieve their goals.

While a college education is not a magic bullet, we must do more to help Hoosier students and families weigh their options between professional careers or technical careers. Since our healthcare industry heavily relies on Professionals such as Doctors, Nurses, Chemical Engineers, Technicians, and others who may often rely on student loans to finance education, we must ensure that our state does not punish student loan forgiveness. I would support legislation that would explicitly exempt student loan forgiveness, including public service loan forgiveness, from state Income taxes.

Q: What will you do to help expand affordable, accessible housing options (not nursing homes) for seniors?

A: I would work to increase the deduction on property taxes for those over 65. Additionally, I will work to reform property assessment procedures from the state level so that our Seniors and other neighbors are not forced out by reassessment and gentrification.



I will continue to work with city leaders to reform our permitting procedures. Currently, the bloated bureaucracy of the City Permitting Department needlessly delays projects and increases the cost of improving or rehabbing properties. If we can increase the supply of rehabbed properties, we can provide real affordable housing.

Q: What will you do to advocate for those with mental disabilities and to ensure that their rights are protected?

A: We must have more options for our friends struggling with mental conditions. As a grandparent, I will advocate for legislation that proactively addresses adolescent or pediatric mental health so that mental conditions are identified and treated prior to being presented as problems within our penal system. We must do more to make treatment accessible by implementing incentives for people to go into mental health careers or to invite providers from other states.

Our Indiana state Constitution clearly states that our penal code shall be based on reformation and not on revenge. We must ensure that our jails and prisons are not simply holding places for people with mental challenges by ensuring that every individual receives opportunities for help, treatment, and human decency. I will fight for policies that reduce recidivism and ensure that former prisoners can access employment and return to leading productive lives.

Edgar Amaro Villegas (LIB):

Did not attend nor answer written questions.

Indiana State House 89:

Mitch Gore (DEM):

Did not send written answers to questions.

Michael-Paul Hart (REP):

Did not send written answers to questions.

Marion County Prosecutor Written Answers:

Ryan Mears (DEM):

Q: If you are elected, how will you use your position as Prosecutor to impact violent crime in Marion County?

A: Addressing violent crime has been my number one priority since I became Prosecutor in 2019. Under my leadership, the prosecutor's office has never had a higher conviction rate on violent crime cases, including homicides. Despite this, we continue to see violent crime affecting those in our community. What does that tell us? We are not going to prosecute or arrest our way out of this problem.



That is why I remain committed to implementing creative initiatives aimed to address the root causes that contribute to violence. Since 2019, we have served thousands of residents through our Second Chance Workshops and Good Faith Initiative— assisting residents with driver’s license restoration and expungement services. As a result, more of our neighbors are placed in a position for better housing and employment opportunities— two root causes that contribute to crime.

A trend that we are seeing is more and more young people with access to firearms and mechanisms such as Glock switches that can make a semi automatic pistol essentially a fully automatic machine gun. Under my leadership, we have taken an aggressive approach to these cases by filing an enhanced felony charge for those found with switches on our streets.

Additionally, we acknowledge that if we are seeing younger people with guns, then we must invest in our youth at a younger age in order to prevent and deter them from making bad decisions. To address this we established a juvenile second chance program for youth whose first interaction with the criminal justice system is a nonviolent offense. We continue to host our annual basketball clinics because we believe the first time you meet someone from the prosecutor’s office should be on the court not in the courtroom and we partner with grassroot organizations that serve our young people such as VOICES CORP, Stop the Violence Indianapolis, and Boys & Girls Club.

As your elected Prosecutor, I remain committed to a balanced approach to criminal justice and creating a more fair system for all.

Q: Talk to us about your stance on the bail system and any changes you would like to see to the current system.

A: There is a lot of misinformation and confusion when it comes to bail in Marion County. In Indianapolis, the bail schedule (set bond amounts) is determined by the Marion County Superior Court Judges. This schedule has not been updated since 2017. I believe it should be revisited and updated to reflect the challenges we see in 2022.

It is my belief that we should not have people accused of low-level nonviolent offenses in our jail because of their inability to pay. However, those accused of violent crimes and are a threat to public safety should be held for trial. As prosecutors we can and often do ask the court to increase or reconsider bond but I believe prosecutors could benefit from having more tools when it comes to addressing these complex issues.

Q: What will you do to advocate for those with mental disabilities and to ensure that their rights are protected?

A: Addressing issues such as mental health, disabilities or substance use through the criminal justice system is complex and it is my belief that the justice system has fallen short and is often not equipped to properly address them. That is why I implemented the office’s first Quality of Life Unit— a group of prosecutors devoted to addressing these issues through unique partnerships with organizations that can help change an individual’s behavior and adequately address a person’s needs so that they do not continue to find themselves involved in the criminal justice system.



In 2021, we partnered with the Marion County Public Health Department and the Public Defender Agency to create Stronger With Support, a diversion program in which individuals suffering from substance use issues, their families, and roommates can receive an extensive list of wrap-around services. Additionally, we continue to prioritize our mental health and problem-solving courts and see great success through those programs.

Adequately addressing these issues through the justice system is nuanced and complex, it takes a great deal of experience and understanding that success in these areas is not measured in a verdict of guilty or not guilty. I pledge to continue to seek unique solutions through partnerships to ensure the rights of those with mental disabilities.

Cyndi Carrasco (REP):

Did not send written answers to questions.