



## **ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE 2022**

**Carlos Guillermo Smith**

**Running for  
Florida House of Representatives  
District 37**

## Candidate Information

**Website:** [www.carlosguillermosmith.com](http://www.carlosguillermosmith.com)  
**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/carlosguillermoforflorida>  
**Twitter:** @CarlosGSmith  
**Instagram:** @CarlosGSmith

**1. What motivated you to run for this position?**

the transgender bathroom bill in 2015

**2. What does being an ally or advocate for the LGBTQ+ community mean to you?**

putting your name on pro-LGBTQ legislation, vocally standing up against anti-LGBTQ, participating in LGBTQ community events and letting LGBTQ lead and be a voice for themselves

**3. Please summarize your history of community involvement. This may include city boards, civic associations, non-profits, etc.**

Member, Florida House of Representatives, 2016-2022

Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, Board of Directors, 2020-2022

Legislative Progressive Caucus, Chair, 2017-2020

Equality Florida Institute, Inc., Government Affairs Manager, 2015-2016

Orange County Democratic Executive Committee, Chair, 2013-2015

**4. Please summarize any work you have performed in the past five years to further LGBTQ+ rights. This may include paid positions, volunteer work, and donations.**

Member, Florida LGBTQ Legislative Caucus

Equality Florida staff member

Orlando Youth Alliance donor

Zebra Coalition donor

led the charge against all anti-LGBTQ bills in the legislature 2016-2022

Leader Sponsor Gay/Trans Panic Defense legislation

co-sponsor, Florida Competitive Workforce Act

co-sponsor, prohibition on anti\_LGBTQ discrimination in voucher funded private schools

co-prime sponsor, budget request for Orlando United Assistance Center \$150,000 (vetoed)

co-prime sponsor, \$1,000,000 budget request for Pulse Memorial (approved)

## Questions

- 5. The rise in anti-LGBTQ+ legislation barreling down from Tallahassee has caused a sharp increase in discrimination and violence against the LGBTQ+ community in Orange County. How would you go about reducing discrimination in your district or local community? How would you measure your progress?**

working with law enforcement on prosecuting and reporting hate motivated violence  
encouraging local businesses to designate themselves as a "safe space" thru city of Orlando  
encouraging school districts to create a culture of inclusivity with zero tolerance for discrimination

- 6. Elected officials and office staff are still woefully under-educated on the transgender community. This means that the services their offices provide are often ignorant of the needs of the transgender community. What actions would you take to ensure that the services your office will provide will be educated on and cognizant of the needs of the transgender community?**

We've partnered with Equality Florida to host and conduct educational trainings for members and staff in the House Democratic caucus usually every two year cycle.

- 7. The Florida Republican Party is leading the country in stripping away LGBTQ+ rights, starting with our children. Students are having their lives and livelihoods placed at risk by laws such as the Transgender Sports Ban, the so-called Parental Bill of Rights, and now Don't Say Gay. These shamelessly discriminatory bills are forcing LGBTQ+ families to reconsider their future in Florida. What would you tell the parents of LGBTQ+ children in your district who feel they need to leave Florida in order to protect their children?**

I have already been fielding these questions and have assured concerned parents that any harm caused to their child as a direct result of legislation should be reported in an effort to mitigate the harm and have connected them to LGBTQ+ resources for their specific needs.

- 8. The Trevor Project's 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health found that 45% of LGBTQ+ students seriously considered attempting suicide and 1-in-5 LGBTQ+ attempt it. How would you lead on this issue and work to decrease these statistics over the course of your term in office?**

We will continue to bring awareness to this issue and direct youth the resources where they can get help.

- 9. The same survey by The Trevor Project found that nearly all transgender and non-binary students have had to worry about their access to gender-affirming healthcare, bathrooms, and sports teams being taken away from them. How would you work to take this fear off their shoulders so that they can go back to just being kids?**

Continue being a role model for queer youth and reminding them that there are people that get up and fight for them every single day because their lives are worth fighting for.

- 10. Far-right groups are pushing to ban books on any topic they find disagreeable, such as books on Black history and experiences, immigration, the LGBTQ+ community, climate change, etc. Do you support these book bans? If not, what is your plan to counter them and ensure students have access to a full array of age-appropriate knowledge and experiences?**

We've vocally opposed these measures in Tallahassee and shown up to school board meetings to speak out too.

- 11. During a town hall in your district, a constituent describes being gay or transgender as a "lifestyle choice." What is incorrect about their description? How would you constructively respond in this situation?**

As a gay man I have had to respond to these situations in real time and have never been afraid to correct the record.

- 12. During a board meeting, the board chair purposely refers to a transgender woman as "he" and "him" as the woman attempts to give her public comment. The woman corrects the board chair each time, insisting that her pronouns are "she" and "her." The board chair continues to misgender the woman until she eventually leaves the chamber in tears. How would you respond in this situation?**

I have had to respond to these situations on the House floor and have never been afraid to call someone out for intentionally misgendering a person.

**13. A parent approaches you at an event, insisting that her son's teachers have "groomed" him into liking boys. Her son is at her side when she says this. How do respond to the parent's statement such that the young boy leaves feeling better about himself?**

I would have to find a way to explain that no one is taught to be LGBTQ-- they just are...and that they are healthy, normal and should be celebrated.

**14. Orange County continues to embrace urban sprawl, despite a plethora of data that links urban sprawl to severe strains on our housing, employment, healthcare, and public transit systems (to name a few). What are your thoughts on Orange County's growth? What could Orange County in terms of development that would better serve the communities in your district?**

We need ore density near the urban core near the jobs and public transportation and have a record of vocally opposing and defeating bad development deals in rural East Orange.

**15. Do you support the idea of constructing more multi-family homes in neighborhoods traditionally zoned for single-family homes? What impact would this have on your district?**

yes

**16. Homeowner Associations often prevent homeowners from transitioning their lawns away from non-functional grasses such as turf and towards sustainable options such as native Florida plants and edible landscapes. HOAs insist that moving away from the traditional pristine green lawn would lower housing prices. What is your opinion on this issue?**

I've not had to face this issue as a legislator, but as a general rule I support local control on issues related to HOAs.

**17. What are the top environmental concerns you are seeing in your District and what are the solutions you plan to bring forward if you were elected?**

in our area it is overdevelopment east of the rural service line that is jeopardizing the Econ River basin, our clean water and protected species.

**18. Contributions are typically linked to poor environmental policies being passed. Are you pledging to stay away from any particular contributions?**

i've never taken money from sugar

**19. Understanding our economic position, how do you plan to localize and strengthen our food system?**

work with local government