

Williamson County Elections – May 4, 2010

Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Brandon Ryan

Office/District: Williamson County Board of Commissioners/11th District

1) *What is your motivation in seeking election to the Williamson County Commission? How does your background and/or experience qualify you to hold this position?*

- a. As a Franklin native, I care deeply about our County. I have two young sons. I want to make sure they grow-up in the same special place that I did many years ago. Like many of you, I watch the news on a nightly basis. What is going on right now both on the Federal and County level...concerns me. And it should concern you. Our County government is facing enormous debt and very few people are talking about the tough and difficult decisions that have to be made to keep us from falling into uncontrollable debt. As an experienced businessman with a successful record, I have the knowledge it takes to make these difficult, yet responsible decisions. I do not advocate the type of cuts that are necessary light-heartedly, but because it's the right thing to do.

2) *What should be the top priorities of the Williamson County Commission over the next several years? How would you address and/or fund these priorities?*

- a. Again, the top priority of the Williamson County Board of Commissioners should be to get our spending under control. The level of debt we are now facing is truly daunting. We have to learn how to pay our bills with the money that we have. I firmly believe that additional taxes are not needed to achieve this goal. With a property tax rate of \$2.31 per \$100, it provides for adequate funding. We must be responsible enough to treat our County Budget like each of us does our own personal bank accounts.

3) *What is your vision of residential and commercial development within the unincorporated portions of the County over the next 5-10 years?*

- a. To date, as a whole, the County has done a good job of properly planning our growth into unincorporated portions. With that said, there is still room for improvement. We can still do a better job of planning for anticipated traffic patterns. During this downturn in our economy, I suspect we will not see the same growth rate in Williamson County that we have in the past 10-20 years. It's important that we continue to properly plan any growth and not have a knee-jerk reaction to approve any new plan in hopes of increasing our tax revenue. I favor a cautious approach to any additional growth into unincorporated portions of the County. Once we pave over these areas, there is no going back. We are all blessed to live in a beautiful County with an enormous amount of historical significance. It's important we protect these assets for future generations by properly planning any additional growth.

4) *Williamson County has realized tremendous success in terms of economic development and corporate recruitment efforts over the past several years. How would you propose to continue and/or enhance these efforts?*

- a. Two things have contributed to the explosion of economic development we have seen over the past several years. 1) A low tax rate; and 2) superior schools for our children. I will continue to fight for low tax rates. With expected increases in our federal taxes, it is unfair to saddle our residents with even higher taxes on the local level. This is one area of the economy we can control. The quickest way to discourage additional growth in our County is to increase any taxes realized on the local level. Finally, while we are all proud of the results we have seen with our local schools, we must continue to push our County School Board for improved test scores and to make sure we get as much value as possible for every tax dollar given to it.

5) *Do county governments within Tennessee need broader taxing authority granted from the state legislature? Does Williamson County? If so, what specific revenue-generating options would you support?*

- a. I do not believe additional taxing authority is needed for Williamson County. Once more, we have an adequate level of revenue. What we need to focus on is the level of spending by the County Commission.

6) *Under what circumstances should local governments exercise the power of eminent domain? Is there a need to limit or expand this power on the federal or state level?*

- a. According to the Fourth Amendment of the Bill of Rights, "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated." There is on extremely rare occasion times for the government to exercise this power of eminent domain. With that said, it should only be used after extreme caution and due diligence. There is certainly no need for expanded powers by either the Federal or State Governments in terms of seizing personal property. The right to own personal property without the fear of government seizure is the cornerstone to any free society.

7) *How important is the development and preservation of diverse housing options within Williamson County? What role, if any, should county government play in this effort?*

- a. I firmly believe County government should play only a limited role in the development of diverse housing options. Allowing the free market to work in the arena of housing is always the best option.

8) *Do you have issues or concerns regarding the County's current sign ordinance? Please explain.*

- a. I do not believe any adjustments are needed to the current County sign ordinance. I would vote against any measure that would further tighten any regulations regarding sign ordinances.

9) *How should elected officials in Williamson County balance the need between economic development and protection of our natural resources and the environment?*

- a. Even during this recent downturn in the economy, we have been blessed in this County with a vibrant economy. The balance between continued economic development and protecting our natural resources is a very delicate one. Instead of these two factors competing with one another, I believe the best system is one where they work together. While providing jobs and the ability to provide for one's family will always come first to me, I do believe if little attention is paid to protecting our historical significance and/or our natural resources, this delicate balance will no longer be achieved. A County without beautiful natural

resources and historical sites will quickly find itself without a growing pipeline of businesses wanting to locate there. My primary focus in this regard will be to properly plan any growth and how we will pay for the additional services required for such growth.

10) *Should Williamson County government advocate or promote initiatives aimed at improving environmental sustainability? If so, where should these efforts focus?*

- a. Like many of you, my family enjoys canoeing on the Harpeth River and playing at our local parks. I certainly do not want these resources to be tarnished by any individual or organization. We are lucky to be living in times where people and companies, for the most part, all agree these resources need to be protected. The current level of laws protecting these resources is more than adequate to achieve this goal. If someone is found to be violating this public trust, they should be punished according to the current law.

11) ***Other Comments:*** I have been fortunate enough to be blessed with a loving wife and family. After moving across this country as a Television News Anchor, my wife and I decided to come back to Williamson County to raise a family and pursue a business career. I want to give my children the same opportunities that we have in the years to come. In order to do that, we must have a limited local government. I am for protecting the rights and freedoms assured to us by our State and Federal Constitutions. In order to achieve these goals, we must have a government that is limited in scope and allows for the most liberties as possible for our citizens. If you believe in responsible spending and allowing the free market to work, I ask for your support.

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