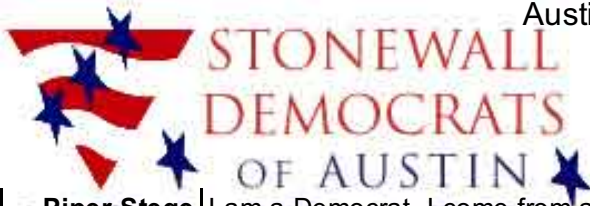


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<p><b>Question 1</b></p>	<p><b>Please tell us why you are seeking the endorsement of SDA. Do you consider yourself to be a Democrat? Do you have a history of involvement in Democratic politics and/or LGBTQIA+ issues? If so please briefly describe this history.</b></p>
<p><b>Jennifer Littlefield</b></p>	<p>I am a lifelong Democrat with a long history of supporting the Travis County Democratic Party. In college, I was President of the College Democrats at Texas State University. Since then, I have worked on campaigns for Democrats, worked in the Texas Legislature for a Democratic State Representative, served as an officer in the Circle C Area Democrats, and have supported many liberal and progressive candidates in Travis County and across Texas.</p>
<p><b>Lynn Boswell</b></p>	<p>I'm seeking SDA's endorsement because our schools serve our community and like any community, AISD is home to many LGBTQIA+ students, staff, and families. I am running for trustee because I love Austin ISD, because so much is good in our schools, and because there is still a great deal that we can and must do better. Full support for AISD's LGBTQIA+ students, staff, and families is one of those things. I'm a lifelong progressive Democrat. In our schools, I have supported LGBTQIA+ issues through the Austin Council of PTAs in several ways. For example, I ensured PLFAG's presence at our annual resource fair and our bilingual resource directory, and advocated for changes to make the sexual education curriculum and dress code more inclusive. I also reached out this month to the equity office to advocate for a transgender student who was being outed on Zoom by his birth name, which AISD systems made it difficult to change - a needless oversight that impacts many students and could endanger some. Austin schools cannot reflect Austin's progressive values until all people are truly at home in every AISD school. That must include all LGBTQIA+ families, students, and staff. SDA's endorsement would reinforce that important message.</p>

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Piper Stege  
 Nelson

I am a Democrat. I come from a family of public servants and caregivers. Teachers, therapists, labor union advocates, environmental activists, public servants—everyone in my immediate family and in my husband's are in helping professions, which is well aligned with the goals of the Democratic party. These days we regularly talk with our two elementary school kids about why we are Democrats. This explanation includes talking about choice and freedom, about taking care of other people, about addressing injustice, and about respect and grace. We talk about a party that has become more and more inclusively representative of all people – and particularly of women and people of color. And we talk about a country that was created with the stated purpose of raising every voice and creating a safety net for those in need. While our country and our party have a long way to go in achieving those dreams, I want to be a part of that work. In today's political world, it is the Democrats that are fighting to defeat a President who foments fear, anger, hatred and racism. Even if I hadn't grown up a Democrat, that would be reason enough for me. I also have a long history of involvement with LGBTQIA+ issues, most recently as the Chair of the Board of Directors of AIDS Services of Austin. I served on that board for four years before being asked to be Chair, during which time I engaged with the LGBTQIA+ community as an advocate and champion. My work with The SAFE Alliance has also been full of work with the LGBTQIA+ community and advocates, as many of our staff and our clients self-define as LGBTQIA+; this means that our organization not just actively works to welcome members of the LGBTQIA+ community, but also works to ensure that once at SAFE as a client or a staff member, that people feel comfortable and that needs are met; this includes creating outreach materials that include same sex couples and people of all genders, listing our pronouns wherever possible, and working with other LGBTQIA+ organizations in the community. In addition to my volunteer and professional work, I am personally an advocate for LGBTQIA+ people and the community. We are raising our children to be and love whomever they

<p><b>Question 2</b></p>	<p><b>Do you believe LGBTQIA+ individuals should be protected against discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression?</b></p>
<p><b>Jennifer Littlefield</b></p>	<p>Yes.</p>



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<p><b>Lynn Boswell</b>  <small>Post Office Box 40898 Austin, TX 78704</small></p>	<p>Yes, June's ruling in <i>Bostock v Clayton County</i> was a major, essential, and long-overdue victory. I have a law degree and recognize that a legal victory does not always equate to a victory in fact. The law must be reinforced through clear policy created by employers - including AISD. I believe those policies should go beyond the <i>Bostock</i> ruling to provide more comprehensive protections. Compliance must be measured. And there must be a safe way to report violations. At AISD, I believe that requires restoration of the ombudsman position. It is also essential for AISD to hire diverse staff, for the benefit of all students, and also so LGBTQIA+ students can know and learn from trusted adults who share their experience. We talk about the importance of ensuring a critical mass of Black and Latino teachers for our Black and Latino students. We need to expect the same for LGBTQIA+ students - especially because some students will not find acceptance and support in their own communities or homes.</p>
<p><b>Piper Stege Nelson</b></p>	<p>Yes, absolutely. And frankly it is heart wrenching that this would have to be a question. Here is a blog that I wrote recently about what the recent Title 7 ruling in the Supreme Court could mean for companies:  <a href="https://www.safeinstitute.org/blog/what-the-title-7-ruling-means- for-your-company">https://www.safeinstitute.org/blog/what-the-title-7-ruling-means- for-your-company</a>.</p>

