

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

2018 Voter Guide

HARRISONBURG - TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6

Senate Candidates



Tim Kaine (D)



Corey Stewart (R)



Matt Waters (L)



Ben Cline (R)



Jennifer Lewis (D)

6th Congressional District

City Council Candidates



Carolyn
Frank (I)



Christopher
Jones (D)



Frank
McMillan (I)



Sal
Romero Jr. (D)



Paloma Saucedo de
la Pena (I)

School Board



Kristen C. Loflin



Andrew I. Kohen



Obie P. Hill

United States Senate Candidate Profiles

Three Candidates for One Seat with an Incumbent

Regardless of size or population, each state has two senators, who serve six-year terms. Unlike the House of Representatives, where all members must stand for election every two years, only one-third of the Senate's seats are filled with each general election. In *Federalist Paper No. 62*, James Madison explained the unique nature of the Senate as the cautious and more deliberative role it would play in American government.

In theory, longer, overlapping Senate terms provide Congress with stability and continuity, and lessen the immediate pressure of public opinion on members of the Senate. Until the 1913 ratification of the Constitution's 17th Amendment, Senators were elected by the legislatures of their respective states.

The Senate shares full legislative power with the House of Representatives. In addition, the Senate has exclusive authority to approve—or reject—presidential nominations to executive and judicial offices, and to provide—or withhold—its “advice and consent” to treaties negotiated by the executive. The Senate also has the sole power to try impeachments.

Tim Kaine (D)



Tim grew up in a middle class family in Kansas City, and learned the value of hard work and having a skill while working in his dad's union ironworking shop. Tim began his career as a civil rights lawyer and went on to become a member of the Richmond City Council and the city's mayor. As Governor, Tim steered the Commonwealth through the country's worst recession in decades, leading the state to national acclaim. Tim has served in the Senate since 2010, where he has kept up his fight to ensure that jobs, opportunity, and education are available to all.

Education: B.A. in Economics, University of Missouri, J.D., Harvard Law School

Current occupation and employer: United States Senator

Previous political experience: Richmond City Council Member, 2nd District, Mayor of Richmond, Lieutenant Governor of Virginia

Date of birth: February 26, 1958

Area of Residence: Richmond, Virginia

Hometown: Kansas City

Family: Tim is married to Anne Holton, former Virginia Secretary of Education, and father to 3 cool adult kids (a Marine, a child care worker, and an actress)

Other interests and experiences: Tim loves baseball, camping, his local parish, and reading everything he can get his hands on. He's also obsessed with both listening to and playing music. If he's in the car, he's blasting old tunes. If he's at a show, you may even catch him on stage, sitting in with the band playing harmonica. Some of his favorites are The Replacements, Charlie Parker, and the Carter Family.

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Corey Stewart (R)



As chairman of the Prince William Board of Supervisors, Corey Stewart kept taxes low, and secured a triple-AAA bond rating for the county – one of only 36 jurisdictions nationwide to do so. Prince William is ranked #1 for job growth in Virginia and #3 in the nation.

Corey's father was a longshoreman and instilled in him a strong work ethic at an early age. Corey was the first member of his family to graduate from college.

Corey now works as an international trade attorney with his own practice. Corey and his wife, Maria, have two sons and reside in Woodbridge.

Current occupation and employer: International trade attorney, private practice

Previous political experience: At-large chairman of the Prince William County Board of Supervisors

Date of birth: August 1, 1968

Area of Residence: Woodbridge, Virginia

Hometown: Duluth, Minnesota

Family: wife, Maria, have two sons

Other interests and experiences:

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Matt Waters (L)



I have spent over two decades raising money for candidates, ballot initiatives, 501c3 and 501c4 groups, and non-profit organizations. I have been married nearly 20 years to Anne Marie and we have five wonderful kids that we homeschool.

Education: George Mason University, BA in Political Science; Reformed Theological Seminary, MA in Religion (2019)

Current occupation and employer: Waters.Agency

Previous political experience: Fundraiser on Several Campaigns

Date of birth: August 12, 1967

Area of Residence: Alexandria, VA

Hometown: Newport News, VA

Other interests and experiences: Boy Scouts of America, Families & Youth Director

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6th Congressional District Candidate Profiles

Two Candidates for One Open Seat

What do Members of the House of Representatives do?

James Madison described the U.S. House of Representatives as a legislative body with “an immediate dependence on, and intimate sympathy with, the people.” Representatives are elected directly by the people and the Constitution requires that Representatives must stand for election every two years. These requirements were meant in theory to make it a political institution that is responsive to the will of the people and that serves as a forum for their political priorities.

Membership is based on the population of each individual state. By law, its current membership is set at 435 Representatives, plus nonvoting delegates from the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories. The House possesses the sole authority to impeach federal officials and, in the case of indecisive Electoral College results, to elect a president. While revenue and spending bills traditionally originate in the House, the Senate may amend them as with any other piece of legislation.

Ben Kline (R)

Ben Cline lives in his hometown of Lexington, VA with his wife Elizabeth and their twin daughters.



After graduating from Lexington High School, Ben attended Bates College and law school at the University of Richmond. Prior to launching his law practice, Ben was an Assistant Commonwealth’s Attorney for Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. Since 2002, Ben has represented the 24th House District in the Virginia General Assembly. He currently serves as Chairman of the Militia-Police Committee and Chairman of the Conservative Caucus. Prior to his election, Ben worked for six years for Congressman Bob Goodlatte, ultimately serving as his Chief of Staff.

Education: B.A.; Bates College, Lewiston, ME, J.D.; T.C. Williams School of Law, University of Richmond, Richmond VA

Current Occupation and employer: Member, Virginia House of Delegates (2002-Present)

Date of Birth: February 29, 1972

Area of Residence: Lexington, Virginia

Family: Married to wife Elizabeth, father of six year old twin daughters, and dog “Max”

Other interests and experiences: Hiking, swimming, early American History

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Jennifer Lewis (D)

Jennifer Lewis is a mental health worker, community advocate, and leader in the fight against the Atlantic Coast Pipeline. She’s been a civically active member of her community in Augusta County and Waynesboro, volunteering for various local groups, serving on boards and commissions, and fighting on the front lines for the values of the Sixth District. She’s not a career politician and doesn’t accept money from special interests, corporate PACs, the NRA, or fossil-fuel interests.



Education: BA, Sociology, State University of New York at Oneonta

Current occupation and employer: Mental health worker, Region Ten Community Service Board

Previous political experience: Chair of the Waynesboro Parks and Recreation Board for eight years and Chair of the Office on Youth Commission. I’m also an elected member of the Headwaters Soil and Water Board. I served as Vice Chair of the Waynesboro Democratic Committee until winning the primary this year, and I received the Democrat of the Year award in 2013 and Grassroots Organizer of the Year award for the Sixth District in 2014.

Date of birth: September 30, 1981

Area of Residence: Waynesboro

Hometown: Whitesville, NY

Family: My husband, Ben, three cats, and a dog. Together we’ve fostered many litters of kittens through Cat’s Cradle in Harrisonburg.

Other interests and experiences:

I spent the early part of my professional career working in the Virginia public school system, providing mental health services to at-risk youth. I also served as a trained rape crisis counselor at a domestic violence safe house right out of college.

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City Council Candidate Profiles

Five Candidates for Two Available Seats

What do city councilors do?

The City Council is the elected governing body of the City of Harrisonburg and is made up of five members elected at-large. This means that the city has no wards or districts and that all members represent all citizens equally. You may contact any city council member about any issue regardless of where in the city you live. Harrisonburg City Council hires and supervises a full-time City Manager who oversees day-to-day city operations. City Council also approves a city budget, as well as zoning, land use and a Comprehensive Plan. It oversees city revenues, and creates and passes city laws.

