



Stonewall Democrats of San Antonio

2013 SAN ANTONIO CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions:

Deadline for receipt: Friday, March 15, 2013.

Please mail, fax or email to: Stonewall Democrats of San Antonio, P.O. Box 12814, San Antonio, TX 78212

FAX to 210-695-1635 (Attn: Jamie Lewis); E-mail to endorsementcmte@stonewallsanantonio.org

For questions contact, Daniel Graney at 210-334-7850, E-mail

endorsementcmte@stonewallsanantonio.org

An electronic version of this questionnaire in *Word* format is available upon request.

Candidate's Name: Arthur M. Thomas IV

Mailing Address: 3731 Mill Meadow Dr, San Antonio Texas 78247

Phone: 210-568-7950 **E-mail:** arthur@amtiv.com

Position sought: **Mayor** **City Council District** 10

Campaign Contact Person: Candidate

Contact Person's Phone: _____ **E-mail:** _____

(Under its Standing Rules for Endorsement, *Stonewall Democrats of San Antonio* may endorse any candidate who has filed in a non-partisan election, irrespective of political party affiliation)

To be eligible for the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats of San Antonio, the candidate should return this questionnaire by Friday, March 15, 2013, **and** attend our Candidate Forum on Sunday, March 17, 2013, 1:30 PM in the Fiesta Room of Luby's Cafeteria, 911 N. Main

Will the candidate personally attend? Yes No

If candidate cannot attend, will a representative attend? Yes No

Name of representative, if known: _____ Phone: _____

SECTION A: SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS

Please circle your response to each of the following questions. You may make extended comments concerning these questions in SECTION B. (For the purposes of this questionnaire, the abbreviation "LGBT" includes lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people).

1 Are you seeking the endorsement of Stonewall Democrats of San Antonio? YES NO

2 Do you support full & equal civil rights for LGBT persons? YES NO

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- 3 San Antonio is the only major city in Texas that does not provide non-discrimination protections for LGBT persons in its Municipal Code. If elected, will you vote to amend the City of San Antonio's nondiscrimination ordinances to include real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression in the following areas:
- | | | |
|---|------------|-----------|
| | <u>YES</u> | NO |
| a. City Employees? | <u>YES</u> | NO |
| b. Public Accommodations? | YES | NO |
| c. Housing? | YES | <u>NO</u> |
| d. City Contractors? | <u>YES</u> | NO |
| e. Appointments to Boards and Commissions | | |
- 4 If elected, will you vote to adopt a citywide employment nondiscrimination ordinance that prohibits all employers doing business in the City of San Antonio from discriminating on the basis of real or perceived race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital or family status, religion, disability and veteran's status? YES NO
- 5 In 2011, the San Antonio City Council adopted a budget that includes granting domestic partner benefits to unmarried city employees in same and opposite gender relationships and their legal dependents. Do you support this action by the City Council? YES NO
- 6 An equal benefits ordinance requires contractors that have contracts with a state or local government to offer equal benefits to its employees. To comply with such an ordinance, a contractor that offers health insurance and other benefits to employees' spouses must offer equivalent coverage to employees' domestic partners. The ordinance does not require city contractors to begin offering benefits not previously offered to its employees. If elected, will you vote for an equal benefits ordinance that requires city contractors to offer equal benefits to all their employees, including those with same and opposite gender domestic partners? YES NO
- 7 Many cities throughout the U.S. provide a domestic partner registry so that same and opposite gender unmarried couples who so choose can register their relationships and have them officially recognized. If elected, will you vote to establish a domestic partner registry in the City of San Antonio? YES NO

