

Democratic Rural Conference of New York State

2018 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE DEMOCRATIC RURAL CONFERENCE

CANDIDATE'S NAME and HOME ADDRESS: Leecia Eve

[REDACTED]

Position for which you are a candidate: **New York State Attorney General**

Candidate's address for all DRC correspondence:

[REDACTED]

THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS WILL BE POSTED ON THE DRC WEB SITE, Facebook Page, and as many other media outlets as possible.

Name, cell phone number and e-mail address for the person on your staff who will be your liaison with the DRC. [REDACTED]

List your qualifications for this office including but not limited to other offices you have held, educational background, etc.

I am running as the most qualified, prepared and experienced candidate to take on the challenges we are facing right now. I have spent my career fighting for social justice – advancing the rights of women, advocating for the disenfranchised, protecting the vulnerable, and defending educational and economic opportunities for all. My career in public service has prepared me for this moment – to lead the tough fights, grounded in the law, always remembering who we are and who we're fighting for.

Now more than ever, we need an Attorney General to protect, empower and defend New Yorkers from the assault on our rights and values by Donald Trump. I am best prepared to fight back against Trump but also most knowledgeable and best prepared to tackle the challenges we confront right here at home that New York state "owns" as issues that we need to address, from criminal justice reform to election reform to increased educational and economic opportunities for New Yorkers.

Born and reared in Buffalo, my ties to New York State run deep. After graduating from Smith College, Harvard Law School and the John F. Kennedy School of Government, I served as a law clerk to Associate Judge Fritz W. Alexander, II, the first African American to serve a full term as a judge on the New York State Court of Appeals, New York's highest court. I later became the first African American general equity partner at the Buffalo law firm of Hodgson Russ, representing many clients in New York State.

As a young litigation associate Covington & Burling, I was one of four lawyers who worked *pro bono* to win a precedent-setting case that resulted in significant relief in the areas of sexual harassment, obstetrical and gynecological care, program evaluation, environmental health and fire safety for hundreds of women incarcerated in District of Columbia prisons.

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Having served at the nexus of the legal, public, and private sector worlds in both New York and Washington, DC, I have a thorough knowledge of the complex legislative, regulatory, and public policy matters affecting New York, as well as a keen understanding of the diligence and resolve necessary to be an effective public servant. I was proud to have served as counsel to then-Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr., when he was the ranking member of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, on critical civil rights and social justice issues, including immigration and implementation of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which Senator Biden authored working with hundreds of lawyers and organizations across the country to support survivors of domestic violence and physical assault.

I later served as the first Senate Counsel and Homeland Security Advisor to Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, working in the trenches with Hillary to advance civil, women's, reproductive, immigrant, LGBTQ and voting rights and criminal justice reform, fight bad judicial nominees and champion good nominees. In the wake of the September 11th attacks, as Homeland Security Advisor I crafted legislation in partnership with fire fighter and law enforcement organizations across the country, legislation that was enacted and provided increased and expedited support under the Federal Public Safety Officers Benefit Program for surviving family members of first responders killed in the line of duty.

As the Deputy Secretary for Economic Development for New York State, I was responsible for overseeing eleven agencies in state government – including Agriculture and Markets – and was the chief economic development advisor to Governor Cuomo. As Deputy Secretary, I focused on leveraging state resources to attract new investment to the state, bring new businesses to New York and help existing New York businesses expand and grow, while marketing the state as once again “Open for Business.” I am especially proud of the work I did in partnership with many businesses in the tourism industry to increase tourism in all of the regions of the state, with small and medium manufacturers and with the agriculture industry, including the yogurt and wine industries.

Though I am in my third month of a voluntary unpaid leave of absence, I serve as the Vice President for Government Affairs for Verizon for New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, overseeing policy for a company that innovates and invests billions in New York State and puts nearly 20,000 New Yorkers to work every day. I also serve as a Commissioner of the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey and as a Member of the Board of Directors of the Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, based in Buffalo and the oldest cancer center in the nation.

Please address these questions, but make your answers brief so the entire questionnaire does not exceed 4 pages.

1. ABILITY TO LEAD THE ENTIRE STATE – What contact and experiences have you had with parts of the state, other than where you currently reside, which demonstrate your recognition of the geographic, demographic and economic diversity of the state and your ability to provide leadership on behalf of all New Yorkers?

My roots in our great state run deep and my knowledge of all of the regions of our state is unmatched in this race. Born and reared in Buffalo, I have fond memories of spending many vacations as a child with my family in

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Letchworth State Park in Livingston and Wyoming counties and in Robert Moses State Park in Massena in St. Lawrence County and in the Adirondack Park, most especially Saranac Lake, in Essex County.

On a professional level, it was proudly my job as Senate Counsel for Hillary Clinton to have an understanding of the challenges and opportunities present in all of the regions of the state. Similarly, as the chief economic development advisor to Governor Cuomo, I was engaged at the beginning in the establishment of the regional economic development councils. My oversight of eleven agencies in state government, including Empire State Development and Agriculture and Markets, has given me a unique and special appreciation and knowledge of the economic, geographic and demographic diversity of New York State.

2. KNOWLEDGE OF THE ISSUES – What issues do you believe are of most concern to voters in rural counties, and what will be your message in addressing those issues?

