



## **ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE 2022**

**Melissa Myers**

**Running for  
Florida House of Representatives  
District 40**

## Candidate Information

**Website:** <https://www.votemelissamyers.com/>  
**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/VoteMelissa2022>  
**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/VoteMyers2022>  
**Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/melissastephaniemyers/>

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

Please watch this video: [https://youtu.be/fe0dmS\\_xdiM](https://youtu.be/fe0dmS_xdiM)

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

Being an ally means understanding, supporting, advocating, and defending the LGBTQ+ community. As a result of the discrimination faced by the LGBTQ+ community members, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is impossible. Words are insufficient if one claims to be an ally. One must act constantly in order to be a faithful ally. As CCP an ally, I will pursue laws that defend and expand the rights and protections of the LGBTQ+ community. I will also expand upon the services made available to the LGBTQ+ community members since this community experiences high rates of suicidal ideations and behavior even at very young formative ages. I will also pursue greater protections for the LGBTQ+ community members, especially in housing and employment, because this community currently faces unfair practices, unlike any other population. As an ally, I will work to undo legislation recently enacted in the State of Florida that attacks and undermines the rights of the LGBTQ+ community of all ages.

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

I am a founder of a nonprofit organization Just Write Consulting Inc. My non-profit organization focuses on Career development, which teaches resume writing, interviewing skills, computer training, and one-on-one career consulting. During the pandemic, the nonprofit pivoted as our communities' needs changed. I partnered with the Ocoee Fire Department and Farmers to Families, and we hosted a Food Drive for the community feeding 600 families in one month.

While many are associated with groups, my efforts were done on my accord and my passion for our communities without any leadership from a group or board.

Here is a list of things our campaign has contributed to our communities.

1. Partnered with local landscaping company "5 Reasons Landscaping" to provide free tree trimming services to Our Seniors before hurricane season.

2. Instructed a free course on educating small business owners on how to become MBW/MWBE certified, a program that gives the opportunities to obtain lucrative government contracts.
3. Passion Speaks a Discussion on Mental Health
4. Passion Speaks a Discussion on Affordable Housing
5. The Passion Campaign Vehicle Contest: Offered discounts from various small business owners in the Orange County area to members of our community.
6. Good Trouble Episode, "Our Forgotten Seniors,": Highlights Senior Linda Lee and the help she needs from elected officials.
7. Partnered with Concec Medical to provide Free Drive-Thru Covid Testing for members of our communities.
8. Donated toys to a local nonprofit organization to create a reading program for the youth.
9. Collaborated with a local organization to promote Career Development programs for our youth who aren't college-bound.
10. "The Silver Stage Where Passion Meets Music": A Youth Concert bringing awareness to HIV/AIDS in the State of Florida and promoting healthy lifestyles.
11. Melissa Myers is highlighted on Channel 2 news as she goes before Ocoee Commission to advocate for creating more programs to bring more lucrative opportunities for small business owners.
12. Patients Awareness Day to bring education on Medical Marijuana
13. Trojans Service Day at Evans High School
14. Melissa visited Assisted Living Facilities in District 40 to hear the concerns of our Seniors and the Facility Directors. She also delivered gift bags to our Seniors.
15. Melissa S. Myers Challenge a contest for music artists to present the most popular song to promote getting out to VOTE.
16. Rallied for those that lost their lives in Buffalo, NY. Aired on Channel 6.
17. Championed the Step Up for Students scholarship for school choice to give families education options for their children.
18. Provide meals to families for Thanksgiving Dinner.
19. Went before City Commission and sat down with city leaders to advocate for more Mental Health Resources in our communities.
20. Held "Conversations with a Cop,": An event where community leaders and local police officers had tough conversations.

21. Held "Casting with a Cop,": An event where families spent a day fishing with local police officers to bridge the gap between law enforcement officers and our communities.

22. Championed for various Pop Warner teams to bring awareness of the funding that our youth sports programs need.

23. Championed and advocated for those who have lost their loved ones due to senseless violence.

24. Advocated for our First Responders (Ocoee Firefighters) to bring awareness to their department's ever-growing issues.

25. Appeared in a list of television and radio interviews and speaking engagements, advocating for our communities.

**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.**

In full transparency, I have not publicly participated in any of the above. My advocacy has been in my own home and the youth that I encounter daily that has identified themselves as part of the LGBTQ+ communities.

