

1. If elected Magisterial District Judge, prior to setting any condition of bail, will you conduct a careful, individualized hearing and look at all of the factors listed in the Rules of Criminal Procedure (523), which include a person's employment status and community ties?

Yes. A principle that will guide my efforts as district magistrate is to follow the law impartially. The referenced rule requires an individualized hearing to create conditions for bail that would ensure a criminal defendants' continued appearances before the court. I would therefore consider every factor listed in Rule 523, as well as "any other factors relevant to whether the defendant will appear as required."

2. If elected Magisterial District Judge, will you set bail based on a person's charge alone?

No. Please see my answer to question number 1 concerning the many factors I would consider in setting bail per the Pennsylvania Rules of Criminal Procedure.

3. If elected to the position of Magisterial District Judge, will you assign cash bail in an amount that a person can afford, as required in the Rules of Criminal Procedure (528 (A) & (B))?

Yes. In the event that cash bail is called for, the referenced Criminal Rule of Procedure states that any monetary bail "shall be "reasonable," and based on a non-exhaustive list of criteria, including "the financial ability of the defendant." I would thus follow this rule and consider the affordability of cash bail.

4. If elected to the position of Magisterial District Judge, will you use cash bail as a way to keep a person incarcerated until trial pursuant to Rules of Criminal Procedure (524)?

No. Pennsylvania Rule of Civil Procedure 524 states the only purpose of any kind of bail, including cash bail: "[T]o ensure that the defendant will appear at all subsequent proceedings and comply with the conditions of the bail bond." For this reason, it would be inappropriate under the Rule to set bail with the purpose of incarcerating a defendant until trial.

5. If elected to the position of Magisterial District Judge, will you make pretrial liberty the norm and pretrial detention the exception? For example, not arbitrarily denying bail?

Denying bail arbitrarily would clearly violate Rule 523, which requires a magisterial district judge to "consider all available information" relevant to whether a defendant will appear a future hearings and comply with bail conditions. Following the Rules, I would not deny bail arbitrarily.

6. Do you believe racial discrimination in Pennsylvania's criminal legal system is an issue?

Yes.

7. If elected to the position of Magisterial District Judge, will you work towards making sure you aren't deciding cases in a way that is discriminatory towards black and brown communities?

Yes. The fair and impartial application of the law requires diligence from members of the legal community to ensure that no individuals – including members of black and brown communities – are being discriminated to any degree through court decisions. In fact, the Rules Governing the Standards of Conduct of Magisterial District Judges require this, stating that “duties of the judicial office, including administrative duties, [must be performed] without bias or prejudice.” I will hold myself to the standard of this Rule.

8. If elected Magisterial District Judge, will you comply with the requirements in the relevant statutes (42 Pa.C.S. § 9726(c) and (d)) for setting discretionary fines, and will you consider a defendant's financial resources when imposing such fines?

Yes. The laws mentioned expressly require a judge to consider a defendant's financial resources when setting fines. As a district magistrate, I will follow this Rule to the best of my ability.

9. If elected Magisterial District Judge, in cases in which you cannot immediately hold a payment determination hearing pursuant to the Rules of Criminal Procedure (456) (, will you schedule a new hearing and determine if a defendant can be released on their recognizance without requiring collateral?

I believe that making the promise considered by the question – to never require collateral under Rule 456 of the Criminal Rules of Procedure when there is reason to believe that the defendant (1) will not show up to the next hearing, and (2) can pay for the collateral – is not a promise a candidate for Magisterial District Judge may make. The Rules Governing the Standards of Conduct of Magisterial District Judges prohibit “pledges, promises, or commitments ... inconsistent with the impartial performance” of court decisions. Criminal Rule of Procedure 456 contemplates collateral in the limited situation where the magisterial district judge “determined that less restrictive conditions of release will not be effective in ensuring the defendant’s appearance.” I would apply this Rule impartially, and on a case-by-case basis.

10. If elected Magisterial District Judge, will you and your staff comply with the Rules of Criminal Procedure (456) and statute (42 Pa.C.S. § 9730)) by setting affordable payment plans for defendants?

