



EDWARD M. FLANIGAN, III

State Representative, District 41

Prior to running for office, Edward Flanigan served in the Arkansas Army National Guard from 2006 to 2020 and worked as a federal technician at Camp Robinson.

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

Over taxation, as evidenced by the \$1.6B surplus we had this year, followed by the good ol' boy corruption in Little Rock

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

Give it back to the Arkansans that paid it in

How do you define public safety and what changes would you make to keep all communities safe?

Public safety is keeping the streets safe enough for children to walk to a friends house without fear of being abducted.

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

That is a question with too many answers. The Arkansas good ol' boy system has to go, as does the prison for profit. And in place of the 400 or so parolees that may get out early, how about we release the 12k+ that are in the Arkansas Department of Corrections from a cannabis charge. How can the state still arrest people for something the state collects taxes on???

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?

Only if the number of overall felony cases is reduced by the number of cannabis related charges in the state.

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?

Addiction and mental health issues should NEVER be treated as a crime, as they are here in Arkansas, and many other states. Addicts should be sent to treatment facilities that will actually help them not only get clean, but help them better themselves to be a functional member of society rather than treating them as criminals. Police officers should not be the first responders to mental health calls.

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?

Parents need to be able to be more involved in their children's lives, and stop having to allow the school system to raise their children. Parental involvement in a child's day to day life would help, as would making kids that commit petty crimes face their victims and make it right, so much more than sending a kid to juvie for swiping a pack of gum.

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?

Definitely! I'm no expert, but in the brief time I worked for the ARDOC, many inmates said they learned more about being a criminal in the penitentiary than they did in the free world.

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

I believe we punish crimes very disproportionately for example, a person selling a half an ounce or more of cannabis will get anywhere from 6 to 30 year in prison (especially if the grew it), and that is the same as a person convicted of pedophilia!

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?

Solitary confinement, like so many other forms of punishment in the prison system, has a huge potential to be abuse, and often is.