

COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ALABAMA DISTRICT 2: NAPOLEON BRACY, JR.

1. Why are you running for this seat?

After much thought and a rewarding 13 years in the Alabama Legislature, I decided it was time for us to take this thing to Congress. The news maps presented an opportunity for us in Southern Alabama to have a representative who fights for us to have the resources and opportunities we need to thrive. I'm from this District, and I know firsthand the type of representation we need. Our community deserves a representative who understands us as people, our traditions, and the nuances from county to county, town to town. We need someone who will remain dedicated to ensuring we have a seat at the table built on the backs of those who, my entire lifetime, had been disregarded by their Congressional representatives due to their voting record or area code.

I never imagined a kid like me would ever graduate from college, nevertheless, to have a career in electoral politics. But despite everything I've seen, my service has remained the same as it was over 20 years ago—to do whatever I could to change the reality I grew up in. My life is a testament to what it means to take care of home, and I know that I will only be able to expand that impact as a Member of Congress.

2. How do you plan to address disparities in educational opportunities and resources among different communities within our district?

I am a strong advocate for public education and have continuously supported increased funding for them, particularly in underserved communities. I have sponsored bills to expand early childhood education, raise teacher salaries, and improve school infrastructure, which I will carry into Congress. My main priority is to close the achievement gap because all children deserve access to a quality education, regardless of their background. As a Member of Congress, I will utilize my role to direct funding and vote on bills that address racial and socioeconomic disparities in educational outcomes. Furthermore, I will continue to champion initiatives that increase funding for and access to career and technical education resources. That means finding ways to prioritize these initiatives through the federal programs available. I also will support expanding college affordability by increasing the Pell Grant, making community college tuition-free, and supporting President Biden's goal to forgive student debt.

3. Given the rising cost of housing in our area, what measures will you support to ensure affordable housing options for all residents, including low-income families and individuals?

As a member of Congress, there are several things I can do to support affordable housing options for all residents, including low-income families and individuals, that fall into three categories: legislative action, oversight and policy, and community engagement. There is no one-size-fits-all solution because I believe that the best answers are the ones that provide resources specific to community needs.

Through legislative action, I can increase and expand existing federal funding for affordable housing programs such as the National Housing Trust Fund, the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, and the Housing Choice Voucher Program to increase the number of affordable housing units available. I will support tax incentives for developers to build affordable housing, encourage communities to adopt inclusive zoning policies, enforce fair housing laws, and invest in infrastructure and transportation for underserved communities.

Using oversight and policy, I will hold hearings and investigations to examine the effectiveness of these existing programs to identify areas of improvement. I will promote cross-governmental collaboration to leverage our available resources and expertise to create solutions that will streamline regulations and reduce the burden of excessive regulations that have hindered affordable housing development.

In all of this, I will continue prioritizing being within the community by getting feedback directly from residents. None of this is purposeful without ensuring the community is empowered by having a say in the development and management of affordable housing and are positively impacted by what the government is doing on their behalf. Other ways to address this are to support innovative solutions such as alternative housing models like tiny homes, co-housing, or land trusts that offer more affordable options. Ultimately, to address this, we must tackle the root causes of poverty, low wages, and lack of economic opportunity in our communities.

4. With budget constraints, how will you prioritize funding for social services, such as mental health programs, addiction treatment, and support for vulnerable populations?

There are programs that we have available that I would encourage our local organizations and police departments to utilize, such as the JAG Grant Program,

which goes to our local law enforcement and expands mental health programs and education to avoid unnecessary trauma in response to a mental health crisis. As a member of the State's General Fund Committee, I allocated funds to the 9-8-8 Program to train local police and sheriff's offices in mental health and employ mental health professionals to better respond to these instances, so I would look for ways to incorporate this at a federal level.

Here are some additional potential strategies that I will consider as a Member of Congress:

Conduct comprehensive needs assessments to help us prioritize funding based on thorough needs assessments to identify the most critical areas requiring support.

Advocate for increased funding for social services by advocating at the federal level for budget increases, grants, or reallocations of resources. Despite looking to increase democratic representation in Washington, politics is a team sport, so I will engage in bipartisan efforts to leverage our shared goal of addressing community needs by highlighting the importance of social services.

Engage with constituents to understand their priorities and concerns regarding social services to help me make informed budget decisions that best address them. Doing this, I will focus on allocating funds to programs in high-impact areas with a proven track record of success to ensure we maximize effectiveness.

As legislators, we must learn to be creative in addressing the needs of our communities, and exploring opportunities for public-private partnerships is a great way to do it. We should encourage collaboration between government and private organizations to enhance efficiency and impact.

By employing a combination of these strategies and focusing our investment on prevention, as a Member of Congress, I can navigate budget constraints while still prioritizing funding for critical social services to support mental health, addiction treatment, and vulnerable populations.

5. What steps do you think government should take to address police brutality against communities of color?

I don't know many African American men who have not had some type of negative encounter with law enforcement, and I myself have had them. I know firsthand the long-term effects of police brutality, and I believe that government has a role to play in addressing it. Though there are many ways we can address

police brutality, such as increased training and resources and reform initiatives, I believe that ending qualified immunity for police officers is one of our most impactful methods. Removing the protection of police officers from civil lawsuits will directly hold them accountable and create a clear path to justice for our communities that experience police brutality. I appreciate the law enforcement officers doing the right thing to protect and serve us all. But the number of Black people losing their lives at the hands of police is never-ending, and we have to do everything we can to stop it from happening over and over again.

6. Do you support an individual's right to reproductive rights?

Yes. In my work as an AL State House, I am a longtime supporter of women's reproductive rights, and I will continue to hold firm in this stance in Congress. I received the Champion of Women's Health Award from Planned Parenthood Southeast and Planned Parenthood Federation of America in 2013.

7. Will you make it a priority to get the John Lewis Voting Rights Act passage?

Yes. The creation of the 2nd Congressional District was a resounding victory for fair representation and will continue to serve as a powerful testament to upholding the Voting Rights Act. The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act will be a powerful tool to prohibit this type of racial gerrymandering across the United States and reaffirms the principle that every citizen's voice deserves to be heard at the ballot box regardless of their race.

Please return your responses to the questionnaire by February 5, 2024 to beverlycooper@standupmobile.org.