



Congratulations on your candidacy for State Representative!

The ACLU of Texas will be engaging our members and other voters in multiple House Districts to provide them with information about the November election. **The ACLU of Texas does not endorse candidates for political office.**

We would like to invite you to participate in this process by providing responses to the questions asked on the next page.

Please help educate voters in your district by providing your full response by August 22, 2018.

For incumbent legislators we ask you to provide a short candidate statement highlighting your reasons for seeking office in this district and a brief listing of your top 3 priorities in the next legislative session. Please limit your candidate statement to 500-words and limit top priorities to 250-words per priority.

In addition, we will be providing information regarding incumbent voting records on legislation of key importance to the ACLU of Texas and our membership in the 2017 regular and 2017 special sessions. This information will be presented to members and other voters as a total percentage score based on how the incumbent voted.

For non-incumbent candidates we ask you to provide a short candidate statement highlighting your reasons for seeking office in this district and a brief listing of your top 3 priorities in the next legislative session. Please limit your candidate statement to 500-words and limit top priorities to 250-words per priority.

In addition, we will be asking you to take a position for or against legislation of key importance to the ACLU of Texas and our membership in the 2017 regular and 2017 special sessions.

Legislation has been divided into 3 categories:

- Ending Discrimination: positions on LGBTQ equality, immigrant rights and reproductive freedom
- Advancing Justice: positions on criminal justice reform
- Protecting Liberty: positions on free speech

By submitting this questionnaire, you give permission for your responses to be made available to the public online. We will provide a link to your responses when they launch online in August.

Should a candidate chose not to participate, the site will note that as well.

Please direct any questions to Brad Pritchett at bpritchett@aclutx.org

Respectfully,

ACLU of Texas



About the Campaign

(For Public Use: to be posted online along with candidate responses and legislative record)

a. Campaign website

www.rhettabowers.com

b. Campaign email address

Bowers4tx@gmail.com

c. Campaign phone number

972-379-8080

e. Please provide a link to a candidate photo. Headshot preferred.

(To instead provide a file, please email Brad Pritchett at bpritchett@aclutx.org)

Candidate Statement

(Please limit your answer to no more than 500-words)

Please provide a brief biography, including why you are running for office and your qualifications for the office sought.

Rhetta Bowers is proud and dedicated wife of a Gulf War Veteran, a mother and democrat committed to changing her community for the better.

Bowers comes from a long line of activists. Her father, an immigrant from the West Indies, was a nationally recognized surgeon. Her mother, who worked beside him, was a prominent community leader. Rhetta followed their courageous examples of community engagement. Her own life of activism began when she volunteered to phone bank for the late Congressman Mickey Leland as a pre-teen, later worked on her own mother's campaign and quest for the Texas House and she hasn't stopped since.

An involved member of the community, Rhetta shepherded her children through local public schools. As an educator, a PTA member, and through her volunteer work with the Garland Independent School District, Rhetta has learned the value of investing in young people. She was appointed to the Rowlett Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and served for 8 years. She has a proven record of working with community leaders in the City of Rowlett, as well as leaders with the City of Dallas and other municipalities. She looks forward to serving the North Texas community in which she and her husband have raised their children.

As a former broadcast journalist, educator and a full-time wife and mother, she knows from experience that the path to success is founded upon hard work, access to education, job opportunity, and quality healthcare. She ran for State House in 2016 and is running again in 2018 because of her commitment to ensuring that every Texan gets a fair shot.

In January of 2017 and 2018, Rhetta Chaired the Dallas Women's March, an empowering and positive March that has drawn thousands of participants each year. She is the recipient of the 2017 Community Service Award from the Garland Chapter of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional



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Women's Club, the 2017 *Rising Star* Award from the Dallas Alumni Chapter of her alma mater, Texas Southern University, and a 2017 *Spelman Woman to Watch*, among other accolades. Rhetta is a faithful and active member of St. Paul United Methodist Church and a lifetime member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Bowers is a native Houstonian, an alumna of both Spelman College and Texas Southern University, earning her bachelor's degree in Telecommunications, with an emphasis in Broadcast Journalism. She is the proud, dedicated wife of MSG (ret.) John P. Bowers, Jr. and a devoted mother and grandmother to her three children, John P. Bowers, III, Jade Elizabeth Bowers, and JaKia Bowers Chalmers (Marvin) and her three grandchildren – Chayce, Jazlynn and Rheya.