Carolyn Frank (I)



Carolyn Frank has a heritage of generations as a valley resident. She grew up on a farmette in Rockingham County with her parents and 9 siblings, married and moved to Harrisonburg in 1980. Carolyn had 38 years of service with Verizon, retiring in 2010. Carolyn became the first woman line-person at the company. Carolyn advanced her career by taking electronic and computer classes at Massanutten Technical Center in the evenings. Carolyn spent 22 years as a communication technician, maintaining the 911 system, installing and troubleshooting high-speed data lines. In this technical position, she was the first and only female in her department.

Education: High School Diploma, Elkton High School; Adult technology classes at Massanutten Technical Center

Current occupation and employer: Retired from Verizon in 2010 with 38 years of service

Previous political experience: City Council 2000-2004, First Woman Mayor 2000-2002, City Council 2006-2010, Central Shenandoah Planning District-2000-2004, City Council Representative to Dept. of Social Services

Date of birth: August 31, 1953

Area of Residence: Preston Heights Subdivision

Hometown: Elkton, VA

Family: Carolyn married Rob Frank in 1980. Their sons, Chris and Charlie, attended city schools graduating from HHS and then graduating from VA Tech and JMU, respectively.

Other interests and experiences: Carolyn is described as a trail blazer and extremely community-minded. Carolyn provided 5 years of tireless leadership to develop the city's first soccer program and advocated for the Smithland Soccer Complex. The initial soccer program was co-ed, but under Carolyn's leadership, an all-girls league was soon formed. Carolyn, an avid outdoorswoman, is founder of the "Hiker Chicks". She leads a group of ladies weekly to the woods to unplug, hike and fellowship.

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Christopher Jones (D)



Education: James Madison University. Sociology concentrating in Critical Theory and Africentric Thought. Minor in Business.

Current occupation and employer: WHSV-TV 3 Harrisonburg's ABC, CBS, and FOX news affiliate. Advertising Account Executive - I create advertising and marketing solutions

Date of Birth: May 1, 1979

Area of Residence: I live in the subdivision of Wyndham Woods. My greater neighborhood consist of the Sunset Heights and Brookland Subdivisions.

Hometown: I was born in Danville, VA! Home of Wendell Scott, the first African American NASCAR driver.

Family: My parents are James and Mae Marie Jones. My father is a retired employee of Goodyear Tire and Rubber. My mother is the owner and operator of Marie's Salon of Beauty, in Danville, VA and holds and a PhD in Cosmetology. I have two older brothers. Anthony of Greensboro, NC is a former financial investor turned educator and Vincent of Lynchburg, VA is a Baptist pastor and a mental health therapist. My wife Terra is a North Carolina native, who was raised in Harrisonburg within the Northeast Neighborhood of Harrisonburg a historically African American Neighborhood and is a graduate of Harrisonburg High School. We have four children. Solomon Christopher, 17; Haile, 14; Haiden, 10; and Seth Christopher, 2.

Previous Political Experience: 1998-2000 James Madison University Student Government Association Senate. 2015-2017 Mayor Harrisonburg, VA. 2017-2019 City Council Member Harrisonburg, VA.

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Frank McMillan (I)



I am not your traditional city council candidate. My background is different. I have been involved in the community for many years and know what it takes to raise a family in the city. For these reasons, I am running as an independent because local politics is not about party lines. It is about you - my neighbor. I care about our community and its people and hope to gain your support.

Education: I am a product of public schooling and a graduate of Spotswood High School. I attended Blue Ridge Community College and have a degree from Massanutten Technical Center.

Current Occupation and Employer: I am employed by Kelly Services where I am a District Manager and have owned several small businesses.

Political Experience: I am not a politician. I am a businessman, father and husband who has been well-involved in the community through the United Way, Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, Police Advisory Board and other non-profits where I have held board positions.

Date of Birth: January 10, 1964

Area of Residence: Reherd Acres

Hometown: The big city of Grottoes, Virginia - which is in Rockingham County.

Family: I have two sons who are graduates of Harrisonburg High School and a stepdaughter who recently graduated from JMU. My wife, Donna Marie, has worked for the JMU Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships for the past 20 years. Lastly, I have one grandson, Jaylen.

Interests: I love watching Dukes football, outdoor sports, camping and riding my Harley with my wife.

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Sal Romero, Jr. (D)



Mr. Romero is the Coordinator of Family and Community Engagement for Harrisonburg City Public Schools. Prior to his current position, he has served in public education in the Shenandoah Valley since 2004, as an athletic trainer, home-school liaison, ESL teacher, and assistant principal. Mr. Romero is very active in the community as a member of the Welcoming Harrisonburg Council, Shenandoah Valley Premier Soccer League Board, Latinos del Valle, and Alianza Solidaria.

Governor Terry McAuliffe appointed Sal Romero, Jr. to the Virginia Board of Education in 2014. Mr. Romero served as chairman of the Charter School Committee.

Education: Broadway High School (1996), Blue Ridge Community College, Associate Degree (2000), James Madison University, BA (2004), Shenandoah University, MS in Education (2009)

Current occupation and employer: Coordinator of Family a Family and Community Engagement, Harrisonburg City Public Schools

Previous political experience: Member of State Board of Education (2014-2018), Harrisonburg City Council Candidate (2010)

Date of birth: April 30, 1978

Area of Residence: Greendale Subdivision, Harrisonburg VA

Hometown: Born in El Dormido, Guanajuato, Mexico, but Harrisonburg in my home.

Family: have been married to my wife Amparo for the last 14 years and we have two amazing children: Dani 12 years and Jacky 8 years.

Other interests and experiences: Soccer is one of my greatest passions. I also love to exercise, go on hikes and travel with my family, and watch my children enjoy soccer and gymnastics.

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Paloma Saucedo de la Pena (I)



I am a mother of three, a social worker. I am from Saltillo Coahuila, Mexico, where I was a middle and high-school English teacher for three years. I migrated to Virginia in 2001. After living in different parts of the state, I fell in love with the Friendly City and my family has called Harrisonburg home since 2010. My children include a high schooler and rising high schooler - who I primarily raised as a single mother - and a newborn.

I have overcome the challenges in my life with tireless strength, commitment and resolve; similar to many immigrants and working class families in Harrisonburg. My motivation to run for City Council is based on my experience living, working and organizing across race, class, gender, sexual orientation and cultural lines. I believe NOW is the time to build the unified community vision that so many have for this magnificent city. I stand for the dreams and visions that so many share for a Harrisonburg that provides opportunities for all who live here. Through connecting, organizing, and giving power to the voices that have gone unheard, I believe that Harrisonburg can be a sanctuary, for humans and nature alike, and deserving of its reputation as the "Friendly City"

Education: Bachelors in Social Work from Mary Baldwin University

Current occupation and employer: Crossroads Counseling Center, Therapeutic Day Treatment (TDT) Specialist

Previous political experience: Community Organizer for the last 10 years

Date of Birth: May 27, 1980

Area of Residence: Springside Village, Harrisonburg, VA

Hometown: Saltillo Coahuila Mexico

Family: I live with my three children (who are 17, 15, and 1 years old), my domestic partner, our dogs, cats and ferret!

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School Board Candidate Profiles

Three Candidates for Three Available Seats

What do school board members do?

The School Board governs budgets and policies used daily in schools and is responsible for maintaining two-way communication with the public, elected and appointed officials, concerning progress and needs of schools. Among other responsibilities, the School Board also: selects a Superintendent of schools; determines instructional studies to be pursued; provides suitable school buildings, furniture, and equipment; cares for, manage, and control the school property of the city; establishes school attendance zones; and ensures compliance with the Standards of Quality and other state and federal mandates.