- 8 The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (“FMLA”) grants an eligible employee up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a calendar year to care for an ill spouse, child or parent. In 2010, the Obama administration clarified the FMLA's definition of “son or daughter” to include the child of an employee's same-gender domestic partner, but not the domestic partner. A number of states, cities (including Austin, TX) and private employers have extended family and medical leave to include employees' same-gender partners and their families. The City of San Antonio's family and medical leave policy currently does not explicitly include employees' domestic partners. Do you support the City of San Antonio providing equivalent family and medical leave for an employee to care for her or his domestic partner? YES NO
- 9 Many cities in Texas and across the country have established a Human Rights Commission or similar entity to (1) advise the city on human rights issues; (2) educate both public and private sectors on methods to prevent and eliminate discrimination citywide; and (3) adjudicate claims of discrimination brought before it. San Antonio has no such entity. If elected, will you vote to establish a Human Rights Commission or similar entity in the City of San Antonio? YES NO
- 10 Do you support strong enforcement of state and federal laws by the San Antonio Police Department to protect LGBT persons and other victims of hate crimes? YES NO
- 11 LGBT sensitivity training is presently conducted for police cadets at the San Antonio Police Academy. Do you support expanding such training to all city employees? YES NO
- 12 Do you support a line item in the city budget to fund HIV/AIDS medical treatment, prevention and/or supportive services? YES NO
- 13 **(Candidates for mayor only)** If elected mayor, will you appoint a liaison to the LGBT community or create an Office of LGBT Affairs? YES NO
- 14 If elected, will you:
- Have nondiscrimination policies and practices in your office that include LGBT persons? YES NO
 - Be open to hiring a qualified, openly LGBT person on your staff? YES NO
- 15 If elected, will you attend events in the LGBT community such as Pride activities? YES NO
- 16 If invited, will you be a speaker at an LGBT event such as a Stonewall Democrats meeting? YES NO
- 17 If endorsed by Stonewall Democrats of San Antonio, will you list the endorsement in your campaign literature, ads and/or campaign website? YES NO

SECTION B: COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

Please indicate the number of each question in Section A on which you comment. **Feel free to extend your remarks on additional pages.**

1. I seek the endorsement of any that will consider it. I only hope that it will be considered with fair and honest discussion. Some of my answers, given the yes/no, format may seem odd but I do believe in fair and equal treatment of all people by government and the pursuit of tolerance and respect in society.

2. I support civil rights as the equal treatment of all people by government blind to race, creed, or sexual orientation. I support upholding freedom of people to choose how they build their own lives without threat of force from others.

3. I found this hard to answer because I am not sure what 'nondiscrimination protections' are intended here. A government shouldn't need special rules for any particular group of people. It should simply not discriminate based on irrelevant information to the purpose. A government, at any level, should view people as equal without reservation.

c. Is government housing meant here? If so, then I answer yes. Any service provided by government should not discriminate on non-relevant attributes.

d. I answered no here because delving into attributes of every contractor or vendor used can become a costly and time consuming process. It has more potential to corrupt than provide positive benefits. It is more of an affirmative action type measure in which vendors are judged based on attributes other than quality or cost of work. It is up to vendors in how their business is run but I want to avoid policies that get into describing the makeup of companies. Of course I have no issue with city managers denying work to companies with outright discriminatory practices. I do not want the city associated with vendors that encourage hatred and ignorance.

4. I interpreted this question as going into the private market. I am in complete agreement that government should have no discriminatory practices whatsoever. In a free society people have the freedom to make choices that we do not agree with. This means private business as well. Creating laws dictating how people conduct their private affairs does not create a just society or make people more moral. This is government intrusion into personal choice. This is just as harmful to freedom and is the flip side on this issue of dictating moral code that is discriminatory. Equality in society is not created through law. At best government hides discriminatory practices 'under the rug' and pushes them out of the light. Discrimination and ignorance must be fought in full view with people wanting to make a difference, and not by laws that only make people feel like they have done something good for all. Laws do not end discrimination. Good people do.

5. I see this as a fair and equal treatment by government measure. Government should not dictate how benefits are dispersed to its employees in a discriminatory manner. It should offer benefits and the employee should make that decision for themselves and their family.

6. This gets into affirmative action issues similar to question 3d. Judging companies by attributes not directly related to the work they do can lead to a costly and time consumer drain on government efficiency. If the company is not overtly discriminatory in promoting bigotry or hatred then I do not think the city should delve into such issues.

7. Fundamentally I think it is none of government business who is a couple. I also am very wary of any government desire keep lists of people at all. These types of things can be used for malicious purposes more easily than 'good'. I know the intended purpose is for recognition and a step towards marriage equality, but I cannot help and look at history and see this as being used as a list of 'people to round up' as well. Government should strive to treat all people as equal and keep it as simple as that. Seeking recognition of difference by government strikes against the very idea of freedom.

On a practical level I just don't think another level of bureaucracy that would be twisted into malicious government abuse should be established. Getting government out of telling us who we are should be everyone's' goal.

It is not the business of government to make men virtuous or religious, or to preserve the fool from the consequences of his own folly. Government should be repressive no further than is necessary to secure liberty by protecting the equal rights of each from aggression on the part of others, and the moment governmental prohibitions extend beyond this line they are in danger of defeating the very ends they are intended to serve. – Henry George

8. My decision here is not based on the FML Act. I believe employees should decide who their immediate family is and use that time how they see fit. Dictating rules and conditions on what constitutes a family gets into discrimination that the government should not be part of.