At 13 years of age, my son shared with me that he is Bi-Sexual and has had my full support from the moment he came to me

Due to my compassion and an open-door policy with our youth, many have come to me seeking advice and encouragement about their sexuality. I have sat with parents when these same teens were afraid to speak to them alone about their sexual preference. I provided awareness and education to these parents and told them my personal story.

My advocacy has been directly helping those families understand that the LGBTQ+ communities should never be shunned and revoked from the equality that is due to them.

## 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?**

To combat the discrimination and violence against the LGBTQ+ community, I will first speak out about the discrimination and violence experienced by this group.

As part of my campaign platform and future work, I will identify, show support for, and spread awareness of the LGBTQ+ population.

I will work to create laws that protect this vulnerable population that is violently attacked, bullied and murdered on a daily basis.

I will act to increase mental health and substance abuse services for the vulnerable members of the LGBTQ+ population including the youth.

I will be aware of the homeless members of the LGBTQ+ population, including teens, and work to provide housing and placement services.

I will also work to prevent abuse of this population as relates to sex work since many young members of the LGBTQ+ population fall victim to predators and pimps especially if they are thrown out of their homes by unaccepting families.

I will recognize the aging, elder population of LGBTQ+ who are often going into their older age (golden years) without family support.

I will recognize the difficulties faced by the older members of the LGBTQ+ population and their unique needs (including housing, nursing care, mental health, etc.).

I will measure progress by tracking the outcomes of the enacted laws and programs. I will verify usage statistics, recidivism rates, homeless rates in this group. I will listen to community leaders and encourage their observations and feedback.

This above-mentioned activity will help me to comprise data and statistics on the efficacy of the laws and programs that I promote and will assist me to develop future improvements...or, guide me to pursue other pathways if needed.

- 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?**

The transgender community faces oppression, discrimination, harassment, violence, and even murder on a daily basis. Many in the transgender community are discriminated against on sight by most others. I will educate my team and myself about the unique status of the transgender community.

I will engage with community partners to educate myself and my team about all aspects of transgender life and the issues transgender people face. I will advocate on behalf of transgender people. I will encourage inclusion and acceptance of transgendered persons and act to reduce discrimination in especially as relates to housing and employment.

- 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 would first encourage parents who are considering leaving the state to reconsider and instead get more involved in the political conversation and vote with their voice and conscience. I would respectfully remind the parents that discrimination exists everywhere and the only true way of protecting their children is to enact laws that protect the rights of their family members.

I will encourage the parents and let them know that I am an ally. I will work to enact laws that protect against discrimination. I will work to eliminate the policies and laws enacted recently that discriminate against anyone.

- 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?**

Suicidal ideations and behavior is a major issue and concern for members of the LGBTQ+ population. I will first identify as an ally. I will work to increase awareness of this issue. I will work to enact policies and laws that will protect LGBTQ+ persons and increase mental health services. I will encourage suicide hotlines. I will support organizations and related programs that serve to intervene and prevent suicide and mental illness. I will work to ensure schools are more inclusive and that equity exists for all students and staff. I will encourage the school board, PTA, and related organizations to be more supportive of all diverse communities. These actions will serve to reduce stigma and discrimination. In turn, these efforts will serve to reduce discrimination which might lead to a reduction in suicidal thoughts and behavior.

I will endeavor to fight against discrimination in any and all forms throughout my tenure. This commitment will hopefully help to reduce suicidal ideations and behavior.

- 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?**

Transgender youth deal with constant discrimination and the threat of violence. Simply going to the bathroom becomes a political issue for no justifiable reason. Individual rights must be protected. The issues of inclusiveness and equity must be upheld, protected, and ensured. Participation on sports teams, access to restrooms, and access to identity/gender-affirming healthcare are rights any person is entitled to in our country. I will work to ensure access to all of the above for transgender persons. We have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. If these rights are obstructed, we no longer uphold the basic societal principles that are the foundation of our nation and culture. I will work to protect the rights of all persons, especially those who suffer from constant discrimination.