<https://harrisonburg.k12.va.us/District/1125-School-Board.html>

Obie Hill



Obie Hill is a Licensed Professional Counselor who works with at-risk youth as well as with families in Harrisonburg, Rockingham and Augusta counties. Hill is very much involved in the community of Harrisonburg where he has been a resident for the past six years with his wife and two daughters, relocating from New Jersey where Hill was born and raised. Hill's children are both Dual Language students at Bluestone Elementary where he is one of the founding members of the school's current parent organization, Bluestone Community of Helping Hands and currently serves as the organization's Coordinator.

Education: Hill's formative school years were in Paterson, New Jersey and he graduated high school from Passaic County Technical Institute in 2001. Hill earned his Bachelors degree in Psychology with a minor in African-American Studies at Ramapo College of New Jersey as well as a Masters of Arts degree in Professional Counseling from Liberty University in 2012. He then went on to become licensed as a Licensed Professional Counselor in the State of Virginia.

Current Occupation and Employer: Hill is the founder and director of Hill Valley Counseling Services that provides counseling services to children and families in the Harrisonburg, Rockingham and Augusta counties.

Previous Political Experience: Hill has no previous political experience.

Date of Birth: August, 1983

Area of Residence: Harrisonburg City

Hometown: Paterson, New Jersey

Family: Hill has a wife and two children.

Interests: Hill enjoys being physically active and advocates physical fitness, mental health and proper nutrition. He has been coaching his daughters' softball teams for the past five years and has also offered boxing/cardio fitness classes at the Recreational Center at Westover Park. Hill is currently striving to perfect his swing in Pickle Ball!

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Andy Kohen



I am native Michigander, born and raised in Detroit. My mother and all my grandparents were immigrants to the US. Both of my parents earned advanced college degrees in the public education system, and I am a product of public primary, secondary and undergraduate education. I did earn my MA at a private university, though my Doctorate was awarded by a public university. I have volunteered in the local nonprofit sector while serving on the Harrisonburg City School Board. For more than three decades, I have been on the Board of Directors of Beth El Congregation in various positions. Additionally, I have served on the Board of Skyline Literacy for five years and recently concluded a six-year term with the Honors College Advisory Board at JMU. My experience also includes several years as a member of the local board of the ARC. I am the current Vice-Chair of the School Board and am running for re-election.

Education: PhD, Economics, Ohio State University, M.A., Economics, Yale University, B.Ph., Economics, Wayne State University

Current Occupation and Employer: Educator; Retired Economics Professor

Previous Political Experience: Current Treasurer of Skyline Literacy and board member for five years; current immediate past President of Board of Directors of Beth El Congregation and Trustee for over thirty years; minor officer in the local Democratic Party for 9 years; served several years as Chair of Faculty Advisory Committee to the Honors Program at JMU; former Speaker of the JMU Faculty Senate; current Vice-Chair of School Board.

Date of Birth: 1941

Area of Residence: Harrisonburg, VA since mid-1970s

Hometown: Detroit, MI

Family: My late wife and I raised a son and a daughter, each of whom also have a son and a daughter. My children are proud products of the Harrisonburg City Public School System and earners of advanced college degrees. I devote considerable time to being a father, father-in-law, grandfather, uncle, and great-uncle, and I place a high value on doing so.

Other interests and experiences: International travel, golf, duplicate bridge, assorted racket sports

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Kristen Loflin



Kristen moved to Harrisonburg, VA to pursue a graduate degree in counseling and received her MA and EdS degrees from JMU in 2004, specializing in substance abuse and eating disorders. Kristen has worked with at-risk children and adolescents in multiple school settings, college students at JMU, adults with addictions concerns, and young adults through the Alcohol Safety Action Program. Kristen opened her private practice in 2014, and balances a full practice schedule with a number of volunteer activities. She is a member of the American Counseling Association, a past treasurer of the Central Valley Counselors Association, recently finished 3 years as the Smithland Elementary PTO president, and currently serves on the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Alcohol Safety Action Program board. Most recently Kristen has contributed to the work of Any Given Child Shenandoah Valley, an organization that strives to bring the arts to all students in K-12. Kristen and her husband, Matt, have two daughters, Emma and Zoey.

Education: BA Psychology, State University of New York, College at Geneseo, 2001 MA, EdS Clinical Mental Health Counseling, James Madison University, 2004

Current Occupation and Employer: Kristen is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and is self-employed. Her office is conveniently located just two blocks from HCPS Central Office.

Previous Political Experience: Kristen has served in numerous leadership capacities throughout her life. She has served on various boards, as the treasurer for the Central Valley Counselors Association and president of the Smithland PTO, all the way back to running the school store in elementary school. Kristen has not served in political positions and is thankful that School Board is non-partisan.

Date of Birth: 1979

Area of Residence: Kristen and her family reside in Harrisonburg City.

Hometown: Kristen was born in Plattsburgh, NY, and moved to Saratoga Springs, NY at the age of 2, residing there until college. She moved to Geneseo, NY in 1997 and lived there and in Saratoga Springs until moving to Harrisonburg in 2001.

Other areas of interest: Kristen enjoys a number of outdoor activities including hiking, running, and road biking. She completed 4 marathons when her children were preschool age, and appreciated the time alone during this stage of life to unwind and reflect. Kristen and her family enjoy movie nights with neighbors and reading together, most often the Harry Potter series.

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Website: As the race for School Board is uncontested, I have chosen not to actively fundraise and devote resources to an online presence. While my campaign does not currently have an active web address, I invite anyone interested in speaking more in depth to contact me at the above email. I have given numerous interviews and am happy to meet to listen and engage in open dialogue.

Senate Candidates’ Responses to Student Questionnaire

As JMU students, we live in the Harrisonburg community, which is extremely diverse as a refugee resettlement area. How would your policies on immigration and the refugee situation affect our area specifically?

Tim Kaine (D)

Tim believes that Virginia is made stronger by its diversity, and is a supporter of comprehensive immigration reform like the bipartisan legislation that created a path to citizenship and funded border security that passed the Senate in 2013. Tim firmly believes immigrants enrich our society and bring skills and talents that help ensure Virginia, including Harrisonburg, remains competitive in a global economy. Tim has been an outspoken opponent of President Trump’s attempts to ban immigration from Muslim countries, harshly restrict legal immigration, and threaten TPS recipients and Dreamers with deportation. For Tim, it is a moral imperative to protect and defend the inalienable rights of refugees and to respect their dignity, especially by adopting just laws that protect those fleeing danger or inhumane situations. Tim knows that while we must continue to thoroughly vet all refugees who enter the United States, we cannot abandon our core principles and fail to extend a welcoming hand to those who yearn to be free.

Corey Stewart (R)

They will not be affected, because my immigration reform agenda is focused on removing illegal aliens, not lawful refugees.

Matt Waters (L)

I am in favor of increasing legal immigration. Regarding refugee situation in Harrisonburg community; the “Friendly City” of Harrisonburg is building a reputation as a model city on how to welcome and integrate refugees, and can be used as an example on how to do immigration correctly throughout the US.

If you were elected, what would your plan for addressing the student debt situation be?

Tim Kaine (D)

Tim knows that college affordability is an issue our country is grappling with at the national level, state level and especially at the family level. He understands that we need to get this right so students can afford to get a higher education and have a successful start to their careers without being weighed down by student loan debt. Because there isn’t one path that will work for everyone, Tim is pushing for a number of strategies that will ease the burden of debt and enable students to succeed in the workforce. Tim believes that greater access to career and technical education can help students gain the skills they need at a much less prohibitive cost. In addition, Tim has fought for greater transparency in the process of paying for college tuition by introducing legislation that makes it easier for students and families to access financial counseling, and has pushed for other initiatives, like loan forgiveness programs, college dual-enrollment programs for high schoolers, and opportunities for students to refinance their debt.

