



ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE 2022

Kamia Brown

**Running for
Florida Senate
District 15**

Candidate Information

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1. What motivated you to run for this position?

I'm running for State Senate District 15 because my work in Tallahassee is not done. I've spent the last six years working my way up as the State Representative for District 45, beforehand working as an intern and aide, and have been able to be effective and bring resources to the district. I believe it is important that I continue my services to this community.

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

Allyship is one of the greatest things we can do as members of a community to ensure that our neighbors, friends, and family members of different backgrounds receive the same protections of their rights, equal access, and are ultimately able to continue to flourish within the community. It is important as an ally to remember to not speak on behalf of others, but to stand with them and help promote their cause while supporting them and sharing their message. The ultimate goal as an ally is to protect those who are facing challenges to help ignite dialogue within the community that results in meaningful social and policy changes that are beneficial to these groups.

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

I've spent my time within the community participating as a member for various organizations. Currently, I serve on the board for the African American Chamber of Commerce of Central Florida, am a board member for the Youth Advocate Program, member of Lynx Inc., member of the Junior League of Greater Orlando, and am an active congregation member and usher of St. Mark AME Church.

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.

I've been a strong advocate for the rights of the LGBTQ+ community. I have attended numerous rallies, meeting with constituents, and co-sponsoring workforce policies that provide beneficial and safe initiatives to the LGTBQ+ members in Florida.

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?**

The most important thing is recognizing the various backgrounds and ethnicities within State Senate District 15, and how being a melting pot enables our district to be the beautiful place we call home. The LGBTQ+ community is vital to continuing the progress we've made in our community, and it's imperative that we do whatever needs to be done to protect their rights if we expect to keep our community thriving. I believe that by organizing and having local events where residents can come mingle and network with one another is one way to help reduce any animosity that one may hold towards them. Additionally, looking at the demographics information/data and coordinating efforts with groups like Equality Florida and Zebra Coalition are a way to minimize 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?**

It's important for myself and office staff to receive training and education to be informed and learn the best ways to address and understand the needs of the transgender community. Training should be related to topics such as equity, diversity, and inclusion regarding the transgender community, and having a solid foundation of knowledge on these areas will help us create a welcoming environment where they are comfortable and can see we are working for them, not against them.

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?**

It is important to acknowledge the concerns affecting these members of our community. It's also imperative to encourage them to stay here and work beside us to continue fighting for the rights of our fellow Floridians. While the journey won't be easy, together we can push to make a difference and combat these efforts that are completely discriminatory and downright wrong.

- 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?**

Mental health services is undoubtedly one of the most pressing issues in 2022. We must provide mental health organizations and providers with adequate funding so they are able to provide ample amount of services to those in need. Healthcare coverage is a big determination in if one is able to receive mental health treatment and counseling, as well as sustaining these services with their providers to continue treatment and medications. Amplifying groups that work as non-profit or low cost, or who specialize in focusing on the LGBTQ+ youth, and promoting their work to the community so people are aware these services exists and can learn more about how to utilize them.

- 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?**

I firmly believe that healthcare is a necessary right for anyone. I would support legislative initiatives that protects their basic rights, and push to review policies related to these issues that need to be changed in order to ensure these students are able to focus on simply being kids -- not worrying about issues that children should never fear about.

- 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?**

As a Black woman, I am completely against the book banning that is occurring right now. It's important to emphasize and educate the public -- especially parents, teachers, and school boards -- on why learning an accurate, truthful version of history and experiences that is age-appropriate. Ignorance does not fix the issue, but awareness and understanding the full story can.

- 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?**

The idea that one's identity of being gay or transgender is a "lifestyle choice" is completely fictitious. The members of these communities are simply expressing their true selves, just as the rest of us do. It is important to explain this difference, and emphasize that each person has the right to love and be loved freely no matter what.

- 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?**

First, if the chair has been corrected and is purposefully continuing to disrespect the individual, I would immediately object their behavior. If the disrespectful antics were to continue, I would request a public apology and apologize to the woman myself for my colleagues' remarks. I would also look into the board's guidelines and bylaws regarding this type of behavior to see if any official violation was made, and if not I would make recommendations on updating these guidelines and rules. An investigation into the chair's behavior would also be an option I would look at taking. Afterwards, I would request to schedule training for all board members and their staff to help educate any ignorance that may be held.

- 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 you respond to the parent's statement such that the young boy leaves feeling better about himself?**

I would immediately correct the parent in a civil manner. I'd begin by explaining that our educators work diligently to provide an open and safe environment for children to be themselves without fear of judgement or animosity.

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?

Regarding embracing urban sprawl, it is important to focus on the communities that are vastly expanding and promote growth that will be positive economically and environmentally. Giving financial incentives for transportation, infrastructure and housing contractors and organizations to operate their projects on practices that are environmentally friendly. We must ensure protections for our ecosystems, natural resources, and ensuring multifamily housing is built in areas that have ample employment, transit, educational, and public safety services that are able to provide the required amount of services to areas with growing populations.

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?

It's important that we grow smartly and in a controlled manner to avoid problematic issues that may come with quick expansion. I support areas zoned for single family homes at affordable living costs. Regardless of what style homes are being constructed, we must strategically plan for our infrastructure, educational, employment, and public safety systems to adequately support the demands and needs of the area and continually work to help these systems support such growth at the same rate. If we fail to do so, the impact of multifamily homes could potentially lower property values and drive residents out of the area.

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 am a strong advocate for freedom of expression, but I also believe that Homeowner Associations are responsible for providing guidance and outlining the best ways for the residents in the area to live together with minimal conflict. While upholding positive order within a neighborhood is important, HOA's should also be open to changing different rules if the majority of residents want to. Families and homebuyers should make sure they do enough research on the HOA before deciding to move into the area to ensure it is a good fit for their living wants and desires.

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?

At this time, State Senate District 15 is facing a couple of environmental concerns facing. There has been an increased amount of construction projects, which shifts the top concerns on air pollution, water runoff and drainage in the district. There is a heightened amount of hazards residents are being exposed to due to the new building, demolition, and renovations happening. Irritants to the respiratory system like asbestos and lead, molds, and other chemicals are being exposed to the community's quality of air. Environmentally, erosion and vegetation removal and environmental erosion can have detrimental impacts to the area if we aren't cautious. With the issues of flooding and water drainage, the best way to ensure we are prepared is to maintain our infrastructure systems within necessary operational standards so they are functional. Working alongside FDOT, as well as builder associations and companies, we can create and establish initiatives that will prevent, mitigate, and prepare our community with through and effective solutions that achieve the desired goals and outcomes needed to keep our constituents health and safety prioritized without hindering the economic growth and expansion.

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

At this time I have not received any contributions from individuals and groups linked to poor environmental lobbying efforts. I do not plan to stay away from any particular contributions at this time, but ensure I will research all groups and individuals who contribute to my campaign.

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

Localized food systems are imperative to our community. By establishing a central location for facilities combined with a management structure we can continue facilitating local and regional food products through aggregation, storage, processing, and distribution. Proper marketing of the produced food products also helps expand the accessibility and network between residents, organizations, and farmers. The creation and implementation of these systems are beneficial for the lower-income level households in underserved areas to close the gap of ability to obtain healthy products. It's important to create working relationships amongst the community members and food production farms and organizations while continuously conducting research, analyzing the data, and advocating changes to help establish an integrated local/regional food system that is controlled and sustainable.