Yes. The authorities cited in the question expressly discuss making payment plans or otherwise altering an order requiring payment of restitution, fines and costs, when it is determined that a defendant lacks the finances to pay those amounts.

11. If elected to the position of Magisterial District Judge, will you schedule payment determination hearings for defendants who have fallen behind on payment pursuant to the Rules of Criminal Procedure (456), rather than immediately issuing a discretionary warrant for arrest?

Rule 456(B) gives the defendant several chances to either pay the amount owed or alert the court why he or she is unable to make the payment. The Court is to give 10 days of notice to allow the defendant to either pay the amount owed or alert the court why he or she is unable to make the payment. After those 10 days, a magisterial district judge may issue an arrest warrant. In general, I believe that it would be preferable to schedule a hearing prior to issuing an arrest warrant. That stated, there may arise occasion where the impartial and fair application of the law requires the issuance of an arrest warrant. Despite my own feelings about a particular law, I will always strive to apply and uphold the law in an impartial manner as required by the Rules Governing the Standards of Conduct of Magisterial District Judges.

12. If elected to the position of Magisterial District Judge, with regards to cases involving youth (truancy cases and summary citations), will you consider the potential financial burden before setting fines for students?

Yes. In addition to having extensive legal experience, I serve as a high school teacher in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. I am very aware of the impact financial difficulties can have on a student's education. I naturally am concerned with the overall development of our young residents. Any fines directed to students or their guardians must be for the ultimate benefit of our young people, and not to unreasonably burden them before their adult lives begin.

13. If elected to the position of Magisterial District Judge, with regards to cases involving youth (truancy cases and summary citations), will you permit both fines and costs to be waived if the student returns to school, as allowed by statute (24 P.S. § 13-1333.3(b))?

In my experience as a public school teacher, chronic absenteeism is single greatest predictor of poor academic outcomes. The primary goal in dealing with truancy must be to get students into classrooms. That stated, I will always strive to follow the law, including if a case presents circumstances in which maintaining fines and costs is appropriate following a truant student's return to school. I will also reach out to our schools in an attempt to support our administrators and teachers with students experiencing difficulties even before legal problems arise.

14. Do you think incarceration is a form of treatment for individuals with substance use disorder?

No. In the criminal legal system, incarceration serves different purposes than drug and alcohol treatment.

15. Do you believe substance use disorder is a mental health disorder (as it is recognized by the American Psychiatric Association in the DSM-V) and must be taken into consideration when handling criminal cases?

While I believe that both mental health and addiction must be considered when handling criminal cases, I am not qualified to answer this question as it is asked, as I am not a trained expert in

psychiatry. The presence and availability of “diversion” programs in which certain defendants are directed to treatment-based outcomes instead of criminal proceedings demonstrate that mental health and addiction are important considerations within criminal procedure.

16. If elected to the position of Magistrate District Judge, will you evict those who can not afford to pay as communities are impacted by the residual effects of the COVID pandemic?

As a district magistrate, my primary focus will be to apply the law fairly and impartially. As it currently stands, there is a federal moratorium that prohibits evictions. I will follow that law. If that prohibition is removed, I will apply the law governing landlord tenant cases fairly and sign eviction orders when the law requires it.

17. If elected to the position of Magisterial District Judge, will you develop and seek out alternatives to incarceration in collaboration with the community you are serving?

Yes. I will seek out as many opportunities as we can locate within our neighborhoods to provide defendants the opportunity to avoid incarceration, when appropriate, by serving our communities.

18. If elected to the position of Magisterial District Judge, will you be open to hearing feedback and working with community leaders in the community you plan to serve?

Yes. I will be open to feedback from anyone who wishes to provide it. That stated, the Rules Governing the Standards of Conduct of Magisterial District Judges require magistrates to "comply with the law" and to promote "public confidence in the independence, integrity, and impartiality" of the office. Accordingly, while I will always attempt to learn from the community, my allegiance will be to the fair application of the law, whether or not that law is popular.