Corey Stewart (R)

I support the Higher Education Reform and Opportunity (HERO) Act, which aims to consolidate and streamline our nation’s current student loan programs. Perhaps more importantly, the HERO Act would reform the accreditation system. States could develop their own standards, or even partner with employers, to ensure that students are ready to land good jobs after graduation.

Matt Waters (L)

Get the federal government out of the college loan business, as more access to more money has driven up the cost of college education significantly. The federal government student loan program has led to institutions replacing their own aid dollars and states decreasing their subsidies. The US Constitution says zero about federal government involvement in education.

What experiences make you qualified for office?

Tim Kaine (D)

Tim learned the values of hard work, being kind, and most importantly, serving others from his parents. Tim began his career as a civil rights lawyer, and in his time as mayor of Richmond, Lieutenant Governor, Governor, and now Senator, he’s been focused on bringing people together to solve the hard problems we face. From building the first new public schools in Richmond in a generation to steering our Commonwealth through the recession and earning national recognition for our business climate to the work he has been focused on now in the Senate, he’s learned what it takes to serve Virginians in our government. He’s passed legislation to grow the Navy to keep us safer, fund childhood cancer research, protect open space, provide better tools to deal with campus sexual assault, and obtain federal recognition for Virginia Indian tribes. He knows how important it is to get things done – that’s why he always reaches across the aisle to find common ground, despite never hesitating to stand up to efforts that would harm Virginians.

Corey Stewart (R)

I will focus on making last year’s tax cuts permanent, to ensure that our economy continues to thrive. As chairman of Prince William County’s board of supervisors, I have a track record of getting things done. During my tenure as chairman, we enacted the largest tax cut in our county’s history -- while hiring teachers, building roads, and reducing crime.

Matt Waters (L)

I have worked as a political consultant for over 20 years; I have studied and written extensively on a host of public policy issues; I have run my own business for over 10 years.

What would be your greatest priority while in office?

Tim Kaine (D)

Creating economic opportunity for all Virginians is Tim’s top priority in the Senate, and he knows that our economy is strongest when workers and families access to good paying jobs, higher wages, and the skills to succeed and get ahead. He’s passed legislation to help veterans transition to civilian jobs and expand and improve career and technical education for young people, and he supports legislation to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and ensure equal pay for women. In a global economy, it is more important than ever that we invest in our people, value our diversity, and grow the talented and educated workforce that Virginia needs. That also means that all Virginians have access to quality, affordable health care – a priority of Tim’s. He fought back when President Trump and Republicans in Congress tried to repeal the Affordable Care Act – threatening the health care of tens of millions of Americans and hundreds of thousands of Virginians. Tim also has a plan called Medicare X, which would give all Virginians access to a plan similar to Medicare. This public option would give more Virginians a real choice when it comes to health insurance, at a lower cost.

Corey Stewart (R)

As chairman of Prince William County’s board of supervisors, I have a track record of getting things done. During my tenure as chairman, we enacted the largest tax cut in our county’s history -- while hiring teachers, building roads, and reducing crime.

Matt Waters (L)

End the debt by cutting government spending.

Congressional Candidates’ Responses to Student Questionnaire

How does your experience make you suitable for this position?

Ben Cline (R)

My time working for Congressman Goodlatte gave me experience in responding to constituent concerns quickly and effectively, and my time in the Virginia legislature gave me experience in successfully enacting legislation into law that helped the citizens of the district.

Jennifer Lewis (D)

My service to the community and political activism in the Shenandoah Valley has allowed me to meet and engage people of all political beliefs. I am a farmer’s daughter, and I know what it means to work hard just to make ends meet. And as a mental health worker in the district, I understand the suffering and struggles everyday people are facing. I have the experience to help people in our district who can’t afford to hire lobbyists or make large contributions to political campaigns.

What will be your most important priority in office?

Ben Cline (R)

My most important priority will be to listen to the citizens of the Sixth District and be an effective advocate for their views and concerns in Washington, D.C.

Jennifer Lewis (D)

Corruption in our government and our corrupt campaign finance system are at the root of so many problems in our nation. It ensures that career politicians go to Washington and prioritize the interests of their donors. I refuse to accept campaign contributions from corporate PACs, special interests, and the fossil-fuel industry, and I believe electing politicians free from corrupting influences is the first step of reform. We should also pass legislation requiring more transparency, more lobbying disclosures, and ultimately aim for a constitutional amendment to ensure all citizens have equal capacity to influence elections, regardless of wealth or power.

Do you think our healthcare system needs to be amended? If so, how would you do it?

Ben Cline (R)

Our healthcare system is broken due to the excessive regulations imposed as part of the ACA, also known as “Obamacare.” These regulations have increased the cost of insurance for businesses, reduced the choices of health insurance for families, and increased premiums that make insurance unaffordable for many, forcing more people onto government-run health insurance. While some would advocate a bureaucratic “Medicare-for-All” system that requires higher taxes and puts government between you and your doctor, we can make health insurance more accessible and more affordable for millions of Americans by removing or reducing many of these onerous federal regulations.

Jennifer Lewis (D)

We are the wealthiest country in the history of the world, and nobody should die or face financial collapse because they lack affordable healthcare. We must preserve the Affordable Care Act’s coverage of preexisting conditions and women’s health services, but we also need to allow Medicare to negotiate drug prices and prevent insurance companies from price gouging. We need to reduce all of the paperwork, red tape, and administrative bureaucracy in our health care system, and I believe a Medicare for All system is the most efficient, cost-effective way to provide affordable healthcare to everyone. My opponent essentially wants to make it harder for people to acquire affordable healthcare, and I wish he had put people over politics and joined less extreme Republicans like State Senator Emmett Hanger in supporting Medicaid expansion in Virginia.

What are your views on stricter gun control and the Second Amendment?

Ben Cline (R)

I am a strong defender of the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding Americans, and I oppose stricter gun control as an infringement of those rights.

Jennifer Lewis (D)

I support gun safety measures - including strengthening national background checks, expanding background checks to include gun shows and internet sales, and ending the sale of “bump-stocks.” I also agree with Senators Kaine and Warner in supporting Senator Feinstein’s bill prohibiting the sale, manufacture, import, transfer, or possession of a semi-automatic assault weapon or a large capacity ammunition feeding device. None of these measures are in violation of mainstream interpretations of the Second Amendment.

What can you bring to the sixth district that your opponent cannot?

Ben Cline (R)

I will be able to hit the ground running as a strong advocate for the citizens of the Sixth District, and I will not need any on-the-job training at taxpayer expense.

Jennifer Lewis (D)

I don’t expect everyone to agree with me on all policy positions, but I hope everyone will trust that I’ll listen and always prioritize the people of our district when making decisions. My independence from corporate contributions, special interests, and political party leaders makes me the only candidate in this race you can trust will serve you.

City Council Candidates’ Responses to Student Questionnaire

What experiences make you qualified for this office?

Carolyn Frank (I)

For 30 years I have been actively involved in my community by volunteering in organizations that serve our youth, our homeless and needy, those transitioning back into the community from incarceration, abused and neglected children in foster care, plus I served for 8 1/2 years on city council. In 2000, I became Harrisonburg’s first woman mayor. During my years on council, I had the privilege of serving with 11 different councilmen and three different city managers. I was able to learn and develop my skills by listening and valuing their unique leadership styles. While in office I attended yearly Virginia Municipal League Conferences where I received training and education in holding public office.

Chris Jones (D)

My experience and institutional knowledge being on council now and having served the last nearly four years as a mayor and council member are valuable to ensure we do not go through an unnecessary learning curve in city leadership. I am seeking re-election because a significant amount of residents, business owners, students, non-profit organizations, and members of the faith based community believe I am a good conduit between them and local government. They believe in my ability to convey their request or needs to city staff and follow through until they come to fruition or are modified according to our city staff’s ability to deliver.