**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?**

Book bans harken back to ominous, dangerous and even deadly aw times in world history. Whenever books are banned, for whatever reasons, our First Amendment right to freedom of speech is impeded. Book bans are unnecessary and punitive. Instead of banning books, teachers, principles, school boards and parents must ensure that curricula need to be created that serve to educate; and ,thereafter, books need to be researched that meet, support and supplement that established criteria. This cooperation might not be as complicated with subjects and classes such as mathematics or language. Yet, arguably, science might have some controversy as might the curricula for subjects like social science and literature.

I would not support banning books. Instead, I would seek to have books be made available at schools that tie in to the curricula.

It is somewhat naive to think that banning a book would prevent students from acquiring the book by some other means. And, psychologically-speaking, banning a book might pique the interests of those being blocked from accessing said book.

Having academic discourse and conversations about material found in controversial literature or books is possibly the antidote to prevent ignorance and ignorant reactions and responses.

**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?**

"Lifestyle choice" is an inaccurate and imprecise phrase used most likely intentionally (and most likely condescendingly) to summarize a very complicated reality faced by the LGBTQ+ community.

We know from science that, as relates to gender and sexual variability within the human race, there is such realities as hermaphroditism, super Y females, and other genetically distinct variations that occur naturally. Why do certain people deny the reality of naturally-existing variations within human gender, sexual identity, and sexual orientation? Why do people feel the need to dictate another person's perception of their own reality? Only the individual is the expert of their own life experience. Therefore, no other individual has the right or the ability to identify someone else's perception of themselves. Doing so is Orwellian and worse!

I will defend the right of an individual's own self-determination.

In the United States, no one else is ethically or rightfully eligible to control another person's self-perception. Yet, they ceaselessly continue to try to do so.

My response would be, "Why would anyone choose to live the life of a member of an oppressed, hated, targeted, and reviled group?"

I would further ask, Can you show true compassion, understanding, acceptance, and if necessary, forgiveness?

**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 would first go to the woman, stop her and console her. I would then ask her to return back to the chambers.

I will then advocate and stand up that the woman before the board and make an immediate request that she is called by her correct pronouns. Too many people in our communities remain silent when someone is wronged. An obvious bullying tactic will not be tolerated on my watch. As I have witnessed these tactics numerous times before commission meetings to intimidate certain groups not to complain or bring up issues that are important to them. I didn't tolerate it then and I wouldn't tolerate it now.

**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 tell this parent my personal story of being a proud mom of a bi-sexual son. I will further educate her that having a sexual preference isn't taught it is who you are. I would suggest that she connect with various groups in the LGBTQ+ community that will help her learn more and better understand her son. I will also tell her of the consequence that it can have on her son if she doesn't accept who he is.

**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?**

Development is not always desirable or necessary.

Florida brings in some 35,000 new residents per year, and this puts a significant strain on the infrastructure of the community in which they settle.

Historically, developers and city leaders are woefully incapable and seemingly unwilling to consider people and their needs when planning community development.

I would require sufficient water, housing as well as social and safety services be implemented with any new development before approving any new development.

**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?**

No, I do not support the development of multi-family homes in traditionally existing single-family home communities because infrastructure was not set up for more density in those communities. Also, property values would become lop-sided and negativity impact older properties. Instead, developers should focus on creating new communities.

**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 believe xeriscaping is a more sustainable method of moving forward. I believe environment-conscious buyers will track toward buying such properties. Besides, upkeep on the traditional "green grass" lawns is costly and difficult to maintain. With the economy as it is, cost-saving measures are wise to pursue.

**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?**

The main environmental issue facing residents of my district is potable, clean water and fossil fuels. Gas is too expensive and is a "dirty" burn. We need to pursue "green" alternatives such as hydrogen power, electric power, and mass transportation.

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

I will avoid contributions from those sources that act to violate my personal ethics. I will avoid funding from lobbyists and organizations including political parties, and even nations, that attempt to “turn” me into a political “pawn” or worse.

Any organization that promotes hatred and violence to any individuals or groups. The Passion Campaign promotes togetherness and unity, and the same promotion will follow me while I am in Legislature.

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

Farm-to-table and relying on local producers are both good for the environment and for those being served! Keeping produce sources local keeps transportation costs low and reduces pollutants from being put into the atmosphere. I will encourage local food producers, community gardens and other such innovative and environmentally-friendly alternatives.