

RENSSELAER COUNTY: DISTRICT ATTORNEY CANDIDATES ARE ASKING FOR YOUR VOTE. ASK THEM TO SUPPORT REAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM.

When it comes to the criminal justice system, district attorneys are one of the most powerful players. Their job is to represent “The People” in criminal court and to fight for justice. Every four years, the people of Rensselaer County get to decide who best represents OUR values.

WHAT DOES A DISTRICT ATTORNEY HAVE THE POWER TO DO?

- Decide whether to charge someone with a crime and what charges to bring
- Choose which crimes to prosecute
- Recommend whether to hold someone on bail
- Decide whether to use local resources for the Trump administration's deportation agenda
- Influence the passage of state and local laws

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN RENSSELAER COUNTY THAT OUR NEXT DISTRICT ATTORNEY SHOULD FIX?

POLICE IMPUNITY

Officers are often not held responsible when they abuse Rensselaer County residents.

HIGH JAIL INCARCERATION RATE

The jail incarceration rate in Rensselaer County is 286 per 100,000 people which is much higher than the statewide rate of 190 per 100,000¹.

CRIMINALIZATION OF POVERTY

There is a two-tiered system in which those arrested who are rich go home and those arrested who are poor are locked up. Rensselaer County residents should not spend time behind bars because they cannot afford to pay bail.

UNFAIR TRIAL DELAYS

Countless individuals are stuck in jail, missing work and unable to care for their loved ones while they wait months or even years for their trials because of unfair laws and prosecutorial practices.

¹Vera Institute of Justice, Empire State of Incarceration: Rensselaer County Profile (Dec. 2017), <https://storage.googleapis.com/vera-web-assets/downloads/nys-jails-fact-sheets/Rensselaer.pdf>.

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DISTRICT ATTORNEY CANDIDATES MUST SUPPORT REAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

The candidates for the District Attorney race in Rensselaer County are Joel Ablove, <https://www.facebook.com/JoelAblove/> and Mary Pat Donnelly, <https://www.facebook.com/Donnelly4DA/>

Both candidates will participate in a forum run by the League of Women Voters of Rensselaer County on Monday, October 29 at 7 p.m. at the RPI Cultural Center at 2125 Burdett Avenue, Troy, NY 12180.

WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK THE CANDIDATES?

What will you do to support diversion programs?

These programs, like employment training or behavioral therapy, offer alternatives to incarceration.

Do you support treating minor infractions as non-criminal offenses?

Too many people are locked up because of minor offenses though they pose no safety threat.

How will you reduce racial disparities?

Research shows implicit bias results in worse plea offers, higher bail and longer sentences for black and Latino people. Tackling bias is crucial to ensuring that everyone gets treated fairly.

Do you support ending the use of cash bail?

No one should be in jail simply because they can't afford to pay their bail.

Do you support speedy-trial laws?

District attorneys can help to ensure that people who have been charged with a crime don't suffer through unreasonable delays while they wait for trial.

How will you ensure that your office protects immigrants?

District attorneys should not spend county resources fueling the Trump administration's war on immigrants.