Frank McMillan (I)

I have toured the local schools, and the students of Harrisonburg deserve a better education system. As for jobs, I have 20+ years of experience in the employment industry and know what our market needs are in Harrisonburg. Lastly, I am an honest and ethical candidate who has not partaken in inappropriate activities like some of our council members have done. All these experiences make me knowledgeable on what the best policies are for our community.

Sal Romero, Jr. (D)

As an educator for the last 15 years, I believe my various roles in leadership such as school assistant principal, director of a before and after school program, director of local soccer league, founder of Latinos del Valle, and member of the Virginia State Board of Education provide me the leadership qualifications necessary to be elected to city council. As an immigrant, I believe my experiences will be valuable as we look to have representation for the many voices that make up our beautiful city. As a community leader, I have been able to build many lasting relationships with people across our community and believe that will be key when bringing people to the table to have important conversations that impact each and every one of us.

Paloma Saucedo de la Pena (I)

I have spent my adult life serving those most oppressed and neglected in our community. I have participated in health care access initiatives including Promotoras de Salud, Community Health Workers, as a volunteer Doula, and a health interpreter at Sentara Rockingham Memorial Hospital. My community activism has included advocating for immigrants and LGBTQ rights. I provided interpretation for countless community meetings, events and rallies, including City Council meetings when Spanish speakers were concerned about an issue and had no method to communicate with their elected officials. Additionally, I have facilitated ‘Know Your Rights’ trainings for the local immigrant community and I am a member of local latino groups to defend our DACA and TPS holders. While having spent several years in nonprofit management and health services, I graduated in May with a Social Work degree from Mary Baldwin University.

How do you plan to involve citizens in Harrisonburg’s decision-making process?

Carolyn Frank (I)

Open, responsive and engaging government has always been my leadership style. I will continue connecting with our diverse population by stepping outside of city hall and actively engaging with our city’s residents in their neighborhoods. Direct community engagement is vital to me, people are busy and often aren’t compelled to engage through a city council meeting except on “hot button” type issues. I have always been responsive via email and phone to our city residents. Another channel of contact is through my website carolynwfrank.com. After my election in 2000, City Council meetings were broadcasted for the first time in the history of Harrisonburg. I am always open to new ways to engage and involve citizens with our local government. Technological change and development will continue to open new avenues to encourage city residents to be more active in our local government. I feel that every citizen has a right to be informed and involved at the beginning of any local government process.

Chris Jones (D)

Every two weeks since the beginning of 2017, I have held community conversations. Community conversations are open to the public every other Tuesday from 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm, in the city council chambers in Harrisonburg. I hold these meetings to give members of the public an opportunity to voice their opinions, describe concerns in person, and ask questions of me face to face.

Frank McMillan (I)

By continuing to listen to my neighbors. Every night I go door knocking from 5-8 PM. I am running a grassroots campaign, it is the best way to learn what the Harrisonburg residents need. What matters are my neighbors and how policy will impact those around me.

Sal Romero, Jr. (D)

Create more intentional opportunities for our neighbors to be civically engaged. Hold listening sessions with underrepresented and disenfranchised groups and individuals to ensure that my decisions are informed by the concerns of the whole community. Advocate to have interpreters available at public meetings and for the translation of meeting minutes. Build leadership programs for the city’s young people, and for those new to local politics and civic engagement.

Paloma Saucedo de la Pena (I)

Assess city hiring practices to represent the demographics of our community. Provide translated materials and interpretation for city council meetings. Improve multi-language capacity in key entities for immigrants and refugees (DMV, Courts, Police, City Council meetings, and Hospitals). Address systemic racism and promote and recognize the celebrations that unite us and make us a more power-balanced and inclusive community.

What is your top priority?

Carolyn Frank (I)

Financial health of our city. According to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development report on fiscal stress of localities: Harrisonburg is one of the MOST FISCALLY STRESSED cities in Virginia. Future decisions must be economically viable, environmentally sound and socially responsible.

Chris Jones (D)

I have four primary goals once re-elected; each rooted in the feedback of residents, business owners, students, non-profit organizations, and members of the faith based community.

- Partner with our school board and parents to establish a proactive plan that budgets for space and money with contingencies to handle potential overcrowding issues. Public education is a quality investment when planned for intentionally. In the recent past, we have been reactive and operating under a negative mindset that our schools are a financial burden. Overcrowded schools are unsafe and costly. We must end overcrowding at our high school quickly and efficiently.
- Partner with local agencies and nonprofit organizations to help our neighbors with less resources. 26% of our neighbors are at the poverty line or below. 39% of our neighbors are asset limited income constrained and employed or A.L.I.C.E. It is imperative we press economic development for high-paying “blue collar jobs” and “white collar jobs” with training opportunities.
- Hire a Sustainability Coordinator. We need a dedicated person to ensure Harrisonburg is working to waste less, has a recycling program, along with energy efficient buildings & vehicles.
- Hire a Community Criminal Justice Planner. This person would help our community justice board implement and supervise programs to reduce the jail population. Aggressively work to reduce the poverty to prison pipeline.

Frank McMillan (I)

My top priority is to be a voice for fiscal sustainability to the city council. Harrisonburg tax rates have gone up a significant percentage the past ten years, and our population has only increased by a small margin. I plan to keep taxes stable and encourage businesses to invest in Harrisonburg. Also, education is key. Let’s invest in our dedicated faculty and staff members that do so much for our community. I believe we should give teachers a raise to ensure we continue to attract and retain top educators.

Sal Romero, Jr. (D)

Our slogan, UNITED VOICES/VOCES UNIDAS, represents my desire to collaborate with the different voices on Harrisonburg City Council and to show my commitment to bringing everyone’s voice to the table.

Paloma Saucedo de la Pena (I)

- Advocate for dignified and sustainable jobs for everyone.
- Improve the working conditions of Harrisonburg’s work force in the agricultural, cleaning, and poultry industry.
- Advocate for better salaries and health conditions of long-term workers, individuals with disabilities, and minority groups.
- Incentivize our economy by monitoring and creating new sources of long-term employment.
- Free and high-quality education that forms critical thinking leaders.
- Build A New High School Now! Expand the capacity and facilities in our City Schools to increase accessibility to quality education that is safe and adequate to the needs of our students.
- Protect Harrisonburg City School students regardless of their immigration status.
- Implement community prevention strategies to mitigate risks of gun violence, drug use, sex trafficking, bullying, and low graduation rates, understanding the disproportionate effects of these issues on communities of color and poor people.
- Create incentives for the pursuance of technical and higher education opportunities for our youth.
- Increase government accountability and resident participation in our democracy.
- Break down barriers for people of different language proficiencies by providing access to interpretation and content in multiple languages in the work site of our public institutions.

How can JMU and the City of Harrisonburg partner?

Carolyn Frank (I)

Open communication is key, I strongly support the City and JMU quarterly meetings to promote that communication, allowing both entities to explore areas of mutual benefit as well as anticipate areas of potential concerns. Challenges presented by a changing city and JMU growth requires fostering a strong relationship to partner for our future together. I recognize and appreciate the stimulus JMU has to the local economy. The JMU Economic Impact Studies in 2016 provides detail of JMU and City’s current interactions and mutual community support. As the economy is bearing down on cities and universities like never before, JMU and the City’s focus should be strengthening our partnership in areas of economic development and sustainability. We need to seize opportunities to partner for research and development of environmentally friendly policies, forwarding local entrepreneurship for JMU students and continued publicizing the skilled workforce coming out of JMU to attract businesses into our city with strategically planned growth benefitting both JMU and the City.

