

ALLEGHENY COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

The Allegheny County District Attorney is the person in charge of directing how people in the county facing criminal charges are prosecuted. The DA's decisions impact cases ranging from disorderly conduct to homicide.

CANDIDATE



TURAHN JENKINS



STEPHEN ZAPPALA

BIOGRAPHY

Former chief deputy director for county Public Defender's Office. Currently a private criminal-defense attorney. Monroeville native and Democrat. "Justice demands change, and I am that change. I have the legal and professional experience, a heart for the people, and the desire to make our criminal justice work for all us."

A Democrat serving as Allegheny County District Attorney since 1998. Supports efforts to reduce cash bail and to classify hate-driven assaults on LGBTQ community as hate crimes. Says these efforts were overlooked because he "chose not to promote them politically." In 2017, publicly supported reinstating mandatory minimum sentences as a tool to investigate serious crimes.

JAIL OVERCROWDING

Wants to reduce county jail population by 25 percent within first term by ending practice of overcharging; advocating that victimless and nonviolent offenders be released if they sign written promise to show up to court; recommending no jail time for technical probation violations; and changing current administration policy limiting assistant DAs from weighing in on bond arguments.

Says jail population shouldn't be reduced solely by transferring long-serving inmates to penitentiaries, as that "significantly increases the systemic burden on people who are already fighting an uphill battle toward reintegration." His office has created 11 diversionary courts to address criminal justice issues rooted in poverty.

OVERDOSE DEATHS

Supports expanding programs for addiction, recovery, and drug prevention through grant funding; increasing DA's office visibility to engage students on dangers of drug use and addiction. Looking towards providing naltrexone (a medication to help prevent relapses) for people following release from incarceration.

Advises police to treat addiction as a health issue since "being an addict is not a crime." Advocating for more treatment options and a better health insurance system because courts can require treatment for defendants, but only if insurance is willing to pay for those treatments.

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

Advocates uniform training for law enforcement officers countywide. Supports a countywide citizen police review board. Criticized current DA Zappala in handling of prosecuting Antwon Rose shooter Michael Rosfeld, who was acquitted of all charges.

Says current state use of force laws are too forgiving for police officers who shoot suspects and should be changed. Says interpretation of the current law led to the acquittal of Rose's shooter Michael Rosfeld. Supports creation of a countywide citizens police review board.

FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

Pittsburgh NORML, Recommended by Pittsburgh Democratic Socialists of America. Drew support of progressives early in campaign, but was criticized after saying homosexuality is a sin. Has since apologized for those remarks, with some progressives continuing to back him.

Steel City Stonewall Democrats, Allegheny County Labor Council, Allegheny County Democratic Committee