



CORTNEY W. MCKEE

State Senate, District 6

Prior to running for office, Cortney McKee has worked in hospitality and as a political consultant in Garland County since 2014.

What is the biggest issue facing the state of Arkansas and how would you address this problem if elected?

Fair taxation. Recent changes to our tax code eliminated the top brackets of income earners, shifting even more of the burden to the poor, a move that could lead to more homeless and people are priced out of their inherited homes with higher property taxes and assessments. We've seen this with other states as they replace their income tax with higher registration fees and property taxes.

What would be your top 3 priorities for utilizing the surplus budget in Arkansas, if you had full power over the surplus?

Teacher pay raises, expanded preschool access, increased efficiency in the the roll out of affordable, reliable broadband to every single Arkansan.

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What (if any) changes do you believe are needed to the criminal legal system in Arkansas?

I think the state of Arkansas should follow the federal government's lead in expunging federal possession and nonviolent marijuana charges. I believe that those serving "without parole" have a right to have that part of their sentence re-examined. I also oppose privatized prisons.

The Arkansas Public Defenders Commission has been underfunded for many years. Would you support increasing funding to help bring the department in line with American Bar Association recommendations which cap caseloads at 150 felony cases per attorney? Why or why not?

Yes, the right to an attorney should mean the right to an attorney that has time to devote to your case.

It has become common knowledge across the state of Arkansas that those facing health conditions concerning addiction and mental health are located at an increasing rate in the state prisons and local county jails. What solutions do you feel should be explored in this area?

Again, I support the expungement of nonviolent marijuana charges. I believe we can offer all of our citizens, even those with criminal histories, the opportunity to further their careers through tuition free 2 year colleges. This would have a good effect on recidivism. I believe that the possibility of parole was taken from many in the system and they deserve a second evaluation at that part of their sentences. We have to increase access to mental healthcare for all in the state as well as bolster our drug court system designed to give people treatment instead of jail.

Research indicates that juveniles that encounter the justice system in their youth will have a higher likelihood of entanglement with the adult criminal justice system. What strategies do you support to decrease this likelihood?

Try juveniles in different venues, don't take them there to learn how to become criminals.

Neuroscience research has indicated that the human brain is not fully formed until approximately age 25, meaning that impulse control and long-term thinking can be impaired. Would you consider reclassifying how Arkansas young adults are treated in the adult system? Are there specific adjustments that should/could be made?

I have not had the opportunity to consider this prior, but I would definitely give it consideration.

Do you think we have a “parole problem” and how would you address it?

I do believe we have a parole problem, separate from the recidivism one. I would evaluate our system and get testimony from criminal justice experts.

The Arkansas Department of Corrections identified reducing solitary confinement —a practice labeled torture under international law— as a major objective in their 2021–2022 Strategic Plan, however the number of people held in isolation continues to grow. Do you agree with the need to reduce solitary confinement in our state? Why or why not?

Yes. Solitary confinement, with absolutely no contact with others, is unethical.

Additional Comments

If elected, I looking forwarded to working with you to improve Arkansas for ALL Arkansans, including those who are incarcerated and thier families.