Chris Jones (D)

Vice-Mayor Richard Baugh, City Manager Eric Campbell, and I meet with President Alger and the leadership at JMU on a quarterly basis to maintain face-to-face dialogue and healthy communication. This group is called the City Council JMU Liaison committee. It’s important that we continuously have these meetings with Harrisonburg and JMU leadership to keep communication channels open. At one of these meetings I was able to inform President Alger that we as a city had begun supplying our police department with body cameras. Shortly thereafter JMUPD began wearing body cameras. Good things come out of these meetings. In addition, I hope that we can have more students interacting with city staff to help with public works, public safety, and other departments.

JMU is a great neighbor and provider of jobs, education, and cultural opportunities to our city. As the city and the campus each grow our relationship will become even closer, especially now that the hotel and conference center is complete. The conference center is a physical symbol that shows how great the partnership is between the city and JMU since my time on council. Moreover, I was one of three council members that voted to ensure that there was a more accessible voting precinct on campus for students. It’s important that students know that three Democrats voted for the precinct. The Republican and Independent Council Members voted against a voting precinct on campus. I hope that current students at my alma mater remain civically engaged and vote every year at the precinct on campus to prove the naysayers wrong.

Frank McMillan (I)

The relationship between the city and JMU is a partnership. Harrisonburg is fortunate to have a great working relationship with JMU. JMU provides volunteers to our local schools and stimulates our economy through shopping at our stores. We need continue to have a strong partnership because when we do – the city and JMU win. I will work with our local business leaders to help find opportunities for our local business to hire well-qualified employees entering the job market.

Sal Romero, Jr. (D)

Our JMU students are an important part of who we are as Harrisonburg. They represent almost half of our population. It is essential we continue to build strong relationships and I can assure you when I get elected, I will work hard to make sure that happens. It would be great for JMU students to serve on committees, attend city council meetings, and become more intentionally connected to our city for them to have a VOICE. Our city needs to continue to work more closely with university departments like civic engagement/outreach and engagement, etc., and student organizations to collaborate and build a city that works for all of us. It is super important we do all we can to not have a JMU bubble and a Harrisonburg Bubble, but ONE COMMUNITY UNITED.

Paloma Saucedo de la Pena (I)

Cultivate partnerships with JMU and the city. Create opportunities for JMU students to intern and/or volunteer in Harrisonburg. Allow JMU students to get involved in the city to help gain experience in their majors and help the city as well. Many agencies in the city do great work with homelessness, domestic violence, and more. Also, collaborate with JMU to use its facilities to help with the over-populated high schools.

What are your plans for the city’s budget and taxes?

Carolyn Frank (I)

I plan on having a sharp focus on prioritized, strategic and rational financial planning in working through the city budget. We have to balance our city’s needs vs wants, seek to identify and implement innovative and appropriate solutions which work now and will build a financial structure to support a strong future for our city. My goal is to collaborate with other city council members on budget decisions which will create a legacy of economic sustainability for future generations. For this to happen; our city’s budget must be carefully scrutinized. Our property tax rate has increased 44% in six years. New stormwater fees and increased property assessments all add to homeowner’s tax responsibility with some homeowners seeing as much as a 57% increase in their tax bill. Our meal tax increased from 10% to 12.3% and Council added a 5% admission tax in 2018 in order to balance its FY-2018-2019 budget. The city could be headed for a future financial crisis and many retired citizens are worried about their financial future as well. I want our city to move from being the 19th most financially-stressed city in Virginia to a model which fosters economic development – including improving access to good job opportunities, encouraging private investment, and supporting the tax base that enables the City to deliver services without stressing our citizens financially. This will require time and some tough and often not popular decisions by any future City Council leaders.

Chris Jones (D)

I do not believe a councilmember should have set plans for the budget or tax rate. We should wait to review the needs and request of the department heads, city manager and the residents of our city. After that review we should make decisions at that time. Furthermore, taxes only need to increase when necessary. Maintaining clean water, public safety, public education, sidewalks, streets, waste removal, snow removal and debris removal are top priority along with a variety of other things. That maintenance of those top priorities are the only reasons as to why taxes should be raised in the near future. This year there was no tax increase. That was a relief considering future projects that are on the horizon.

Frank McMillan (I)

I plan on promoting financially sustainable solutions to our budget process. Keeping taxes low while maintaining our high quality of life is most important. It is imperative that council members pay their personal taxes if council votes to raise taxes on the citizens. We must hold the school board accountable in the dealings with certain builders to prevent cost overruns. Our budgets should look to plan for the future and plan for the long term sustainability of Harrisonburg, I have the experience to accomplish this.

Sal Romero, Jr. (D)

I think it is important to note that our tax rate is considerably lower than comparable cities in VA. If our citizens take into account what taxes do for us, we can start to educate everyone on why we can’t afford to lower our tax rate: everything from safe water, maintaining our streets, our 10 public schools - and our trash collection to just name a few - are reasons why our taxes are so important. I do believe, however, that the meals tax in our city has to be addressed. It’s hurting our restaurants since they can’t raise their prices due to the 7% tax.

Paloma Saucedo de la Pena (I)

We must evaluate unnecessary city projects that represent a fiscal burden for the city’s budget and our moral values.

School Board Candidates’ Responses to Student Questionnaire What are some additional options besides a four-year university that Harrisonburg students could explore post-graduation that would help them prepare a successful future?

Obie Hill

College is not for everyone, but making a living after high school should be a goal for every student. Fortunately, the city of Harrisonburg houses many local businesses, schools and organizations that provide a variety of resources for current high school students and graduates. Massanutten Technical Center (MTC) is one of these resources and is an organization that assists students and adults in workforce development, job skills training, and employment. MTC has a Work-Based Learning program designed to provide direct links for high school students to their profession of choice.

The Harrisonburg Workforce Center (HWC) located on James Madison University’s campus is another organization that provides work readiness training, tutoring, paid and unpaid work experiences, occupational skills training, and alternative secondary school services. HWC also provides On-the-Job Training (OJT), internships, and registered apprentices. MTC and HWC both offer services and resources for students with disabilities.

Another local program is the Skyline Literacy program that provides educational services in English for non-native speakers and the opportunity for individuals to acquire a General Equivalency Diploma (GED). Students could also explore the option of enlisting into the military especially since there are military recruiting facilities located within Harrisonburg. High school students, who desire to explore options besides a four-year university or college, should rest assured that there are many options available to them within Harrisonburg. Our local universities and colleges offer career-training programs, and have partnered with local businesses and organizations within our city to provide opportunities for students to explore pre/post graduation.

Andy Kohen

I believe that students in a four-year institution learn considerable academic content, how to think critically, how to communicate and how to work collaboratively. I believe that nearly every high school graduate could benefit from a four-year collegiate experience. However, I am aware that this is not necessarily the best option for everyone, and alternatives need to be available for students not attending four-year institutions. I would note that, to date, there are many opportunities to prepare students in the school system for any path they choose take after high school, including apprenticeships and community colleges. I will continue to support instructional programs targeted at the diverse desires of students in Harrisonburg, including dual enrollment, MTC and governor’s school. I am supportive of the recently begun program of internships for high school students in Harrisonburg.

Kristen Loflin

My experience as a parent of two elementary-aged students has shaped my views of Harrisonburg City Public Schools (HCPS). Our daughters have been fortunate to participate in numerous extracurricular activities through HCPS from as early as kindergarten, and the schools have given hundreds of students the opportunity to become bilingual and biliterate as part of the dual language immersion program offered at 5 of 6 elementary schools and 1 of 2 middle schools. This early exposure to language, culture, arts, and STEM opportunities open doors of possibility for future career exploration.

