

Questionnaire for Candidates for District Attorney,
November 3, 2026 General Election
(Voters may vote for 1)

Questions

Sean Boone

Scott Wells Drorbaugh

General

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 advocate closing a courtroom without violating this constitutional provision? [50 word limit]

2. Please provide a statement of no more than 75 words on your philosophy and qualifications for serving as district attorney.

2a. Specifically, what about your background or experience makes you *more* qualified to serve than your opponent? [50 word limit]

State law

3. What changes, if any, would you recommend in North Carolina sex offender registry laws? [25 word limit]

4. Are there any areas in which you think the General Assembly needs to make changes to improve the administration of justice? [50 word limit]

Local Policy and Issues

5. Is the current staffing of the Alamance County D.A.’s office sufficient to efficiently handle the caseload?

6. Do you think additional assistant D.A.(s) are needed in the district attorney’s office?

6a. Why or why not? [25 word limit]

6b. If yes, how many?

7. Some district attorneys across the country have adopted philosophies that they regard as attempting to address “structural racism,” which they usually define as cumulative law enforcement and criminal justice policies that have a disproportionately adverse effect on people of color, primarily blacks and Hispanics. How much of an issue is “structural racism” in the Alamance County criminal justice system, and what, if anything, would you intend to do as district attorney to address it. [50 word limit]

8. An offshoot of that philosophy has been that some of these same district attorneys have begun to employ what they sometimes term “progressive prosecution,” by which they have stopped prosecuting altogether what they consider to be “low-level” crimes; some examples often cited are: minor drug possession, shoplifting, minor traffic violations. What is your view on the possible application of this philosophy in the D.A.’s office here in Alamance County? [50 word limit]

9. When it comes to prosecution of drug charges, some DA’s offices are setting marijuana as a lower priority. What will be your approach to drug charges, for marijuana and for other substances? [50 word limit]

10. What is your assessment of the relatively new use of Alamance County’s Recovery Court, sometimes referred to as drug court? [50 word limit]

11. How much of a problem are gangs in Alamance County, and what can the D.A.’s office do to address the issue? [25 word limit]

1. I believe transparency in our government, especially in our court system, is critical to maintaining public confidence in our institutions. Thus, I believe this constitutional provision should be strictly construed and any exceptions narrowly tailored. Statutes tailored for the protection of juveniles and child sexual assault victims are appropriate exceptions.

2. When I first ran, I said my philosophy is rooted in the Supreme Court’s statement, “The jury is the voice and conscience of the community.” As a prosecutor for 25 years, and District Attorney for 8 years now, this remains true. I have tried over 110 jury trials in our courts; as the elected District Attorney, I continue to try violent crime and murder cases, using these opportunities to train our younger assistants.

2a. I have practiced law for 29 years, including over 17 years as an Assistant D.A. and 8 years as District Attorney. I am a board-certified specialist in state criminal law. I am endorsed by retired Senior Resident Superior Court Judge Tom Lambeth and by over 135 retired law enforcement officers.

3. Increase felony punishment class from class H to E for violating G.S.14-202.5, which bans high risk sex offenders from online conduct that endangers children.

4. Address the need for human resources. Statewide there is a need for more clerks, prosecutors, and public defenders just to maintain the current volume. Things like rapidly growing population, e-courts implementation, and the sharp increase in investigative data reviews (e.g., body cams, cell phone extractions) have all impacted judicial efficiency.

5. No.

6. Yes.

6a. Alamance is the 27th largest district out of 42, but is 15th in felony superior court dispositions, per AOC data. Over-performing leads to personnel burnout.

6b. At least 3; 2 for Superior Court and 1 for District Court.

7. Alamance County has been blessed with leaders both on the bench and with the bar who conscientiously work to ensure our court system works for everyone, regardless of race. As a prosecutor I have always followed this principle. Thus, our primary consideration in any case is strength of the evidence.

8. Our laws currently provide sufficient leniency for “low-level” offenses. I believe any policy of blanket offense-based amnesty only rewards bad conduct and encourages escalation. This type of philosophy would be particularly bad for North Carolina, where an offender’s prior criminal record is a fundamental part of the sentencing process.

9. Under current sentencing laws, most marijuana offenses are treated as low level crimes. Local smoke shops, where illegal marijuana products targeted to children were recently seized, are multiplying. Drugs are now more potent and deadlier, so relaxing drug prosecution standards is not an option for me. We will remain proactive.

10. The work being done in Recovery Court is truly, verifiably, life-changing, and I am proud to be part of the courthouse team that made it a reality in Alamance County for the first time in history. It also allows us to focus our limited resources on our regular criminal docket.

11. Our local law enforcement is very proactive with gang investigations, minimizing the potential problems. We will always work with officers to prosecute gang crime.

1. I would support courtroom closure only when legally justified by a compelling interest, such as protecting child victims, vulnerable witnesses, confidential information, or an ongoing investigation. I would favor the narrowest restriction necessary, require specific findings on the record, and oppose closure intended to avoid public scrutiny or accountability.

