



CLIFF HART

State Senate, District 10

Prior to running for office, Cliff Hart has worked as a small business owner for the past 20 years.

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

The lack of public services for working families is the biggest issue we face. Addressing this issue requires better access to Pre-k and after school programs as well as elder care programs. Using our tax revenue from the budding hemp and cannabis industry as well as NOT reducing income tax on the wealthy makes it possible to fund these programs.

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

See above.

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

The criminal legal system needs to provide better public defence and remove mandatory sentencing.

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 legal profession knows what is needed to provide equitable justice for all citizens. We should heed their opinion.

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?

We should expand mental health care and decriminalize addiction in order to keep prisons and jails free of persons with addiction and mental health issues.

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?

To decrease youth entanglement with the criminal justice system we should utilize community policing and strengthen families by offering more and affordable child services.

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?

Yes. Young adults and first time offenders should be given every break in the system. That is why mandatory sentencing is a negative.

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

I do not have enough information on this subject.

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. We should remove solitary confinement as a form of punishment in Arkansas.