Students in HCPS are offered numerous educational experiences that move them closer to a successful future. Middle and high school students often have opportunities for mentorship, job shadowing, and volunteer experiences in potential career fields. Most notable is the On the Road Collaborative where middle and high school students gain experience in a variety of career fields and make connections to industry leaders in the community. HHS students are able to take certificate classes through Massanutten Technical Center during the school day. HHS partners with Blue Ridge Community College for dual enrollment classes, and many students from HHS go on to BRCC for their associates degree, while some transfer to other four-year universities from there.

What experiences make you qualified for office? What are your main priorities? What should the community know about you before Election Day?

Obie Hill

I am a product of public education and a proud parent of two young girls who are students of HCPS. My wife is a full-time teacher in HCPS, and as a counselor in Virginia, I have worked and collaborated with our schools and students in our city of Harrisonburg as well as the neighboring counties for the past six years and counting. My main priority is to ensure that our diverse group of students, especially within the city of Harrisonburg, receives high quality education in an environment that is conducive to such.

What the community should know about me before Election Day is that I am devoted to helping our kids and our schools. Harrisonburg feels like home to me and as long as I reside in our city, I plan to remain committed to building our community and the lives of our students.

Andy Kohen

First, I have served on the school board for 4 years and had a four-decade long career as a professional educator. My main priority is to serve the Harrisonburg community. I believe that education is the most important investment a community can make. I will work on improving cooperation between the School Board and the City Council. I hope to begin installing money-saving, renewable energy resources in the city schools, focusing first on installation of photo-voltaic solar panels on those schools able to most easily adapt to their installation.

Kristen Loflin

As a mental health counselor, I value not only academic achievement, but also emotional and social growth in our society. I hope to see the continuation of the emotional education of our children as a priority. I would like to find more time in the school day for movement as we know that children learn best when they have time to exercise their bodies as well as their brains. As we consider the planning and implementation of a second high school for Harrisonburg, I want to be sure that there is equity for students, teachers and staff, and educational programs.

One overarching theme I would like to see aided through my activity on the school board is to provide deeper mental and emotional support to many of our students. Many young students face challenges most adults would not know how to approach; an increase in mental health support through an increase in school counselors, psychologists, social workers, as well as family outreach would lift students and families so that students can return their focus to their larger goals of academic advancement.

Since the majority of a child's day is spent at school, the environment they learn in makes a large impact on their ability to accomplish academic work. I look forward to continuing the path of the current school board that voted unanimously to build a second high school to alleviate the overcrowding at our high school. Overcrowding greatly impacts the health and welfare of the students, faculty, and staff at HHS, and building a second high school with a focus on the educational process needed for secondary education will be a top priority for school board members.

Staff recruitment and retention is of great importance to me. The faculty and staff of the Harrisonburg City Public Schools show their commitment to excellence, care for their students, and drive to see success in every student. Just today I received a note from our youngest daughter's teachers asking what extracurricular activities the students participate in as they want to support their students outside of school as well as in the classroom. We need to retain teachers that go above and beyond; we all know that every extra hour we spend at our job is an extra hour away from our families, and it is not the exception for HCPS faculty and staff to do this for their students. I look forward to participating in the search for a new superintendent, as they will lead by example for the rest of the HCPS system. I would like to see smaller class sizes, more teaching assistants in classrooms, and more opportunities for life balance and self-care for our educators.

What is your stance on the new high school? When do you think it should be built? How big do you think it should be? Where will you get funding?

Obie Hill

I am in favor of a new high school due to my prior involvement with our schools, students, and community. In the spring of 2017, Harrisonburg City Schools initiated a process to engage our community on the issue of a new high school. I served as the co-vice chair of this 30-member High School Space Study initiative and as a committee we carefully evaluated enrollment trends and projections to reveal the growing problem of overcrowding at our current high school. We also explored several options submitted by various architectural firms to relieve the capacity issue in our high school and we unanimously voted in May (2017) in favor of building a new high school. On May 16, 2017, the committee chair and co-vice chairs presented our findings and recommendation to the school board in a formal presentation.

In October (2017), I partnered with a local group of concerned Harrisonburg residents made up of parents, community leaders, and educators and we formed FORHHS2. Our group was formed with the intention of showing community support for a second high school. As a group, we (FORHHS2) would like our new high school built as soon as possible. Our city has recently purchased (from JMU) a 60-acre parcel of land for our new high school situated between South Main Street (Route 11) and Interstate 81. It is located just behind Valley Lanes, Steven Toyota, and the Harrisonburg Auto Outlet.

In December (2017) Harrisonburg City School Board made a recommendation to Harrisonburg City Council for a new high school to open in the 2021-2022 school year at a cost of \$76 million dollars. In January (2018) City Council voted to build a second high school to open in 2023. The new school that both Harrisonburg City Council and Harrisonburg School Board approved was a 1,200-student high school. A 1,200-student high school is an ideal number for our new high school as demographic research projects a 2,500 high school student enrollment by 2025. Our current high school was built in 2005 to accommodate 1,350 students and now has over 1,800 students enrolled, hence the urgency to build a new high school as soon as possible. The cost for the new high school would be funded by the city through real estate tax increases and other taxes. Harrisonburg city could offer a tax abatement program to assist low-income senior citizens on fixed incomes.

Andy Kohen

I would like the high school to be built as soon as possible, potentially moving up the proposed timeline in the motion approved by City Council this year. It should have a capacity of about 1,200 students. Funding must come from Harrisonburg City Council that will generate the funds from issuing bonds

Kristen Loflin

I have a firm understanding of the overcrowding problem at Harrisonburg High School. I am on the steering committee of ForHHS2, Future of Rocktown, and have witnessed the effects of overcrowding for a number of years prior to the existence of this organization. I worked at HHS when there were extra spaces to meet with students if someone was having a hard day and needed to talk. Now, there are no extra spaces. Every space is utilized at nearly every moment. In accordance with the recommendations of the Space Study Committee and the unanimous vote of the current School Board, I am very much in favor of a new high school being built with an opening date as soon as possible. Because of the delays put in place by the current City Council, there will approximately 900 extra students impacted by the overcrowding at HHS, and in spring of 2023 there will be 28 mobile learning units (trailers) at HHS. In regards to the details of how the future high school is built, my hope is that it will be built with intention for the students and faculty and staff that will spend their days there. While many of us have a soft spot in our hearts for the high school from which we graduated, that should not necessarily be the school we choose to build at this moment. We should build a school equipped to teach to the diverse needs of our community with a look to the future, not a nod to the past.

Funding is certainly a concern for our community. While the School Board makes decisions about the educational system for our city, City Council controls the funds. In recent years projects and operating budgets have been considerably scaled down to meet the demands of Council. Unfortunately, past City Councils have not chosen to invest in educational infrastructure to

keep up with a growing community. I believe our city’s youth determine the direction of our community as a whole, and therefore would like to give our students every opportunity to grow as enlightened, caring, and responsible citizens. This may mean putting off something that the Council had planned to fund or is currently funding. This may mean a small increase in the tax rate. Those opposed to an increase in tax rate cite our neighboring county’s tax rate; however the differences between Rockingham County and Harrisonburg City are far greater than the difference in tax rate. Harrisonburg provides a large amount of services to their citizens. Cities in Northern Virginia, for instance, have comparable services offered and have a higher tax rate. After a full examination of funding a new high school through a tax increase, the average household would see an increase of \$25 per month; however, it seems highly unlikely that City Council would fund the new school entirely through a tax increase. For further details on possible tax scenarios, I would advise curious individuals to read the data posted at <http://forhhs2.org/faqs/how-much-could-taxes-increase>.

How long will it take to hire a new superintendent? How long will it take to get a firm to help do research for the new superintendent? What kind of management style do you think the new superintendent should have? This area is diverse, what background do you think they should have?