2. My philosophy is that justice requires accountability, fairness, and integrity. With nearly eight years of felony prosecution experience, including cases involving homicide, domestic violence, trafficking, and violent crime, I understand the responsibility entrusted to a District Attorney. I will prioritize violent and repeat offenders, advocate for victims, exercise sound prosecutorial discretion, and pursue alternatives to incarceration when appropriate. My goal is a transparent, effective, efficient and accountable DA’s office.

2a. Mr. Boone is roughly 20 years older; as a result, has more experience. I believe my prosecutorial experience under three different DA administrations, combined with my temperament, adaptability, and ability to relate to people across generations, make me well qualified to lead, mentor, and manage an effective and accountable prosecutor’s office.

3. I would be cautious about changes that weaken offender accountability. One significant hurdle is homelessness, which can make it difficult to comply with address-reporting requirements.

4. I would encourage the General Assembly to address staffing and resource disparities between prosecutors and public defenders. I would also support expanding access to treatment programs and specialty courts, improving court technology and staffing, and promoting greater transparency through consistent statewide reporting of case outcomes and system performance.

5. Yes.

6. Yes.

6a. I believe the current office has opportunities to improve its management and use of existing resources.

6b. 1-2 ADAs.

7. Structural racism is prevalent through the entire criminal justice system not just Alamance County, and deserves an honest, data-driven examination rather than assumptions or political rhetoric. As D.A., I would establish consistent policies, promote transparency, and address any unjustified disparities identified. Every person deserves equal treatment under the law.

8. I do not support blanket policies refusing to prosecute entire categories of offenses. However, prosecutorial discretion is essential because resources are finite, requiring the DA’s Office to prioritize where it invests its time and efforts. I would prioritize violent and repeat offenders while considering dismissal, diversion, or treatment for appropriate minor, nonviolent offenses.

9. I would exercise prosecutorial discretion in minor marijuana possession cases when appropriate, recognizing that resources are finite and must be prioritized. For more dangerous substances, I would focus on holding traffickers and repeat dealers accountable while supporting treatment and recovery opportunities for individuals struggling with addiction.

10. For eligible individuals, treatment and supervision may offer a more effective alternative to repeated incarceration. I would support evaluating the program’s outcomes, including recidivism, successful completion, and cost-effectiveness. Recovery Court should complement, not replace, prosecution of traffickers, violent offenders, and those who pose a significant threat to public safety.

11. DA’s Office should prioritize prosecuting gang-related shootings, violent crimes, firearm offenses, drug trafficking, and repeat offenders. I would strengthen coordination among local, state, federal law enforcement.

