

CCC&Y 2018 Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: **Howard Grodman**

Office: **Flagstaff Justice of the Peace.**

1. What do you think the two most pressing issues are for youth and their families?

Two pressing issues are untreated mental illness in parents and the same in children. This often leads to self-medication with alcohol and illegal substances and other criminal behavior. In a free society such as ours parents cannot be compelled to treat themselves or their children in the absence of a court of law having authority over them. This would require a judicial finding of crime, juvenile delinquency, parental unfitness, or dangerousness. Thus, treatment can be required only after something bad has already happened.

2. What do you believe the role of elected officials is in their communities when it comes to serving and advocating for children and youth?

Elected officials can help make voluntary diagnosis and treatment of mental illness available and attractive in schools and at agencies such as the Guidance Center, Southwest Behavioral Health, and North Country Health Care. It is important for elected officials to promote that there is no shame in addressing mental health issues.

3. Within the duties of your elected office, how can you support the children and families of our community? If elected, how will this be expressed in your agenda?

I see people only after they are charged with a crime. I encourage both substance abuse and mental health treatment: I get commitments from some defendants to commence treatment in exchange for me releasing them from jail; I consider the consequences of loss of employment and separation of families when I make decisions on jail; I preside over a felony mental health court where participants who would otherwise be sent to prison accept mental health treatment as a condition of probation and I see them every two weeks to review their adherence to their treatment plan.

4. How would you, as an elected official, support an equitable school system for ALL students, cradle to career? As 90% of human brain development happens by age 5, please additionally share your thoughts on early childhood education and its role in the educational system.

I favor free, and if that's not possible, affordable preschool. I believe that early childhood education benefits children both academically and socially, and gives parents a needed break from attending to their children's needs, thus benefitting them. Further, children's and families' problems are more likely to be noticed by objective professionals in the preschool setting allowing for early intervention.

5. As childhood abuse, neglect and foster care continue to be major issues in Arizona, what prevention and trauma response strategies do you support for our child welfare system, the Department of Child Safety and/or our local communities? How would you propose using local, state and federal funds to improve outcomes for youth experiencing foster care or additionally, work toward prevention of child abuse in our communities?

I believe that every allegation of child abuse or neglect should be promptly investigated with necessary funding provided by government. The present system of triage is dangerous as children lack the maturity to protect and advocate for themselves.

Regrettably, there is a serious shortage of foster care available for Flagstaff children in Flagstaff. Flagstaff children who are removed from their homes due to parental unfitness are frequently placed throughout the State, making educational and friendship continuity impossible, sometimes separating siblings, and making visitation with parents more impractical. Funds need to be used to recruit local foster families for local children.