



Thursday, September 3, 2026

Union County Pride, Inc
Union County Pride, Inc - Political Candidate Questionnaire

Dear Candidate:

On behalf of Union County Pride, Inc, I write respectfully to request that you respond to the questions submitted below regarding your agenda for the LGBTQ+ kids and their families living in Union County. Union County Pride Inc. is the foremost organization working to promote a thriving LGBTQ community in Union County, North Carolina.

The questions and answers, if received in time, will be published verbatim at www.unioncountypride.org on **September 15**. To meet our publication deadline, your responses must be received by no later than **September 5** If you do not respond, the publication will state *Did Not Respond*.

Please submit your responses through the online survey. As a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, we cannot support or oppose any candidate for public office. We hope that you will take this opportunity to communicate your views on how you as a political candidate will deal with policy and investments regarding LGBTQ+ kids and their families.

Sincerely,

Union County Pride, Inc

Candidate Name	Anita Earls
Email	anita@earls4justice.com
Campaign Website	earls4justice.com
Party Affiliation:	Democrat
Level of Government	State
Political Position	Senior Associate Justice, NC Supreme Court

What would you do for LGBTQ+ people in your political area?

As a Senior Associate Justice on the North Carolina Supreme Court, my primary and most fundamental duty in our state’s judicial branch is to ensure that the constitutional promise of "equal justice under law" is a lived reality for every North Carolinian. While the judiciary is a co-equal branch of government that does not draft legislation or establish statutory policies, I will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that our legal system remains independent, impartial, and completely unswayed by partisan interests or public clamor. As a Justice, I must listen to the concerns of and be aware of the needs of all members of the community, including the LGBTQ+ community.

I will continue my active involvement with the North Carolina Equal Access to Justice Commission to bridge the gap in legal resources and simplify court procedures so that marginalized communities have a fair and accessible venue to vindicate their constitutional rights.

What would you do to for LGBTQ students?

The North Carolina Constitution guarantees every child—including every LGBTQ+ student—the fundamental right to a sound basic education in a uniform system of public education. The Constitution further provides “wherein equal opportunities shall be provided for all students.” On the bench, I have consistently voted to uphold and enforce this state constitutional obligation, most notably in the historic Leandro litigation (Hoke County Bd. of Educ. v. State).

For LGBTQ+ students specifically, my judicial role is to strictly and independently apply our State Constitution’s Declaration of Rights and the Law of the Land Clause to protect their individual liberties and ensure they receive equal protection under the law. Schools must be environments where all students are protected from discrimination, exclusion, or governmental overreach. I will continue to faithfully apply constitutional standards to ensure that no student is denied their fundamental rights or subjected to systemic harm within our public education system.

How would you vote on policies or laws regarding books in schools with LGBTQ+ characters?

Under the North Carolina Code of Judicial Conduct, a sitting Supreme Court Justice and candidate for public office must strictly refrain from indicating any bias or predisposition regarding specific pending or future legal disputes, and I cannot promise or pledge how I would rule on any specific policy or law.

However, I can explain that my approach to any legal challenge arising from policies or laws regarding books in schools is guided by our robust state and federal constitutional frameworks. Such issues directly implicate the First Amendment’s protections of freedom of speech and expression, as well as the Equal Protection and “Law of the Land” Clauses (Article I, Section 19) of the North Carolina Constitution. My duty as an appellate jurist is to evaluate every case solely on its specific factual record and apply established legal precedents with absolute integrity, intellectual honesty, and independence. I believe courts must serve as a neutral sanctuary and a vital check and balance to protect individual liberties, ensuring that legislative or administrative actions do not circumvent constitutional standards to suppress free expression or target vulnerable populations.

Please explain your answer.

As a Supreme Court Justice, I do not serve in a legislative body and therefore would not be voting on any such issue.

Would you vote for a city, state, or state anti-discrimination ordinance or law that covers the protected classes including sexual orientation and gender identity (LGBTQ+) people?

Unknown

Please explain your answer.

As a Supreme Court Justice, I do not serve in a legislative body and therefore would not be voting on any such issue.

How would you vote if Marriage or Relationship Equality becomes a state or local issue?

Unknown

Please explain your answer.

As a Supreme Court Justice, I do not serve in a legislative body and therefore would not be voting on any such issue.

Please explain your current and past actions towards the LGBTQ+ community.

For several years, I have supported Equality NC and the LGBTQ+ Democratic Caucus by attending events,

and sponsoring advertisements in event programs. Equality NC endorsed my successful campaign in 2018, and I am proud to have their support in my 2026 reelection campaign. I am a dues-paying member of the Pauli Murray NC LGBTQ Bar Association and participate in their professional events, including attending their Diversity in the Law Panel and their National Coming Out Day Celebration in Raleigh. I have also collaborated with the North Carolina Bar Association's Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within the legal profession. Earlier this year, I had the distinct honor of presenting the Order of the Longleaf Pine Award to Ian Palmquist, the former Executive Director of Equality NC and a historic champion of the LGBTQ+ movement in our state. During my service as Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice under the Clinton Administration, I oversaw several sections—including what was then the Coordination and Review Section—responsible for protecting the civil rights of marginalized groups, including LGBTQ+ individuals.

Please tell us anything else you would like the public to know about you and the LGBTQ+ community.

I want the public to know that my commitment to the rights and dignity of the LGBTQ+ community is deeply personal and central to my identity as a jurist. I grew up in a multiracial family—my father was Black and my mother was white—and they were forced to leave Missouri because their marriage was illegal under the law at the time. I was seven years old when the U.S. Supreme Court struck down those anti-miscegenation laws in *Loving v. Virginia*. That experience taught me what it means for a family's very existence to be deemed "illegal" by the state, and it gave me a lifelong passion for using the law to tear down discriminatory barriers.

This background is why I strongly reject originalism and textualism. It is a mode of judicial decision-making that seeks to "freeze the meaning of our Constitution in amber according to narrow circumstances in centuries past"—specifically, eras when slavery was legal, women had no property rights, and LGBTQ+ people were completely dehumanized and stripped of their personhood.

I believe our State Constitution is a living document that must be interpreted in the modern context of human rights and human dignity. I am fully dedicated to winning my reelection in 2026 to defend the independence of our courts against political attacks. My goal is to protect the fundamental freedoms of all North Carolinians, ensuring that the courthouse remains a fair, equal, and independent sanctuary for everyone.

I plan to attend the Candidate Meet-up.

Possibly