To some extent, New Yorkers, whether we live in urban or rural areas, have similar aspirations, and that is working to ensure the best educational and economic opportunities for our families. Many of the challenges are similar as well, but I know from listening to many rural New Yorkers that having enough good paying jobs remains of paramount concern. I have also worked with small and medium-sized manufacturers and with many of our community colleges and universities on workforce development issues so that rural New Yorkers can have the training needed to qualify for jobs that many employers in rural counties in many parts of the state have said are unfilled and they are in desperate need to fill them.

In addition, as in urban areas, opioid abuse is a major issue, as is the abandonment of many homes in a number of municipalities in rural counties where the population has decreased significantly, resulting in hundreds of homes where the cost of demolishing an abandoned home – in order to avoid blight or prevent slum landlords from acquiring the property for virtually no money at auction – exceeds the value of a home by tens of thousands of dollars.

The rural parts of our state are some of the most beautiful in the *country*, and I know that protecting the beauty and the environment in rural New York – the clean air and water – is of paramount importance.

3. PARTY BUILDING – How have you expressed and demonstrated a commitment toward building our party statewide and what are your ideas for future party building, specific to rural counties?

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I have a strong commitment to party building and to the DRC in particular. I have traveled to virtually every county in the state, have campaigned for rural candidates and look forward to continuing to do so. I have also personally supported financially and with sweat equity the efforts of DRC members to increase the number of Democratic voters and activism in rural counties.

I also strongly believe that the hours for voting in rural counties should be the same as the hours for voting in major urban centers in New York State. Millions of New Yorkers shouldn't have six fewer hours to exercise the most fundamental constitutional right – the right to vote. I believe that the additional costs for rural counties to have the same voting hours as urban counties should be borne by New York State so that the cost to the counties is not an impediment to all New Yorkers having an equal opportunity to exercise their right to vote and not have a lesser opportunity because they live in a rural county.

4. In the event of a primary for the office you are seeking, will you support the winner of the Democratic primary? (This calls for a YES or NO answer only.)

YES.

5. FAIRNESS IN SHARING POLITICAL POWER - How have you and how will you defend and further the rights of small counties to be represented in the decision making process and in governmental and political positions?

My candidacy in part reflects an effort to diversify our state's leadership in a number of ways, including geographically. I support increased voting hours for rural voters and through my actions underscore the need to ensure that the geographic and demographic greatness of our state is represented in the political process and in government.

6. INCLUSION – If elected, how would your administration include the people from DRC counties and address the issues of concern in those counties?

I would engage with New Yorkers from rural counties on a regular basis. I would also reinstitute the “AG in your city or county for a day” effort and have a more robust personal and direct effort to educate New Yorkers across rural counties about their rights and provide a direct opportunity to engage with the New York Attorney General's Office in their home county.

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7. VOTER APPEAL – What qualities or experiences do you have that would attract support from voters in DRC counties, not just from Democrats but also from non-enrolled voters and cross-over Republicans?

The qualities and experiences described above would attract voters from DRC counties but I will say that my physical presence in rural counties underscores my commitment. In July I attended the annual picnic in Tompkins County, which was wonderful and a great opportunity to engage with many DRC members.

Just a few weeks ago I travelled to Washington County for the annual Washington County Democratic Party summer picnic. The following day, I received an email from someone who was at the picnic who stated that I was the first candidate for *any* statewide office to show up in Washington County this year.

As I said to those who attended that picnic in Fort Edward, I believe that showing up is important, especially in rural counties where it is frankly harder to be a Democrat because Republicans control so much. Rural Democrats are on the front lines of the Democratic Party in our state and on the front lines of turning the U.S. House of Representatives BLUE! Your battles are often tough, hard and long but you stay the course because you believe in the values of our party, our state and our nation. I showed up that day to ask in person for the support of Washington County Democrats and to pay my respects and I will show up and represent rural New Yorkers to the best of my ability if elected Attorney General.

Later that same day I drove down to engage with members of the Columbia County Democrats at their summer picnic and just last week, I was humbled to be honored by the Cattaraugus County Democrats at their annual gala in Ellicottville, an event that I was personally proud to support and in which I also served as the keynote speaker.

Rural democrats across the state helped to put me on the ballot by circulating my petitions. I received more than 40,000 signatures – from as far north as Plattsburgh – across 21 of the 27 congressional districts, even though just 15,000 signatures across 14 congressional districts were required for me to get on the ballot. Democrats in rural counties were a central part of this volunteer-driven effort and for that I am extraordinarily honored and will always be grateful.

8. CAMPAIGN IN DRC COUNTIES – How would you campaign in DRC counties? **Have you personally appeared with any local rural candidates? In what rural counties have you campaigned? How have you helped rural candidates campaign?**

YES! See my answers above.

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9. OTHER CRITERIA – Please set forth anything else you want us to consider.

I would be honored and humbled to receive the support of Democratic rural voters across our state.

I thank all of you for your consideration and ask you to believe in Eve and Vote 7A, Leecia Eve for New York State Attorney General.

Thank you!

August 18, 2018
Date

Leecia Eve
Signature of the Candidate

THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE MUST BE postmarked or e-mailed at your earliest convenience but no later than _____, 2018 to Phil Jones at 19 Elm Street, Geneseo, NY 14454 or via e-mail at paj12147@gmail.com. INTERVIEWS MAY BE ARRANGED THEREAFTER.