



# Meeting with Delaware County District Attorney, Jack Stollsteimer.

Jack Stollsteimer started by talking about his first 25 days and the level of gun violence that occurred. He shared an anecdote about the shooting of a 79-year-old man by a 14-year-old and that the focus of his term in the office is on lowering gun violence. He is looking to models that worked in Philadelphia, creating more diversionary programs and community programs. He announced his introduction of an environmental crimes unit, an initiative called “Stand up for Working Families” aimed at addressing misclassification of workers. Lastly, he wants his department to focus on community policing and prosecuting.

Then the floor opened for questions.

- 1) Will the DA's office make a small amount of marijuana a summary offense as opposed to a felony? How do we keep it at the Magistrate level instead of sending the case to media? He responded by saying they want to make it a civil offense for a small amount, maybe 30g- which is the amount other areas have used- instead of being arrested. He mentioned that in 2016, 3000 people were arrested for simple possession of weed and 59% of the people were African Americans. Showing that African Americans are being disproportionately targeted. Part of this is the lack of uniformity between towns and cities in Delco and so by February he is hoping to put out directives to ensure uniformity.
- 2) How much authority do you have over probation and parole? and have you any plans for reform? He started by saying that the county has a poor record of bringing cases to trial, charges are piled on to force a plea deal. What are your thoughts on this lack of due process system? He stated that he had very little influence on probation and parole, however, he has changed the policy for pretrial, and has brought in someone new (Selena...?) to handle pretrial, to reduce the number of cases that go to the district court.
- 3) We made a petition to the former DA to test the DNA of Leroy Evans. As you know we support Leroy Evans and believe he was wrongfully convicted and would like to see him get out of jail: He responded by saying that his office has moved on the DNA testing, they met with Leroy's attorney, and have sent the DNA out to get tested. The AG has

established a conviction integrity review as an independent party to handle the review of the case/evidence.

- 4) Talk to us about Delaware County vis a vis people of color? His opinion is that the election of all 8 has changed the political climate. He also talked about Nusratj Rashid the 1<sup>st</sup> black woman and Muslim to be elected. Jobs started being posted to the public to encourage a diverse pool of applicants. However, one of the challenges they face with recruiting is that Delco's salary is low.
- 5) What plans does the DA's office have to engage the county's youth and young adults? They have recently gotten grant money, and the governor is willing to help, and so they are trying to leverage resources to create programs.
- 6) Would you be favorable to implementing Youth Advisory Boards across Delco. for 1<sup>st</sup> time offenders, minor charges, and mentor them with civic-minded persons and/or community service? 10 years ago Delco had youth aid panels, and while he is not sure why they were phased out, he wants to work on getting them back. He believes they are effective in helping young people.
- 7) What are the biggest challenges you see impacting Delco? There are some rich cities and poor cities in Delco and he wants the make them realize that we are one community.
- 8) What programs does your office intend on implementing for a reduction in police harassment-related arrest and racial profiling? He is working with police, and he wants to provide them with more training and involve the police in district court proceedings. One of the challenges is that Delco is very parochial and so training hasn't been standardized between departments.
- 9) How will the decision not to hear witnesses and present documents at trial (impeachment) affect trials for ordinary people moving forward? He still believes evidence will always be necessary to win cases.
- 10) What changes are you implementing for the George Hall Prison? Introduced a prison oversight board that includes elected officials and someone who works with drug rehabilitation. They are also working to de-privatize the prison. However, the board is trying to understand the operation because it has been in secret for so long before any further action can be taken.
- 11) Follow-up on the status of private prisons. Information regarding appointments to prison board, parole board, etc. Defense hubs for Delco? The city council appoints the prison board, so he has no say over the appointments.

- 12) What would you or in specific terms, what have you done to develop a trusting relationship with the Immigrant community in the county? His policy is to stop calling ICE and instead focus on ARD programs.
- 13) What are the qualifications for the job of bailiff? Are there any minority bailiffs working in the municipality (in Media)? It is a union position appointed by the county council. He believes there's some conflict between the county council and the judicial branch over who is selected but he is not sure how the process works. However, he hopes that the 3 branches can work together to make the process more fair and transparent.
- 14) What was the purpose of firing ADAs from communities that are republican strongholds? He stressed that it wasn't a political decision, but he was trying to change the culture of the department and removed people who weren't going to accept the change.
- 15) Will the DA's office consider working with High schools, and community-based organizations to put on special assemblies on crime and gun violence? he agrees it's a good idea to visit when his other programs are up and running.

Myron McNeely special presentation:- he thanked him for coming and gave him a sweatshirt saying "Friend of DCBC."