

Matthew Brown, candidate for Perinton Town Board.
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1) Campaign financing:

Are you in support of the Citizens United Supreme Court decision? No.

Would you be willing to restrict your campaign financing to small, individual donations? Yes.

Please comment more fully on how you plan to raise campaign funds:

In Perinton, we have already seen behavior that is suspicious for the influence of corporate donations...one of the biggest complaints/concerns that I have heard while walking door-to-door is the worsening and spreading odor of the High Acres Landfill. Citizens who have reached out to the town have received no help, and one cannot help but wonder if the GOP-led town board might be influenced by the fact that WM, the corporation that owns the landfill, is one of the highest corporate donors to the Perinton GOP. In a similar vein, on July 12th of this year, the GOP-led town board voted unanimously to approve the sale of leasing rights for two town-owned cell towers to a private company, SBA Towers (a company that works closely with Verizon Wireless). On 9/26/17, Verizon Corporate gave a \$3500 donation to the Perinton GOP; to put this in perspective, this is over 3 times what they gave to State Senator Funke's last campaign. As far as I can see, this corporation had never before given to the Perinton GOP.

During this campaign, I have sought and received donations only from friends, relatives and neighbors. People who know and trust me and believe I can do what is right for Perinton, and act in the best interests of my constituents, without undue influence from multimillion-dollar corporations. I will continue to do so, no matter what office is sought.

Rank: 8

2) Voter Access:

Do you support legislation and/or any other initiative that would improve voter access and/or increase voter turnout? Yes.

Please comment on what you have done in your career to increase voter access or what specific initiative/legislation you would be willing to support.

As a family doctor who works primarily with urban/underserved populations, I have unique access to a population that has been disenfranchised and disillusioned by the political process. Since January of this year, I have added a new question to my standard social history: Are you registered to vote? If the patient says yes, I then ask if they do vote regularly; if yes, I thank them for that, and if no, I encourage them to do it. If they are not registered, I provide them with a voter registration form, stamp already affixed, and ask them to fill it out and seal it before they leave the office so we can mail it for them. Thus far I have registered approximately one hundred new voters to Monroe County. As importantly, I have opened up dialogues about the importance of voting as it relates to health care, and also have been able to advise several people with histories of felony convictions that, contrary to widespread belief, they are not prohibited from voting, as long as they have completed parole.

I have taken the above idea and presented it to every state Family Practice Association (under the hashtag #VotingIsAVitalSign), and several have taken it on as a project which they have promoted among their members (New York and California, but also such conservative states as Texas and Utah).

Government that represents all of us will work better for all of us. I am firmly in favor of same-day voter registration or even automatic voter registration, which has been so successful in Oregon.

Rank:5

3) Climate Change:

Do you believe that climate change is due in part to human activity? Yes.

Please comment on any legislation you would support/propose related to climate change.

On a local level, I think the most effective thing Perinton could do would be to provide greater incentives for green/renewable energy. In February, our current town board voted 5-0 to opt out of Real Property Tax Exemption 487, meaning that residents of Perinton who choose to install renewable energy will not be eligible for tax credits they would have otherwise. We should be encouraging rather than discouraging our citizens to pursue changes to their property and energy plans that would benefit our local and global environment.

Rank: 10

4) Gun Safety:

Do you support public safety initiatives/legislation to prevent gun violence? Yes.

Please comment on the type of gun safety legislation, if any, you would want to see enacted.

Universal background checks with no exemptions for guns willed or given to family members. No reciprocity for concealed carry. Legally mandated safe storage.

Rank: 9

5) Economic issues:

Which do you believe is a means of promoting economic growth? Federal spending

Do you support increasing the minimum wage to \$15/hour? Yes.

Do you support enacting paid sick and family leave? Yes.

Do you support raising the personal income taxes for citizens with incomes over \$100,000? Yes.

Please comment on what you see as the most important economic issues facing the country, and what legislation you would like to see enacted in response to those issues.

I would say that economic disparity is the greatest issue that faces us today, with too much wealth concentrated in the hands of the richest of the rich. Making sure our tax codes appropriately focus on the highest wage-earners while providing a suitable floor for minimum wage will start to mitigate this disparity.

Rank:1

6) First amendment rights:

Do you believe in having unfettered access to the actions of the government? I believe in complete transparency with an exception (with a clearly-defined expiration date) for details which would compromise national security, were they made public.

Do you believe that the government should have the right to conduct more, or less, surveillance of its citizens? Less.

Do you think hate-speech is protected speech under the first amendment? I do, but you should not be shielded from the effects of that speech.

Please share your thoughts on gathering information on individuals and on an individual's right to peaceably assemble.

Gathering of information of individuals should be done only when it can be shown with reasonable confidence that they present a clear danger to fellow citizens. An individual's right to peaceably assemble should be limited only by safety concerns and private property laws.

Are there any terms and conditions that would warrant the restriction of an individual or a group's First Amendment rights?

In my opinion, the first amendment details the most important rights granted by the constitution; it should be limited by law only when there is a risk of death or significant harm (such as yelling "fire" in a crowded theater). Unpopular speech, even that which would qualify as hate speech, is still protected speech.

