



NARAL Pro-Choice Texas

Houston Candidate Questionnaire On Reproductive Rights



Dr. Marvin McNeese Jr.

Candidate for City Council At-Large Position 5

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Legality of Abortion

I believe abortion is part of comprehensive reproductive health care and support the right to choose abortion as fundamental to each person's autonomy.

Disagree

I support the enshrinement of the fundamental right to abortion in law and oppose legislation that makes abortion and other reproductive health services harder to access.

Disagree

Policies That Affect Access to Abortion

Insurance coverage for abortion services, including government-provided health insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, etc.

Support

Comments: Support in cases of rape, incest or to save the life of the mother (see below).

I empathize with womens' struggle for reproductive rights. There was a time in this country where when did not control their own fertility. Women's fertility was largely cont

Laws that prevent local governments and jurisdictions from providing funding for abortion services to indigent residents

Oppose



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State law that requires doctors to provide information unsupported by medical and scientific evidence, such as the claim included in the “Women’s Right to Know” Act that asserts that abortion increases the risk of breast cancer

Support I dispute the claim in this question that such information is "unsupported by medical and scientific evidence."

State law that that imposes a medically unnecessary 24-hour waiting period on abortion patients, necessitating at least two separate visits to the same provider

Oppose

Comments: Would oppose it if abortion were only allowed in cases of rape, incest or to save the life of the mother.

Policies that require pregnant minors to obtain parental consent or seek a judicial bypass in order to receive an abortion

Support

Comments: If parental rights have not been severed, or are not under review by CPS, then yes the parents should be notified.

Policies, including local clinic safety ordinances, that protect patients, doctors, and other health care professionals at reproductive health clinics from violence, harassment, threats, and intimidation

Support

Comments: Government, especially local governments, should protect everyone always from physical and material threat and harm.

Proposals ensuring that “crisis pregnancy centers” (CPCs, fake women’s health clinics, of which there are more than 10 in Houston) do not mislead or intimidate people facing unintended pregnancy by misrepresenting themselves as sources of unbiased health information, and local ordinances that limit false advertising and other deceptive practices of CPCs

Oppose

Comments: I'm against misrepresentation, false advertising and deceptive practices by whatever provider. I am skeptical of whether the CPCs in Houston are guilty of such, necessitating regulatory intervention.



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Non-coercive, comprehensive access to the full range of reproductive health care, including abortion, for incarcerated people

Oppose

Comments: I favor granting them enough reproductive technology such that they don't get pregnant if they don't want to. Abortion should be off the table except in cases of rape, incest and saving the life of the mother.

Local funding for organizations that provide logistical assistance, doula services, and other wrap-around support for people seeking abortion care

Oppose

Policies That Support Access to Comprehensive Reproductive Health Care and Support Healthy Communities

State law that prevents local government from partnering with abortion providers or their affiliates (such as, but not only, Planned Parenthood) for services like sexual health education, family planning initiatives and STI prevention

Support

Proposals that allow certain individuals or corporations (such as HMOs, pharmacists, and health insurance companies) to refuse to provide specific reproductive health services, information, or referrals, including under claim of "religious liberty"

Support

Emergency contraception (EC) should be accessible to all people – including ER patients and people who seek services because of rape or sexual assault. (EC is an FDA-approved contraceptive, taken after sex, which greatly reduces the likelihood of pregnancy. EC is not abortion and cannot harm a pregnancy if one is already established.)

Disagree

Comments: EC doesn't prevent fertilization; other reproductive technology is better.

All Houston workers should have a living wage of at least \$15 per hour.

Disagree



Comments: Those with the least skills, experience, etc. need an easier on-ramp to the economy.

All employers, including the City of Houston, should provide paid family and medical leave so that people aren't forced to make a choice between earning an income and caring for themselves and their families.

Agree

Pregnant individuals should be able to work, be protected from discrimination, and be provided with any reasonable accommodations they need.

Agree

The City of Houston should protect its employees, public housing residents, and HHA voucher recipients from discrimination based on gender identity and reproductive decisions.

Disagree

The City of Houston has a role to play in helping school districts provide age-appropriate and medically accurate sexual health education that is not limited to teaching only abstinence.

Disagree

Comments: Even if parents are negligent, government should be kept out of the sex education business; there is too much debate and disagreement here to find "one curriculum" that would satisfy everyone. Leave that to the nonprofit and private sector, where individ

Undocumented people should be able to access reproductive health care without fear of being reported or shamed. The City of Houston should implement programs to help undocumented residents feel safe when seeking these services, such as municipal identification and cultural competency and "Know Your Rights" trainings for healthcare providers and clinic staff.

Disagree

Comments: The undocumented are only "reported" when arrested for a crime. Otherwise there's no cause for fear from seeking help from City resources. Yet, I would leave it to the philanthropic and charitable sectors, rather than the City, to provide reproductive



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Municipal courts should abolish cash bail such that people do not face pre-trial incarceration — and, therefore, the risk of losing their homes, jobs, and ability to care for their families — for being too poor to post bond.

Disagree

Comments: Abolish? No. Restructure, yes.

Getting to Know the Candidate and How They View Reproductive Freedom

Please describe your stance on access to reproductive health care, including family planning, contraception, and access to abortion.

I empathize with womens' struggle for reproductive rights. There was a time in this country where when did not control their own fertility. Women's fertility was largely controlled by the men in their lives. Our popular culture didn't even have a word for rape or sexual harassment until the '80s. Even in marriages, the husband would dictate when the pair had sex (as one husband asked his pastor, "If I'm the head of the house according to the Bible, what does her consent matter?" He missed the Bible's instruction that husbands sacrifice themselves for their wives like Jesus did for us.). Yet, the husband would blame the wife for "getting pregnant." Abortion is always wrong, as it involves an unjustified killing of another person, but I understand that in those years, it was the only technology available by which a woman could control her fertility.

That is no longer the case. Technology has given women almost perfect control over when and how they get pregnant. No woman has to get pregnant, and in those cases where rape or incest result in pregnancy, I favor permitting abortions, but favor more encouraging the woman to take that baby to term and even to allow another family to adopt it, automatically severing paternal rights to the child to speed that along. I would allow abortion to save the life of the mother. So, I favor building a policy framework, supported by charitable efforts, aimed at saving the lives of the unborn to the maximum extent possible.

Where does it fall on your list of priorities?

It is not a top priority for the City of Houston. I could imagine going an entire four year term without once dealing with a City sponsored initiative on reproductive health, except maybe to convene a symposium where it is discussed.



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Do you see a connection between reproductive rights and other issues, such as racial, economic, and migrant justice?

Yes, I believe current abortion practices are part of the factors keeping African Americans as a community from doing better materially in this country.

How will that impact your service if elected to office? Do you intend to proactively seek out opportunities to champion action for reproductive rights, including by drafting and sponsoring creative items to increase gender equity and access to reproductive health for all Houston residents?

No.

How do you feel about preemption of local government on progressive issues? Specifically, are you willing to champion, support, and vote for legislation that may ultimately be preempted if you feel it's the right thing to do, including on issues of abortion access? Will you, subsequent to passage of progressive legislation, work to stop potential preemption, including actively opposing state legislative overreach and providing resources to defend city laws in court?

No. Subtract "progressive issues" and my answer would be "yes" especially for those policy areas that vary by municipality.

Tell us about a time when you stood up for reproductive rights and gender equity. Have you ever been publicly outspoken about your values in supporting access to abortion? Have you ever had conversation with colleagues, coworkers or other community members, published an opinion piece in the paper, attended a public event in support of reproductive rights, etc?

No.