



Hays County Tejano Democrats
Primary Election March 2024
Candidate Questionnaire: Hays County Justice of the Peace Precinct 1
(Alphabetical Order)

Nicholas "Nico" Costilla		Website: https://sites.google.com/view/nicholascostillaforjp1-1/home Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/nscforjp1.1/
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Current Member of the Hays County Tejano Democrats

Why are you seeking the office of Justice of the Peace Pct 1? What is your background and how does it pertain to the office you are seeking?

My motivation in seeking the position of the Justice of the Peace is that I believe that when circumstances arise necessitating contact with a justice court, it is important and essential that the justice court continuously provide accessibility, efficiency, impartiality and expediency in its rulings and decisions. My educational background with a degree in Criminal Justice along with my current 9 year employment in administrative and supervisory roles in the Hays County District Attorney Office created a deep and sincere interest in the justice system. My experience along with training in this office, has covered several aspects of the judicial system as well as management that I believe is an asset as a JP.

Justices of the Peace often handle cases that directly impact individuals in their communities. How do you plan to ensure that justice is accessible to all residents in your precinct, particularly those who may face economic or other barriers?

I will ensure that the JP office is open and available to the public Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm. No doubt there would be instances when the office will be closed to the public due to in-house training, staff attending continuing education conferences and team building opportunities. However, I will ensure that these events are scheduled well in advance and listed on the JP 1-1 website notifying the public of all closure dates and times.

Community engagement is crucial for a Justice of the Peace. How do you intend to engage with and involve the community in the judicial process, and what steps will you take to keep residents informed about their rights and responsibilities?

I would work to educate the public about the Justice of the Peace Court. This is a court where a person can represent themselves on legal matters so understanding the process ahead of time will provide them the tools needed. I would like to run an efficient court utilizing all available technology to continuously improve upon and streamline the system for all parties. I will listen to all parties, treat them with respect, follow the law and be fair. There is always potentially more one can do, however we must be careful not to cross the line from providing information into providing legal advice. Having the applicable law, court procedures, timelines, and related information available on line and in hard copy on request is important. Providing the same information for resources and referrals for assistance is also a must for the Court to better serve, particularly those navigating the system representing themselves.

In a Nov 2023 survey conducted by UnidosUS, the United States's largest Latino nonprofit advocacy organization), when asked about the Democratic Party, 49% of Texas' Latino voters say the party cares about Latinos, 37% say it doesn't care too much, and 14% say it is hostile toward the Latino community. If elected, how does being a Democrat impact how you carry out the duties of your office?

If elected, it is important and essential that the justice court continuously provide accessibility, efficiency, impartiality and expediency in its rulings and decisions.

Can you share a personal story or experience that highlights your commitment to public service?

Personally, my familial background includes medical and social workers, public servant, and service members who have instilled within me attributes of empathy, commitment, courage, integrity and accountability that have played a major role in my development as a trustworthy leader and strong advocate focused on doing what is required but also assess other viable options. My grandmother Lupe Costilla who served on the SMCISD School Board for over 20 years really is the one showed me the true meaning of what it is to be a public servant. She is the reason why I am so passionate about giving back to the community. I recognize the critical importance of ongoing and positive relationship among our wide range of community, civic and professional organizations and activities. I promise to continue to be involved in the community as much as I can. I believe involvement in our community is an important aspect and as such, currently serve in various organizations.



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JoAnne Prado

FB: Re-elect Jo Anne Prado for Justice of the Peace

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Why are you seeking the office of Justice of the Peace Pct 1? What is your background and how does it pertain to the office you are seeking?

I enjoy my job and serving the community it is very rewarding and engaging to serve in this capacity. I have 20 yrs experience sitting on the bench presiding as judge over the JP 1-1 court. I know the rules and laws as it applies to the JP court and how to apply them.

Justices of the Peace often handle cases that directly impact individuals in their communities. How do you plan to ensure that justice is accessible to all residents in your precinct, particularly those who may face economic or other barriers?

My goal on a daily basis is to make the court as accessible and convenient as possible. I do offer the zoom hearing for those individuals that may not be able to physically come to the court and or take off from work. The zoom hearing makes it possible to log on from home or your work and basically from anywhere you might be.

Community engagement is crucial for a Justice of the Peace. How do you intend to engage with and involve the community in the judicial process, and what steps will you take to keep residents informed about their rights and responsibilities?

JP 1-1 court is accessible to all. We strive on a daily basis that anyone coming to the court understands the process and what to expect by providing literature to all about the court hearing and or process in filing a suit with the court and also their options when it comes to entering a plea before the court. We also have information for the community on the Hays County website about the procedures and forms for the court.

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I believe that I can relate to most if not all the voters in my precinct. Precinct 1 is predominantly democrat and I have been a lifelong democrat.

Can you share a personal story or experience that highlights your commitment to public service?

My commitment and dedication to Hays County in public service is evident by my 20 yrs as an elected official. I also served Hays County for 20 yrs prior to taking office through my employment at the District Clerks Office. I am a dedicated and proven leader and will continue to serve with dignity and integrity in representing this community and the people of Hays County.