

National Lavender Green Caucus

Green Candidate Questionnaire

NAME: Bob Mueller

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CANDIDATE FOR OFFICE: IL State Representative, District 47

ELECTION DATE: November 2, 2010

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: [www.votemueller.org](http://www.votemueller.org)

SOCIAL NETWORK SITES (FACEBOOK, TWITTER, MYSPACE): Facebook

**1 Do you support the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity plank of the national Green Party Platform <http://www.gp.org/platform/2004/socjustice.html#999077> ?**

Yes.

**2 GLBT people in the U.S. are twice as likely to not have healthcare coverage as the rest of the U.S. population. What will your office do to help ameliorate this disparity in coverage while simultaneously working towards universal single payer healthcare?**

Single payer healthcare is the best solution to coverage problems for more groups than just LGBT individuals. It also helps disabled individuals and seniors who want to have their current families recognized.

In the interim at the state level, I can make more people aware of the IRS's stance on partner benefits as taxable income, publicize the discrimination in blood and organ donor policies, encourage if not require hospitals and other medical institutions set up a methodology for identifying same-sex partners until the federal government comes around, and require diversity training for healthcare providers who receive state funds, including setting up impartial hearing boards that can investigate complaints when the status quo will not.

**3 What are the biggest issues facing women and girls within the LGBT community? How would you address gender disparity in political representation, funding priorities, healthcare, job discrimination, issues relating to parenting, and so forth?**

I'm running as an openly gay candidate in a district that is traditionally Republican but is going through demographic changes that are making it more independent. It's important we make our sexual orientation a part of our profiles/biographies, but only a part.

Women probably face more harassment in schools and the workplace, with the straight guys "bragging" that they could change those women fast. This leads to a greater fear of being sexually harassed and even raped with no one including law enforcement caring.

We all need to be bold in pushing our fellow employees, employers, teachers, and politicians to realize we have rights and we have responsibilities. We're not afraid to publicize it.

**4 Do you support the inclusion of transgender people in all federal non-discrimination and hate crime legislation?**

Yes. I know a very strong advocate for transgender people. She has made me aware of the issues so I know we cannot settle for partial appeasement by leaving transgender people out of our laws.

I've already had the opportunity to lobby people like Judy Biggert when the big debate about dropping transgender from ENDA legislation. No one should be kicked to the curb as we push for equality.

**5 What is your position regarding the inclusion of the trans community in the federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act ( ENDA ) ?**

As stated above, the transgender community must be included in all non-discrimination legislation.

**6 What would you do about the high poverty and low employment rates for transgender persons?**

I would need suggestions about what can be done. I know it's a problem, with several stories about teachers and government employees being subject to dismissal.

Fortunately, in 2006, the transgender community was included in Illinois' 30-year struggle to fix the non-discrimination law. We were the 16<sup>th</sup> to add lesbians and gays, and only the 7<sup>th</sup> to include transgenders.

The problem is that the law passed but no money was appropriated to fix the charts in workplaces. Appropriating funds and making private businesses publicize the 2006 change is one of my high priorities when I become a state legislator.

**7 Would you install a written policy in your office regarding sexual-orientation and gender-identity discrimination?**

Yes, and the written policy would be in all workplaces, not just my office. See answer to #7.

**8 Do you support an age-appropriate public school curriculum that teaches awareness and sensitivity regarding sexual orientation and gender identity?**

Yes. Currently we find many teachers and administrators are looking the other way as LGBTQ students are getting bullied and harassed.

This education is necessary for students, teachers and administrators. Many of the attitudes that discrimination is okay come from the home, so it is important for schools to provide a balancing view.

**9 What steps would you take to curb the discrimination and violence directed at LGBT youth in public schools.**

GSAs (Gay-straight alliances) are one of the best ways to enlighten schools about LGBTQ individuals and families.

Illinois just passed an anti-bullying law, but it is hard to legislate against discrimination. It's good that

it brings attention to the problem, but too often such legislation is just window-dressing. Seeing how this law evolves – whether it gets enforced or gets made light of – will tell whether it was worth the effort.

**10 Would you support or oppose using the sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression of caretaking adults as a factor in determining the best placement for a child for child custody, foster parenting, or adoption?**

A long time ago, a couple lesbians took the Illinois state adoption agency to court, and they won. It's been a non-issue here for a long time.

The only thing that matters in adoption is the quality of the home and the love a parent(s) can provide.

**11 Do you support needle exchange programs to reduce transmission of HIV?**

Yes. I believe experience in Europe and elsewhere has proven this to be one aid in reducing transmission.

**12 Would you support an expansion of Federal funding for HIV and AIDS programs, including HIV/STD prevention education in our public schools?**

Yes. An honest discussion of HIV and AIDS can only help people overcome prejudice. There is a lot of fear when HIV and AIDS are mentioned. Without real facts, that fear can only grow into hate.