Obie Hill

A new superintendent search is already underway and a national search firm i.e. BWP & Associates has been selected by Harrisonburg School Board. This search firm specializes in assisting boards that are seeking superintendents. Harrisonburg City School Board will hold a series of input meetings for both the Harrisonburg school community and the broader Harrisonburg community to engage in the process of identifying the best candidate. Our new prospective superintendent is set to serve on or after July 1, 2019. Our new superintendent should possess leadership skills that cover several areas such as interpersonal skills, organizational skills, managerial skills, public relation skills, communication skills, financial skills, and instructional skills. Harrisonburg is a unique and diverse city and it is important for our superintendent to embrace the culture of a diversely growing city. Our new superintendent needs to possess vision for our city, be a negotiator, a team builder, possess integrity, be innovative, a risk taker with good judgment, as well as enthusiastic.

Andy Kohen (Responses to in-person interview with student)

I think that a new superintendent will be hired by February 2019. The school board has selected a search firm that will do diligent work in order to have this operation completed. I believe that the new superintendent should have previous experience as a superintendent or assistant superintendent. I also believe that the new superintendent must have a collaborative and cooperative management approach, with respect to her/his administrative and teaching personnel as well as with the elected school board. The new superintendent must be comfortable with and advocate the core value beliefs of HCPS, which include that each child matters and that we are committed to every student succeeding, I have no prior expectations about the new superintendent’s personal background other than the demonstrated ability to lead a school division with a diverse student population.

Kristen Loflin

The search for a superintendent will be an intensive process. The current School Board has just recently decided on a firm to assist in the search process, and applications will be due mid-January. The start date for a new superintendent will depend upon factors between HCPS and the system from which the incumbent is hired. I am confident that I will be able to easily integrate myself into the ongoing search. I look forward to examining candidates’ education, management style, background, and personality, as all factors are important when choosing a superintendent. A superintendent should be an individual who leads by example, and highly values the quality of life for students and faculty and staff. A superintendent needs to put forth a collaborative nature with other stakeholders such as City Council, the city manager, and leaders within our local universities. I will choose a candidate that understands the needs of our diverse and growing community.

Do you have any specific ideas on how to combat poverty in the city? Is the current school board doing enough to support the less privileged in the schools or should more be being done?

Obie Hill

In 2009, The Commonwealth of Virginia developed the Virginia Poverty Reduction Task Force (VPRTF), which was developed to analyze poverty in the state, along with its causes and potential solutions from a governmental level. It was recommended by VPRTF to invest in children and education since early childhood programs provide children with the foundation for future economic and academic success. Access to high quality educational services will assist individuals in becoming better educated, which will lead to opportunities of obtaining better jobs and ultimately decreases the likelihood of poverty. There are many local organizations and government affiliated departments within Harrisonburg that are assisting with poverty in many ways such as Harrisonburg City Public Schools, the Department of Social Services, the Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority, the Harrisonburg Police Department, Mercy House, Our Community Place, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Free Clinic, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Our Community Place, Open Doors, People Helping People, United Way, and many others. The current school board is significantly contributing to the less privileged in schools by providing services to children such as providing meals to schools, adequate training of staff members, technology, and transportation. Elon Rhodes Early Learning Center and Bluestone Elementary School are initiatives that Harrisonburg School Board realized to spread out students in order to maintain small class sizes in our schools.

Andy Kohen

My views on combating poverty in the city extend far beyond what the school division does or can do. I know that the school board is aware of the diversity of economic situations of the students that we serve and is supportive of all programs to equalize the opportunities to learn for all of them. We support all the governmental (state and federal) programs designed to accomplish this and take pride in the award-winning programs that exist in HCPS, including those for our early childhood learning programs and our nutritional programs available to all children in the community. I actively support budgets containing at least cost-of-living annual pay increases for teachers and staff of HCPS.

Kristen Loflin

Harrisonburg City Public Schools have a tremendously creative faculty and staff. I continue to be in awe at the programming that takes place before, during, and after the school day. Teachers, administrators, and all school staff work tirelessly to give each student every opportunity they can imagine. They make learning fun for students and keep students and families engaged in the process. Another example of quality after school programming is the On the Road Collaborative, which connects educational experiences and caring adults with low-income middle and high school youth. Students are recruited for after school clubs and sports regardless of family income. Students and advisors do tremendous work fundraising and involving community sponsors to make sure all students can participate.

HCPS schools are Title 1 schools, which indicates that a high percentage of students qualify for free or reduced cost lunch. Many years ago HCPS added breakfast as an option for students, and in recent years made breakfast free for all students as part of homeroom time. Moving breakfast from the cafeteria to the classroom helped to remove the stigma associated with having breakfast at school. This year many schools within HCPS have moved toward free lunch for all students, again making eating school lunch a more normative part of the school day. HCPS implemented a Mobile Cafe during the summer to provide meals for students when they might not have a nutritious meal. The Mobile Cafe traveled to different neighborhoods and schools throughout the summer. Different schools have different food options, and I would hope to see an improvement in the quality and delivery of food throughout HCPS. While not a program directly implemented by the School Board, many local schools have backpack programs to help with food need for families over the weekend.

How would you like to see JMU students, faculty and staff engage in the Harrisonburg City School system? What kind of partnerships and programs are mutually-beneficial and productive?

Obie Hill

I would like to see JMU students, faculty, and staff continue to engage the Harrisonburg City School system by maintaining partnerships already established with our local schools and organizations and explore new ones within our school system and city. The Mentor Experience Civic Learning Program between JMU faculty, staff, and students and our elementary, middle and high schools provides students with an opportunity to tangibly see what life is like for a college student and the various opportunities that are available to help a student reach their career goals. This program also provides students with opportunities for future involvement at JMU. JMU has established various partnerships with our schools and local businesses and offer services to our community that meet common economic, social, cultural, and educational goals. JMU is deeply connected to the city of Harrisonburg and our city values the involvement that JMU has had in our city and among our students.

Andy Kohen

I would like to expand on the Harrisonburg City Schools/JMU cooperation. I support the recently started program of a selected number of students in the JMU College of Education being full-time interns in HCPS with a significant stipend that will lead to them being hired as regular teachers. There already are JMU faculty that collaborate in several HCPS programs including STEM and college readiness. Indeed, one of my colleagues on the school board is a JMU faculty member and alert to partnerships. I am also a supporter of the JMU program designed to foster collegiate readiness for students in the Valley (not just Harrisonburg) who would be the first in their families to attend college. There are already JMU faculty that engage with HCPS in valuable advisory capacities because their children are or have been students in HCPS.

Kristen Loflin

Our community works best when all voices are heard. HCPS is fortunate to have engaged faculty at JMU who integrate volunteer experiences into their students' course curricula. JMU students have shown their desire to impact change in the daily lives of HCPS students in the numerous ways that they volunteer time and resources. HCPS provides many practicum, internship, and student teaching placement opportunities for JMU students, but there could be more connectivity.

I could imagine dietetics students researching and presenting on school nutrition and purchasing power such that college students would gain valuable real-world experience, and HCPS would benefit from having new ideas circulated. Health Science and kinesiology students could formulate a program that helps to increase school-day movement. The Breeze and School of Media Arts and Design could partner with Newsstreak, the HHS school newspaper. Students in the business and finance departments could consider the challenges facing the City Council on how best to fund major infrastructure funding concerns. The engineering department could collaborate with the education department to offer ideas as to how to build schools that implement best practices for teaching and the betterment of our students. In other sectors students majoring in engineering or urban geography could collaborate with HCPS and the city in general to help with public transportation concerns. HCPS students visit the JMU arboretum and planetarium for field trips, which provide students with science exploration that they will later use on their SOLs. I view all educational settings as preparation for living life, and in life finding mentors and collaborative groups benefits the individual as well as the collective.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the candidates and their campaigns for taking the time to respond to questions and provide information so that our communities can make informed decisions on Election Day.

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