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**Candidate Questionnaire  
Senate District 40**

**About DFMC**

Democracy for Monroe County (DFMC) is a political action committee dedicated to recruiting, training, and supporting fiscally responsible and socially progressive candidates at the local and state levels. DFMC is part of a nationwide coalition of grassroots groups allied with Democracy for America, the political action committee inspired by the presidential campaign of Howard Dean. We meet every first Thursday of the month. For more information about our organization, visit our website at [www.democracyformonroecounty.org](http://www.democracyformonroecounty.org).

*DFMC: Building and training the progressive grassroots.*

**Please return this questionnaire to [chair@democracyformonroecounty.org](mailto:chair@democracyformonroecounty.org) by Sunday, March 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm, or [wellsec01@bluemarble.net](mailto:wellsec01@bluemarble.net) and [robertdeppert@gmail.com](mailto:robertdeppert@gmail.com).**

**About You**

Name: Mark Stoops

Preferred email address: [markastoops@gmail.com](mailto:markastoops@gmail.com)

Website (if available):

List of your support or campaign committee members:

**Question 1: Why are you running for office?**

To make sure there is a progressive liberal voice in the Indiana legislature and work to pass laws that promote environmental, social, and criminal justice in Indiana.

**Question 2: List your political experience (here and elsewhere), including any grassroots activity in which you participated or led.**

Monroe County Council 8 years, and President of the Monroe County Council; Monroe County Board of Commissioners 4 years, and President of the Commissioners; Indiana State Senate 4 years. MC County Plan Commission, Solid Waste District Board, Storm Water Board plus most other county boards and commissions. Ranking Minority Member Senate Environmental Committee, Senate Education Committee, Senate Health Committee, Senate Appropriations Committee, Budget Committee, Senate Transportation Committee, Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. Passed MC Cell Tower Ordinance, MC Bike and Ped Trail Plan, MC Comprehensive Plan that protects environmentally sensitive and rural areas, MC Human Rights Ordinance and Commission, MC Environmental Quality and Sustainability, MC Women’s Commission, MC Employee Health Clinic, MC Responsible Bidder Ordinance, Purchased MC Government Center at Shower’s, Structural Repairs and Historic Restoration MC Courthouse, MC Storm Water (Clean Water) Program. In legislature passed, amended, killed too many bills to list on a wide range of issues but have been particularly active on environmental protections including setting a 50% recycling goal for state, water resource issues, protecting public education from republican privatization attempts, working to replace ISTEP testing and accountability and teacher retention and attraction improvements, mental health issues including expanded services, criminal justice diversions , addiction treatment and needle exchange programs, concussion protections, Medicaid expansion and Affordable Care Act implementation. Fighting anti-women, anti-immigration, anti-gay, pro-gun, anti-union, anti-environment, anti-abortion, corporate handout platform of republican supermajority.

**Question 3: In what way(s) do you consider yourself socially progressive?**

I believe in protecting our environment, biodiversity and wild areas, which is good for the earth but also good for humans. I believe that government should protect its citizens from the excesses of private business and corporations. People have a right to live in a clean and healthy environment, with access to high quality food, health care, and a free education, have a job with dignity and at a living wage. I think businesses should not be subsidized and should not be allowed to take advantage of their workers or the environment.

**Question 4: Describe your ideas for engaging citizens in more active participation in our community and our government.**

I am constantly talking to interested groups of people throughout the state to get them more active on state government issues. Also, although it is difficult to fight the republican supermajority, I make a point of voicing the progressive view in the statehouse at every opportunity – partly because it is not

a view many republicans in Indiana hear much, but also because I understand that although republicans have the majority it is just because of fraudulent redistricting and hefty corporate campaign finance. Almost half of the population in Indiana are Democrats and I would say that if everyone knew the crazy stuff that legislators get up to, support for our issues would be closer to 70%. Those are the people I make a point of speaking out for.

**Question 5: Do you pledge to publicly support all Democratic Party nominees, including your primary opponent(s), should he/she prevail in the May Primary Election?**

Yes

**Question 6: Because the Republicans have a super majority in the House and Senate, it is very difficult for any Democratic legislator to influence any legislation. How would you address this issue?**

See Question 4 above. Also, there are many times that I have been successful in working with Republicans on a wide range of issues – there are some issues that we can see eye to eye on.

**Question 7: There are many pieces of legislation that have been put forward to protect the rights and freedoms of individuals and certain groups of folks--for instance, the hate crimes legislation or the response to the RFRA legislation. Which of these efforts do you feel are the most important to address and how would you try to influence Republicans to be supportive of these efforts?**

The state civil rights statute must add sexual orientation and gender identity as a protected class, with no qualifications. The republicans however are very scared of their right wing base, which is prejudiced against people who are different, but masks their bigotry behind their religion. It is outrageous that the right wing fundamentalist sub group of the Christian religion is capable of controlling our legislature in order to ostracize other groups of citizens. Many republicans don't support the discrimination described above but they know that if they vote against their base they will face primary opposition in their gerrymandered district. Because their districts are so strongly republican they aren't worried about being viewed as extremist in the general election. They only have to keep their base happy. It will be very difficult to overcome that hurdle.

**Question 8: As an organization, the DFMC stands for making sure that the progressive voice is heard in Democratic politics. As important as that is, it is equally important to make sure that Democrats of all stripes are elected instead of Republicans. In our state, for a variety of reasons, electing Democrats is very difficult. How are you more electable as a Democrat than your competitor and how can you still represent the progressive voice?**

Back when I first ran for office in the mid 90s, Monroe County leaned Republican. My campaigns were always in mid-term elections which made it even more difficult. In 1998 I won an R leaning County Council district from a moderate R incumbent. This swung the majority to Democrats. In 2002, Republicans raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to boot out local county democrats. By and large they were successful except that I was still able to win my seat, the only council person to do so.

When I won my County Commissioner seat in 2008, it was the first time we had 3 democrats holding the Board of Commissioners.

It also has a lot to do with consistency. I haven't changed my policies or practice over 20 years of politics and liberal progressive voters know they can count on me to have their backs, whether that was on local issues or now at the state. We all know too many politicians who talk the talk but then after they get in office they change and start supporting the status quo. I believe I am more electable because people know and trust me.