**13 The impact of the domestic HIV/AIDS epidemic is hardest on racial minorities. How do you propose addressing those populations?**

Just being lesbian or gay in a racial and/or ethnic minority is hard. Many times the additional problems stem from religious groups in their communities.

In addition to community discrimination, there is poor healthcare available. Certainly single-payer healthcare is essential as the long-term solution. Educating current healthcare providers on HIV/AIDS will be a short term bandaid until we get there.

I am a strong believer in separation of church and state. However, governments do not have to fund faith-based groups that further prejudice against the LGBTQ community. We must engage them in dialogue and challenge their arguments, talking about civil and human rights and how these rights conflict with some of the dogma these groups espouse.

**14 Have you started or would you start sensitivity training for your staff members regarding LGBT issues?**

I've offered to work with the human resources and legal departments of one employer. They still don't think they have a problem, but they do.

I'll continue to offer my services while at the same time showing by example that we deserve equal rights and equal treatment.

**15 Would you support mandatory diversity training for public employees that includes LGBT issues?**

Yes. I've advocated that for our DuPage State's Attorney and sheriff's department to no avail, but I don't give up easily.

**16 Do you support marriage equality for LGBT people?**

Yes. My partner and I have been together for 22 years. I think it's time we got recognized as a family.

**17 If your jurisdiction does not allow same sex marriage, do you support the inclusion of domestic partner benefits in all employee contracts?**

Yes, although as mentioned above, the IRS needs to change its rules to make this as meaningful as it is for heterosexuals.

**18 Would you support Congressional repeals of the Defense Of Marriage Act (DOMA) and the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) policies?**

I'm a Vietnam vet so I know Don't Ask, Don't Tell is purely discriminatory. So many other countries got over it. Why can't the US?

As far as DOMA, I have a slightly different take. Because there are over 1700 federal laws that would need to be rewritten and repassed to give LGBTQ families equality at the federal level, we should just amend DOMA to include LGBTQ families as part of those 1700 laws.

I wrote three US Supreme Court petitions on DOMA and same-sex families (1999, 2001, and 2002). It is unconstitutional on at least five basic principles, but let's use it as a means to fix all these discriminatory federal laws in a single swoop. Amending DOMA can do that.

**19 Do you support "charitable choice" or "faith based" programs that allow public dollars to be used to subsidize social services offered by religious organizations that are allowed to disregard civil rights laws in hiring and public services?**

No. I am a member of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State (AU) as well as a Green and several other organizations.

We have several issues pending on what is happening in Illinois; we'll keep working while public funds support inappropriate discrimination.

**20 What are the biggest issues facing queers of color?**

As stated above, their religious communities which help their families turn them out.

**21 What are the biggest issues facing LGBT people with disabilities?**

Healthcare, which is true for most people with disabilities. For LGBT people, one has to add the prejudices/attitudes of care-givers as an additional issue.

**22 Please describe (briefly) what your top goals will be if elected to this office.**

First, get money appropriated for workplaces to get updated posters on the 2006 change to the non-discrimination law.

Second, get the civil union bill passed in Illinois. We also have an equal marriage bill. Eventually a

single term will be used for all families recognized by the state and federal governments. For now, it is important to get LGBTQ families recognized period.

Third, fix healthcare so it is a human right rather than an economic commodity.

Fourth, address the profiling and harassment LGBTQ individuals face from government officials and police.

**23 In the past, what LGBT related events, activities, or organizations have you participated in or been a member of or are currently a member of?**

We've got an Equal Marriage DuPage group that grew out of the anti-gay amendment petition of 2006. I led the group that checked the petitions in Wheaton, DuPage County's county seat, where we realized how many groups in Republican DuPage were working on various LGBTQ equality issues.

As mentioned, I've written three US Supreme Court petitions on DOMA and LGBT families. Two of these were filed when Ted Olson (California Prop 8) was Bush's solicitor general. He used most of the same arguments I wrote back then. He added freedom of association but forgot the cruel and unusual punishment argument.

As a DuPage Green, we started social justice forums a little over a year ago. Our first forum was on equal marriage. We got an excellent panel. You can check out our YouTube videos by searching for "DuPage Green Social Justice". We have DVDs of the whold discussion.

I've marched in the Chicago Pride Parade for the last seven years and have marched with PFLAG in the Wheaton 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade since 2006.

I continue to participate in forums whenever possible.

**24 As a candidate how will you get LGBT voters to vote for Green Party candidates?**

I'm proud to say I'm the first Green Party candidate to be endorsed by Equality Illinois. Much of that is due to my activities cited in #23.

I mention my Green Party candidacy at LGBTQ functions where it is appropriate to be political, plus I keep the local Green Parties aware of activitie

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Bob Mueller

DuPage County Green Party Political Director

Green Party Candidate for Illinois State Representative, District 47

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