



Hays County Tejano Democrats  
Primary Election March 2024  
Candidate Questionnaire: Hays County Justice of the Peace Precinct  
2-2  
(Alphabetical Order)

Amanda K. Calvert

akcforjop.com

**Why are you seeking the office of Justice of the Peace Pct 2? What is your background and how does it pertain to the office you are seeking?**

I have desired to run for Justice of the Peace for many years. I have a BA in Political Science, Minor in Sociology, and attended the graduate program for Legal Studies. I have worked at the Hays County District Attorney's Office for almost eleven years and feel it is time for me to step up and do more for my community. I believe this newly created position is the perfect opportunity.

**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 think there are many factors that affect accessibility. Economics, education, disability, mobility, work status. I think looking at each of these barriers and determining how can we provide what is needed without the community being negatively affected in the legal process because of those factors are important. Requiring physical presence in all court processes is one things that could effects all of these situation. I think having some remote opportunities if possible can be something that could greatly assist.

**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?**

One idea I have had for many years is informing our youth about laws, rights and responsibilities. To meet with them and give them an overview of the justice system so they know what the laws are, potential consequences, how those things change from when they are juveniles and when they become adults. I think also having a continuously updated platform the community can access with information and events to learn about their community and participate in events that constructively build up our community will be beneficial.

**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?**

I strive to operate with integrity in everything I do. It is important to not solely view life through the lens of our own lives. You need to understand your community and the people who have different experiences from you. Listening to the community, advocating for them and being receptive to criticism is important to continuing to grow.

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

I have always been one with a sense of duty to serve. I was a certified advocate for the Hays Caldwell Women's Center and was apart of their hospital response team for victims of abuse and sexual assault. I also wrote a book about domestic violence and donated all of the royalties for the first month to the Hays Caldwell Women's Center. I have worked at the District Attorney's Office for almost eleven years serving the public. I was also a mentor for the Seedling program where you are matched up with a child at a local school whose parents are incarcerated. I then became a certified foster parent and wound up adopting my son from foster care at 14 years old. I also recently started volunteering at the Paws shelter in Kyle.



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Paul Hill		Website: <a href="http://www.paulhill.org">www.paulhill.org</a> ; Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/paulhilljp2.2">https://www.facebook.com/paulhilljp2.2</a> ; Instagram: <a href="https://www.instagram.com/paulhillforjp">@paulhillforjp</a>
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**Why are you seeking the office of Justice of the Peace Pct 2? What is your background and how does it pertain to the office you are seeking?**

I am running to give back to the community that made me the person I am today. I grew up in Hays County, and my family struggled. My parents did the best they could, and with the help of our community and public programs I was able to graduate, go to college and law school, and become the first lawyer in my family. I have been a practicing attorney for the last seven years. In that time, I have had seven jury trials to verdict, including three in justice court. I have sought warrants, and I have argued bonds. I have done the legal work that occurs in justice court every day, and I am ready to fulfill the judicial duties of this job on day one. I have seen our court system on both sides - as someone who has been affected by it and someone who is a part of it. I have seen it work and I have seen it not work. I am running to be the part of the system that works and makes lives better.

**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?**

For justice to be accessible, the court needs to be accessible. I am a firm believer that the law should meet people where they are, and modernizing the court to increase court accessibility will be a top priority of mine. I will explore ways to ensure that anyone, regardless of background, can access court and have the opportunity to seek justice and defend themselves. This would include expanding court outside regular business hours, allowing virtual hearings when possible, and ensuring that everyone who is eligible for a fee waiver receives one.

**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?**

It is important that people understand their government. Without that knowledge, people can be taken advantage of or miss out on asserting their rights. One of the most common questions I have gotten during this campaign is what exactly a Justice of the Peace does. As Justice of the Peace, I will attend community events and stay plugged into the community to make sure that people learn and understand their government. Also, to prevent truancy, I will ask to speak at school about the importance of education and avoiding truancy court.

**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?**

One of the biggest reasons that I am a Democrat is my firm belief that the government, when run by passionate, dedicated, competent individuals, can make a positive impact in the communities it serves. I am running because I am passionate about public service, dedicated to my community, and competent to perform the duties of a Justice of the Peace. I will never fully understand the experience of the Hispanic community in Hays County, Texas, or the United States. But as a judge, leader, and human, I will listen with

empathy and learn with compassion. What I hear and learn will inform my decision making and actions I take as a judge and community leader. What people expect most of their government and the Democratic Party is making good on promises to have the right people in office who make peoples' lives better, and I plan to do just that.

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

I worked as an attorney for Child Protective Services, and in that time I saw the good that we were able to do and I also saw the parts that need improvement. When people think of CPS, they sometimes think of people taking children out of their homes. However, what really made the job worth doing was the stories that ended happily. I knew my work was worth doing when a family was reunited and was stronger than before, and when a child who had experienced abuse and neglect was adopted into their forever home. I am proud of the work I have done to make families and communities stronger, and I look forward to the opportunity to continue that.



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Janie Flores	janief.isblessed@icloud.com	Facebook - Janie Flores for Justice of the Peace 2-2
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**Why are you seeking the office of Justice of the Peace Pct 2? What is your background and how does it pertain to the office you are seeking?**

I am seeking this newly created position bringing 15 years of hands on experience working with the Justice Courts as a clerk and currently as the Justice Court Administrator for JP 1-2. As a public servant I have the desire to expand my service to the community by presiding over criminal cases, civil cases, issuing warrants, conducting inquests and performing marriages just to name a few of the things a Justice of the Peace must conduct. I have had the privilege of working alongside several Judges in the justice courts on a daily basis for the past 15 years. Taking part in the yearly training programs offered by the Justice Court Training Center as continuing education as well as attending the Legislative Updates for the justice court have been and will continue to be ongoing learning resources for the Justice Court Judge as well as the staff.