Rank: 11

7) Healthcare:

Do you support repealing the 2010 Affordable Care Act? No.

Do you support a "Single Payer" health care as an option? Yes.

Please comment on the pros and cons of NY adopting a "Single Payer" health care option.

Single-payer is a method of health care that has been tried and tested in many, many other countries, with the results being better health care outcomes than that which the United States currently has, and at lower cost. As a primary care physician who specializes in underserved and urban populations, not a day goes by in which I don't see someone who has paid the price for being unable to afford a doctor's visit, or a medication or a procedure. The most-often quoted disadvantage of single payer health care is prolonged waiting times for non-emergent medical procedures...for me, this falls laughably short as an argument, as for many of my patients the wait times are "forever", because under the current system they cannot afford them at all.

Rank: 7

8) Immigration

Do you support a religion-based test for enacting US immigration policy? No.

Do you support a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants? Yes.

Do you support Rochester's status as a sanctuary city? Yes.

Do you support resisting turning undocumented persons into ICE, eve if it is federally mandated? No.

Please comment on your position as it relates to US immigration policy.

I am a firm supporter of the DREAM act, and would support legislation giving undocumented immigrants rights against forced deportation.

Rank: 6

9) LGBTQ rights:

Do you support same-sex marriage? Yes.

Do you believe that religious affiliation should allow an individual or entity to deny a member of the LGBTQ community goods or services? Not if the denial is based on that person's sexual/gender identity or orientation.

Please comment on your support of LGBTQ anti-discrimination laws and specifically whether they should be enacted at the Federal, State or local level.

I am in favor of gender identity and sexual orientation being covered under federal anti-discrimination laws, in the same way gender, race and disability anti-discrimination laws are.

Rank:4

10) Racial Justice/Criminal Justice/Prison Reform

Do you support the issues raised by the Black Lives Matter Movement? Yes.

Do you support mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent drug offenders? No.

Please comment on the policies you would support toward the goal of criminal justice and prison reform, and in the role of the government in preventing discrimination based on race.

I would support reform of our current drug laws, moving towards decriminalization and treating drug addiction as a disease that needs to be treated, rather than a jailable offense. These laws are too often used in a disproportionate manner to affect racial minorities, locking them into the legal system and preventing them from accessing housing, employment and schooling. I would also support bail reform and repeal of mandatory minimum sentencing.

Rank:3

11) Reproductive Rights

In general, which position do you support? Pro-choice.

Do you support continued funding of Planned Parenthood? Yes.

Do you believe that free contraceptives should be a part of a basic health care plan? Yes.

Please comment on your position related to abortion rights and access to contraception.

Providing access to contraception and abortion is one of the most effective ways to provide women with the tools to determine their own future. By giving them the ability to decide when and if they will become pregnant, more women will be able to complete their schooling and advance in their careers. I have spoken at length about this issue, partnering with the Rochester chapter of the National Organization for Women to demand that our state senators support the Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act.

Rank:2

Have you ever run for office before? No, this campaign for Perinton Town Board is the first political office I have sought.

How do you plan to communicate with your constituents once elected?

The current town board communicates with the citizens of Perinton through bi-monthly meetings and open hearings; however, these open meetings are advertised only through the legal notices section of a local paper, and through the agendas of the town board meetings, which are typically available only 48 hours prior to a meeting. Perinton has no e-mail notifications, and no use of social media such as facebook or twitter. The result of this has been meetings which are poorly attended, and an electorate which has only the vaguest idea of what the town board does. Once elected, I will develop an outreach program to all town members that will involve the use of e-mail and social media, proactively inviting the citizens to participate so the "open hearings" will be open in more than name.

In what ways have you worked to break down institutional barriers on the basis of race, creed, culture, religion, sexual orientation/transgender, persons who are differently able, et al, or the intersectionality of any of these? Have there been lasting changes as a result of your efforts?

I have spent the last twelve years working to improve the health of some of the most vulnerable citizens of Monroe County, and the last three years working to treat people with opioid addictions.

I have helped them to get back to their jobs and their education, and have helped them register to vote. I have educated them on and provided access to birth control and to abortion providers. And, because I have been given the privilege of being their family doctor, I have been able to witness real, lasting change in their lives, and it has been the foremost pleasure of my life to be able to see it happen.

When it comes to voting on a specific issue, do you defer to your conscience, your constituents, or your political party? I have chosen my political party based on my moral conscience, and my constituents have chosen me based on it, as well. My conscience would inform my every decision; both my party and those who elected me would be able to judge my decisions based on their own, and act accordingly to keep or remove me from office.

Will you be willing to stand in direct opposition to your party's leadership? If you have done so in the past, please explain.

If my conscience and my party ever came into conflict, I would have to choose conscience. As I have not been in office before, I cannot offer examples.

Are you willing to work with people regardless of party affiliation to improve results for your community?

The current makeup of the Perinton Town Board is exclusively republican; if myself and my running mates win office, we will still make up only half of the elected officials of the town. In order to maintain a functioning town, we will have to learn to work with one another and to find common ground.