Top Priorities

(Please limit your answer to no more than 250-words per issue)

Please list your top 3 priorities during the next legislative session.

- 1.) Public Education – I believe we should be a state that fosters strong neighborhood schools that support our teachers and students so much so that they all graduate ready for the college and career of their choosing.

- 2.) Healthcare - I believe that all Texans should have access to affordable and high-quality healthcare for everyone and expand Medicaid to cover our neighbors in a time of need.

- 3.) Jobs – I believe we have to work together to build an economy that works for all of us with equal pay for equal work, a family supporting livable wage, and allows small businesses to flourish.



For non-incumbent candidates for office.

To best inform our membership about their choices in this election we will be listing the incumbent candidate's legislative record on issues of key importance to the ACLU of Texas and our membership from the 2017 regular and 2017 special sessions.

For the purposes of this candidate survey, we are asking how you would have voted on these same specific pieces of legislation so we can provide our membership with a comparison between the candidates on these key issues.

We will include links to the bill language for each piece of legislation.

Legislation has been divided into 3 categories:

- Ending Discrimination
- Advancing Justice
- Protecting Liberty

To respond just select FOR or AGAINST or ABSTAIN for each piece of legislation to reflect how you would have voted given the opportunity. Your answers will be used to create an overall score on your position on ACLU of Texas key issues.

Section I – Ending Discrimination

Description – Legislation pertaining to LGBTQ equality, immigrant rights and reproductive freedom.

[Senate Bill 4](#)

Relating to the enforcement by campus police departments and certain local government entities of state and federal laws governing immigration and to related duties and liability of certain persons in the criminal justice system; providing a civil penalty; creating a criminal offense.

AGAINST

[Senate Bill 8](#)

Relating to certain prohibited abortions and the treatment and disposition of a human fetus, human fetal tissue, and embryonic and fetal tissue remains; creating a civil cause of action; imposing a civil penalty; creating criminal offenses.

AGAINST

[House Bill 3859](#)

Relating to protection of the rights of conscience for child welfare services providers.

AGAINST



[House Bill 13 – Special Session](#)

Relating to reporting requirements by certain physicians and health care facilities for abortion complications; authorizing a civil penalty.

AGAINST

[House Bill 214 – Special Session](#)

Relating to health plan and health benefit plan coverage for elective abortion.

AGAINST

[House Bill 215 – Special Session](#)

Relating to reporting and certification requirements by certain physicians regarding certain abortions.

AGAINST

Section II – Advancing Justice

Description – Legislation pertaining to reforming our criminal justice system.

[House Bill 351](#)

Relating to the administrative, civil, and criminal consequences, including fines, fees, and costs, imposed on persons arrested for, charged with, or convicted of certain criminal offenses and to the creation of a commission to review certain penal laws of this state; increasing a criminal penalty.

AGAINST

[House Bill 3130](#)

Relating to the establishment of an educational and vocational training pilot program for certain state jail felony defendants.

FOR

[Senate Bill 292](#)

Relating to the creation of grant programs to reduce recidivism, arrest, and incarceration of individuals with mental illness.

FOR

[Senate Bill 1849](#)

Relating to interactions between law enforcement and individuals detained or arrested on suspicion of the commission of criminal offenses, to the confinement, conviction, or release of those individuals, and to grants supporting populations that are more likely to interact frequently with law enforcement.

FOR



[House Bill 674](#)

Relating to the suspension of a student enrolled in a grade level below grade three from public school and to a positive behavior program for public schools.

FOR

Section III – Protecting Liberty

Description – Legislation pertaining to free speech.

[House Bill 89](#)

Relating to state contracts with and investments in companies that boycott Israel.

AGAINST

[Senate Bill 179](#)

Relating to harassment, bullying, and cyberbullying of a public school student or minor and certain mental health programs for public school students; increasing a criminal penalty.

FOR