**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?**

Give residents the resources to get in touch with Legal Aid Programs that provide free or low-cost legal assistance to obtain legal representation if needed. Provide plain language resources, and self-help guides, simplify legal procedures for residents. Provide interpreters and offer translated documents as well. Joint efforts with non-profit organizations to help address specific needs of our residents.

**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?**

Be available to residents, answer questions and address concerns that will give them a sense of understanding. Provide online resources that provide clear and accessible information, to include an informative website that outlines court procedures. This can help involve the residents in the judicial process as well as keep them informed of their rights and responsibilities.

**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?**

It is important for Judicial Officers to uphold impartiality, fairness and the law. The law should be applied equally to all constituents regardless of their political beliefs or ethnicity. Being Latina I recognize and understand the diversity within the Latino community. Latinos from Guatemala, Honduras, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Argentina walk through the doors of our court and it has been my pleasure to talk to them, listen to what their concerns are, and give them options that we are able to offer them as clerks of the court.

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

We had a criminal case where the defendant was on active military duty in Spain at the time a citation was issued to him. His mother called the court to advise us of this as she received a courtesy letter for him to come to court. She gave us his email address (military) where I was able to forward him a plea sheet, to which he returned a Not Guilty plea to the charge. We set him on a pre-trial docket to speak to the ADA and they were able to coordinate communication via email (there is a 7-hour difference between here and Spain). An

agreement was made between the ADA and the defendant. Working together is key, listening to what the defendant has to say is important, this is what commitment to public service is all about, going above and beyond to help our constituents.



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J.R. Mendoza

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*Current Member of the Hays County Tejano Democrats*

**Why are you seeking the office of Justice of the Peace Pct 2? What is your background and how does it pertain to the office you are seeking?**

Currently, I am the Justice of the Peace for Precinct 2, Place 2. I am seeking to remain in office for the following reasons: 1. To continue the purpose of this position, in assisting Judge Smith with the increased workload duties in the courtroom and with the inquests. 2. Assist in the educating of teenagers on the dangers of Fentanyl with an end goal to stop teenagers from overdosing and dying from Fentanyl use. 3. Work with the school district to reduce and ultimately stop students vaping in the schools. 4. Determining issues causing school truancy and locating resources to help the student with an end goal of the student returning to school. 5. Providing a fair and equitable courtroom for all individuals. In September of 2023, the Hays County Commissioners Court unanimously appointed me Justice of the Peace for the position I wish to remain in. The selection committee compared my education and experience to that of my opponents Paul Hill, Janie Flores and Amanda Calvert. The selection committee determined that I was the most qualified candidate to perform the required duties. I graduated with a Bachelors Degree and majored in Political Science. Unlike my opponents and have over 12 years of contract compliance experience working for the State of Texas and additional 10 years of Law Enforcement experience. I have experience with the court process, Penal Code, Class C misdemeanors and traffic violations. Additionally, I have direct experience working with and mentoring juveniles. I understand juvenile issues related to school violations, criminal acts and truancy. Finally, I am the only candidate with prior training and multiple years of experience investigating deaths which is essential when conducting inquests.

**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 have been appointed to a newly created Justice of the Peace position. I have had the opportunity to develop the standards and processes for the new court. I am working to have all documents available in Spanish and will ensure that a translator is available for non-English speaking customers. The court will provide information of available resources including information related to the inability to afford payment of court costs. This information will be available in our office and on our website.

**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 have plans of creating an English and Spanish language, civics class for the community. My plan consists of having various individuals, including myself, provide information regarding duties of the Justice of the Peace, the County Court and District Court and the judicial process. Additionally, my plan includes having a session explaining the services and resources provided by Hays County. I will have videos available on our website, for those who are not able to attend the sessions.

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**If elected, how does being a Democrat impact how you carry out the duties of your office?**

I believe having employees that speak Spanish or having an interpreter for a Latino Spanish only speaker, can make the person feel more comfortable when they come to court. The office is a “People’s Court” and we serve the people. I ensure that all individuals are afforded the same level of fairness and objectivity in our court and in the community, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age or income level (to name a few).

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

I have over 20 years of public service to the State of Texas and to our community. I have always had a passion of helping others and I have had many opportunities and rewarding experiences as a public servant. Approximately 6 years ago, I began volunteering at the San Marcos Youth Council. At the time, I was a Police Officer for the City of San Marcos. I knew many of the youths, that temporarily resided there, were removed from their residence (some forcefully removed) and had traumatic histories. I knew many of the children came from a broken home or that they didn’t have a father. During the summers, I would take my lunch break at the shelter, I would go after work and even on my days off. Usually, I would be in uniform and I would spend quality time with the children, talking to them, playing basketball, soccer and even coloring with some of the younger children. There were kids that were afraid of police, but after “hanging out” with the residents, many of them began to trust me and the police. I even had other officers stopping by to say hi to the kids. There was an instance when the organization gave me permission to take 4 of the children fishing. It was the first time the kids had ever been fishing. Seeing the smiles and hearing the joy in the voices of the kids brought me joy, because I knew at that moment, they were not depressed or recalling the trauma they had experienced in the past.