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12. In your judgment, how can North Carolina's habitual felon statute be used most effectively in Alamance County cases? [25 word limit]	12. Using it on weak cases is not effective, but utilizing it primarily in strong cases increases our chances of successful prosecution, resulting in longer sentences.	12. North Carolina's habitual felon statute should be used strategically against repeat offenders whose criminal histories demonstrate a persistent disregard for the law.
13. What would you do to reduce the backlog of violent felony cases? [50 word limit]	13. The 2020-2022 courthouse Covid restrictions resulted in significant backlogs statewide, but our effort to catch up was hindered by a lack of qualified defense attorneys to handle violent offenses. In 2023 I worked with our legislators to bring Alamance County's first Public Defender's Office, since then greatly helping resolve cases.	13. I would begin with a comprehensive review of the violent felony docket to identify the causes of delays and prioritize cases involving the greatest threat to public safety. I would emphasize early case assessment, timely discovery, meaningful plea negotiations, and close coordination with law enforcement and the courts.
14. What will your office do to ensure that defendants with underlying mental health issues receive psychiatric care to meet new rules approved last year and to prevent the release of repeat violent offenders, as part of the judicial reforms contained within Iryna's Law? [50 word limit]	14. Although pretrial custody status is determined by the Court, our office has an important role in providing the court any information we receive concerning a defendant's mental state. We will continue to inform the court in a timely manner of such information, and advocate for an appropriate secure pre-trial detention.	14. I would work closely with judges, law enforcement, mental health providers, and detention officials to ensure defendants receive required psychiatric evaluations and treatment in compliance with Iryna's Law. I would also prioritize identifying repeat violent offenders, presenting relevant criminal histories and risk factors to the court, and advocating for appropriate pretrial conditions.
15. Do you believe that Iryna's Law, in which more of those accused of crimes are jailed while awaiting trial (with no more cashless bail), could eventually result in overcrowding in the Alamance County jail?	15. Yes.	15. No.
16. If yes, what can your office do to ameliorate that possibility? [25 word limit]	16. Our office works closely with the jail staff, the Public Defender's Office, and our local bar to timely dispose of cases or conduct bond hearings.	16. N.A.
17. Are there any suggestions with respect to reducing the county jail population to relieve existing overcrowding? [(25 word limit]	17. The law requires certain misdemeanor sentences be served in the local jail; change it to require housing by the Department of Adult Correction.	17. I would support reviewing jail population to identify individuals charged with minor, nonviolent offenses who may be appropriate for pretrial release, diversion, or treatment programs.
18. What can be done to reduce the number and prevalence of continuances and thereby expedite a final resolution/verdict in criminal cases? [50 word limit]	18. More criminal district courtrooms. For over three decades, two criminal District Court courtrooms have regularly operated here. Since 1997, our county's population has grown by more than 50,000 people, yet we haven't increased available court time. New laws have actually decreased our available court time. This impacts all criminal courts.	18. Promote early case assessment, timely discovery, and proactive communication among prosecutors, defense attorneys, and the courts. Continuances should be granted when necessary to protect due process, but avoidable delays should be minimized through better preparation, consistent scheduling, and accountability. I would also ensure that serious cases move forward without sacrificing a fair trial or thorough prosecution.
19. Discuss the relative merits of conducting probable cause hearings, especially for the most serious felonies. Should these be restored in Alamance County? [50 word limit]	19. No. We work closely with officers on the most serious cases, and are prepared to submit these cases to grand jury usually within 30 days, making the probable cause hearing moot. There's rarely a reason to consume valuable district court time for a matter the grand jury will already consider.	19. I would oppose routinely restoring probable cause hearings in serious felony cases. Probable cause hearings can become fishing expeditions that provide the defense an opportunity to preview the State's evidence and cross-examine witnesses before prosecutors have had adequate time to prepare them for trial.
20. What can Alamance County's D.A. do to ensure that cases from this county do not end up before the state's Innocence Commission as examples of wrongful conviction? [50 word limit]	20. Cases that come before the Commission have by that time been scrupulously reviewed on the trial and appellate levels, so any basis for overturning a conviction would likely be newly discovered evidence. Should that be the case, we will work to vet the evidence and see that justice is done.	20. Preventing wrongful convictions starts with a commitment to integrity, thorough investigation, and accountability at every stage of a case. I would foster an office culture where prosecutors can raise concerns without fear of criticism and where charging decisions are based on evidence, not pressure to secure convictions.
21. What, if anything, can be done to improve the collection of, and distribution of, actual restitution when it is ordered as a part of a sentence? [25 word limit]	21. For restitution-related probation violations, judges can extend probation beyond the original length. Offenders remain supervised and revocation remains an option, encouraging payment to avoid prison.	21. While recognizing that some defendants lack the financial means to pay immediately, we should distinguish inability to pay from unwillingness to comply.
22. Are existing provisions adequate to guarantee safe and effective implementation of protective orders? (25 word limit)	22. No provision can be effective without accessibility and sound implementation. Our Family Justice Center is highly effective in both, helping many victims secure protective orders.	22. Yes, with respect to violations of 50C orders, which address unlawful conduct unrelated to domestic violence. Violations of 50B domestic violence protective orders, however, should be prioritized and prosecuted vigorously.
23. What will be your policy on prosecuting those who appear to have violated North Carolina election registration laws, by voting more than once in a specific election, voting while a felon, or other instances of ineligible voting? [25 word limit]	23. Election law violation cases will be prosecuted according to their merits, and we will be guided by the evidence and strength of each case.	23. I would work with election officials and law enforcement to distinguish deliberate violations from mistakes or misunderstandings of eligibility requirements.
24. What areas within the judiciary/law enforcement do you feel most need improvement, and what suggestions do you have? (50 word limit)	24. Staffing. We need more good people to go into public safety. Law enforcement agencies are struggling to fill positions, and these positions can only go unfilled for so long before impacting the morale and well-being of officers. Law enforcement is an honorable profession with exceptional people. They need more.	24. Backlogs and transparency are two major areas for improvements. Backlogs should be addressed through early case assessment, timely discovery, meaningful plea negotiations, and better coordination among prosecutors, defense attorneys, law enforcement, and the courts. A Citizens Advisory Board could provide an additional avenue for community input and accountability.
25. How can voters be assured that your prosecutorial judgments will not be influenced by contributors to your campaign? [50 word limit]	25. As an Assistant District Attorney for over 17 years, I made thousands of prosecutorial judgments, and I did so without any contributors. My philosophy hasn't changed. My judgment has been consistent over my career and will remain so. I have a 25-year prosecutorial track record that people know and trust.	25. I believe prosecutorial decisions must be based on the facts, the law, and the interests of justice—not campaign contributions or political relationships. I have raised less than \$1,000 in campaign donations to date, and I have never been comfortable asking people for money.
26. Give your campaign's three main issues. (25 word limit)	26. 1. Keeping public safety a priority. 2. Ensuring court operations keep up with our county's growth. 3. Stopping offenders who sell drugs targeted to children.	26. 1. Public Safety: Prioritize violent and repeat offenders, protect victims, and ensure those who commit serious crimes are held accountable. 2. Fair, Effective Justice. 3. Transparency, Community Trust.