9. Government is not the champion of civil rights. Empathetic and compassionate citizens are the champions here. I would never endorse a government agency to assume this authority above the people. A city with discriminatory practices isn't going to add another agency to get rid of that discrimination effectively. It is like hiring a racist to end racism. It doesn't make sense. Civil rights issues should always be fought by citizens with their voices and their votes. Even with the best intentions this would become an agency that slows down complaints and shuffles them into bureaucratic red tape.

In the end it is up to citizens as responsible voters to simply support and elect candidates that are not discriminatory. That policy will ripple through government.

10. This one is very difficult to answer. Obviously people should be protected equally under the law. Justice should be blind or it is not just. I believe creating special classes of citizens works against this purpose. The idea of a hate crime protection may make us feel emotionally good but it is saying crimes committed for some reason are worse than others. If someone is beaten or killed the criminal should pay for their crime no matter the reason. It is not more just that a man was killed for his wallet than because he was homosexual. It is no more justified to beat a man to steal his belongings than because he was a minority. The idea that special groups of people exist and get extra protections is not justice. This notion convolutes motive and intent and supposes that understanding of intent can bring 'more' justice. We need a fair system that treats people equally. Creating a system that says people are more worthy of justice than another works against the very purpose this idea is supposed to serve.

11. I am actually ignorant of the specific training police get right now. It is something I would have to learn more about. My initial reaction that is seems odd to me that anyone would need to learn treat people differently. Is homosexuality a physical condition like being handicapped such that special procedures are needed? Are homosexuals not persons just as heterosexuals are? Why would special policy need to be created for any group by a government that is supposed to see

people as equals? I am willing to listen to arguments here, but by default I see no purpose in treating people different as policy.

I will say police or civil servants should not act in a bigoted manner. If they do so I wouldn't question whether they needed training but why they are still employed.

12. I want to emphasize that this is a very worthy cause. We could all list hundreds of worthy causes that we could petition for government to do, but my answer is out of respect for charity and people having the freedom to use their lives and resources as they see fit. I see this as purely the domain of private charity and free citizens. Government is often the worst at charity by either mismanagement or turning it into a political process instead of a compassionate one.

If government is no more than a battleground for use to take from each other and spend on things we deem worthy then it will never end and we all lose. Let us end the battle and take responsibility for the things we care about. Government is not compassion.

14. I have absolutely no problem hiring a LBGT employee if I am elected. It is irrelevant to me. My only concern should be hiring an employee that could do the job effectively and treats citizens with respect.

15. Yes, and I have done so in the past as part of the Libertarian Party of Bexar County.

16. I do not see myself as a 'speaker' really but I would not decline the invitation. I would gladly come to a meeting or participate in a debate if it were held and my schedule permits. I think open communicating and dialog are important to civil discourse and solving issues.

17. I would do this but I have no plans current to have an 'endorsements' page. If I do get enough endorsements to be worthy of its own page, I would have no issue listing this one.

SECTION C: OTHER COMMENTS

In addition to matters of particular concern to the LGBT community, what other issues do you think are important to the city of San Antonio and your district, in particular? Is there anything you would like to tell us about yourself that might influence the Stonewall Democrats of San Antonio in their endorsement decisions? **Feel free to extend your remarks on additional pages.**

My purpose for running is to minimize government interference in our lives. People have to power and the desire to solve problems much more effectively than political fighting does. Government is not a tool to build a better person, community, or world. That is up to us as free individuals. If we as a society cannot tend to our problems when how will that same society build a government that can do better?

One of my main goals will be to build a "City Builder" website so that citizens can actively pursue interests and developments in the city that they want to support. It will be completely voluntary and citizen driven projects. It could be as simple as a new sidewalk, fire equipment, substation police training, or even an HIV awareness and training program. Citizens should not have to rely on council district fighting one another to fund what they care about. A good city should provide the basics and allow citizens to build the city they want to through their efforts. This will put

communities in touch with one another and bring people together to accomplish common goals. Any volunteer money put into this system would be controlled by donors and protected from abuse by city employees.

I believe in the power of people to do great things and not government. I am running to help end the old style top down approach that mimics a feudal system and help the citizens take charge of their city.

Signature of Candidate

Date