

Questionnaire for Candidates for Clerk of Superior Court, Republican Primary Election, March 3, 2026 (Voters in Republican Primary may vote for 1)

Questions

Kristie Miller Culler

Steve McGilvray

1. Article I, Section 18 of the North Carolina Constitution provides that "all courts shall be open." Are there any circumstances you can envision that would cause you to close a courtroom while conducting any judicial hearing entrusted to the clerk of court without violating this constitutional provision? (50 word limit)

2. What about your background or experience makes you more qualified to serve than your opponent? (50 word limit)

3. The clerk of court is now elected in a partisan race. Would you prefer the office to remain that way or be converted to a non-partisan elected position? (Please explain in 25 words or less.)

4. What improvements do you anticipate making in the clerk's office over the next four years, if you are elected? (25 word limit)

5. What are your views on whether employees of your office should be of the same party registration as you are? (50 word limit)

6. What information maintained by the clerk's office, if any, could be made available online (that is not already online)? (50 word limit)

7. What, if anything, can be done by your office to improve the collection of, and distribution of, actual restitution when it is ordered as a part of a sentence? (25 word limit)

7a. What, if anything, can be done by your office to improve the collection of child support payments in the court system? (25 word limit)

8. Are there any areas in which you think the General Assembly needs to make changes to improve the operations of the clerk of court's office? (50 word limit)

9. Give your campaign's three main issues. (50 word limit)

1. Adoption records are confidential; therefore, any adoption hearing before the clerk is closed to the public. For incompetency proceedings, N.C.G.S. § 35A-1112 provides that hearings are open unless, upon request of the respondent, counsel, or guardian ad litem, the clerk shall exclude all persons not directly involved or testifying.

2. With more than 30 years in the legal field and over 15 years in the Clerk of Superior Court's Office, I bring deep institutional knowledge, proven leadership, and hands-on courtroom experience. I understand the law, the people we serve, and how to run an efficient, accountable office.

3. I have no preference. We serve all citizens equally and must remain impartial and focused on the administration of justice.

4. Improve public accessibility, work with clerks statewide and the Administrative Office of the Courts to strengthen online systems and continue expanding staff training.

5. Clerk's Office employees should be hired and promoted based on qualification, performance, and professionalism, not political affiliation.

6. The Clerk's Office does not control what information is available online. The Administrative Office of the Courts determines what content is published on ncocourts.gov. I would support foreclosure listings and up-set bids being listed online for public access.

7. Our role is limited to accurate recordkeeping and timely disbursement to victims once payments are received for restitution.

7a. The Clerk receives and records child support payments, maintains those records, and distributes funds as ordered. The Clerk does not collect or enforce child support.

8. The General Assembly could support clerks by providing adequate staffing resources and continued funding for technology improvements that enhance efficiency and public access.

9. 1. Expanding communication tools for the public; 2. Technology improvements to make court access easier; 3. Respectful, professional service that helps the public navigate the court system.

1. Yes. When an overriding interest outweighs the public's right of access, such as defendants' right to a fair trial, sensitivity of information. Best practice – give public notice, opportunity for objection.

2. 36 years serving within criminal justice system. From writing citations, investigating homicides, working with DA, Judges, clerks, now as magistrate judge has provided me with insight needed to identify areas which need improvement. Majority of my profession was spent leading, managing personnel. Coaching, educating team members to be their best.

3. Political affiliation has no place within the clerk of court's office. This office serves all persons from all places without prejudice.

4. Transition from reactive office to proactive office. Improve ergonomic workspace to reduce physical strain. Electronic payment, online public portals. Transparency. Accountability. Customer service improvements. E-Forms.

5. My concern is not party affiliation, but more focused on personnel that can perform responsibly, efficiently, and with a passion that we will develop where public service meets community well-being.

6. Since the County's transition to eCourts, the Clerk's Office has taken strides in improving its online presence. Without question, as time passes, so will the availability of the extensive, largely public records that are maintained by the Clerk's office.

7. Aggressively docketing judgments. Manage balance due, ensure victims are notified of right to pursue civil enforcement, coordinate with probation, issue writs of execution, monitoring payments....

7a. Enforce income withholding orders. Immediate issuance of show cause orders upon non-compliance. Administrative enforcement re: license revocation. Modify support when income changes and file directly.

8. Better training opportunities since the extremely rushed implementation of eCourts. Address staffing shortages. Expand virtual court, a system that reduces, rather than adds to the workload of the Clerks.

9. 1. Modernization of technology, training staff on new technologies and improve public access through digital tools. 2. Improve customer service through efficiency and accountability. 3. Management transparency, improve communication with the public while fostering trust in the court system.