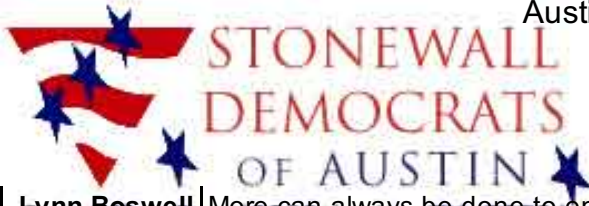
<p><b>Question 3</b></p>	<p><b>Do you believe that public schools should institute rules and policies to prohibit harassment and discrimination against LGBTQIA+ students?</b></p>
<p><b>Jennifer Littlefield</b></p>	<p>Yes. I am a member of Informed Parents of Austin, which is a parent led group that advocates for LGBTQIA+ inclusive policies in AISD. In 2019, the group successfully advocated for science-based sex ed policies to be incorporated into AISD's curriculum. AISD is currently not doing enough to prevent harassment and discrimination against queer students. Middle school in particular is still a terrible time for many LGBTQIA+ students. Gay slurs, as well as racial slurs, are commonplace across middle and high schools. The work to create inclusive campuses for our students needs to begin in elementary school.</p>



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<p><b>Lynn Boswell</b> Post Office Box 40898 Austin, TX 78704</p>	<p>Schools must institute rules and policies to prohibit harassment and discrimination against LGBTQIA+ students. It's a matter of basic decency, of a safe educational environment, of mental health, and even of life or death. Policies must be paired with a culture and teaching that reinforces those policies, and with a safe system of reporting that adds an extra, protective lawyer to the campus-based system that currently exists - an ombudsman's office. There must also be fidelity measurement to ensure that the policies in place are being followed. Policy and practice don't always align. For example, despite rules prohibiting denial of recess as punishment, that is happening on some campuses - and families fear retaliation if they push back. To be effective, policies must be monitored for implementation, and there must be safe and clearly accessible recourse beyond the campus when well-crafted policies are in place but are not being honored.</p>
<p><b>Piper Stege Nelson</b></p>	<p>Yes. There should absolutely be rules, if there are not already. But it needs to go beyond rules and the enforcement of those rules - which must happen. But we have to change the culture. Social emotional learning is one of the great things that Austin ISD is doing - and a program that I believe in fervently. I think that it works to tell children that they can listen to their feelings, express their feelings and, therefore, truly express who they are. I honestly believe that if people were allowed to truly be themselves, to truly follow their heart from a young age, the violence, anger and hate in this world could be vastly lessened. Recently my son was chided by another little boy in class because my son had his toenails painted in a gorgeous rainbow array. The other little boy said emphatically that painted nails were for little girls - at which point three of my son's friends began to speak emphatically to the other boy. They told him that painted nails are not just for girls, and that not only could boys have painted nails but that people get to choose what they do with their bodies. My son recounted this to me later, not in shame or anger, but as a fact - there are people that do not know, and sometimes you and your friends have to teach them. This is the sort of culture change that I want to be a part of - and that I would love to help AISD find even more ways to further.</p>

<p><b>Question 4</b></p>	<p><b>Do you think the school district is doing enough to ensure equality for its LGBTQIA+ employees? For example, how would you address organizational issues such as transgender employees transitioning on the job?</b></p>
<p><b>Jennifer Littlefield</b></p>	<p>I am unaware of whether AISD is doing enough to ensure equality for its LGBTQIA+ employees. I would advocate for AISD to follow best practices in supporting its LGBTQIA+ employees in all aspects of their employment.</p>

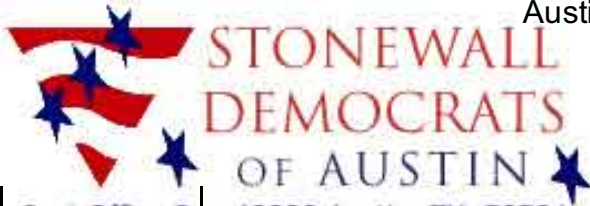


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<p><b>Lynn Boswell</b>  <small>Post Office Box 40898 Austin, TX 78704</small></p>	<p>More can always be done to ensure equality for AISD's LGBTQIA+ employees. AISD includes many LGBTQIA+ employees in leadership roles and in the classroom - but that should be expected as a norm, not seen as a special achievement. A review of AISD policy shows clear changes that are needed and also shows many opportunities for stronger and more specific protections. It's a matter of both adding policies that are missing and fixing language in policies that already exist. For example, this language from current AISD policy about Hostile Environment calls out "Verbal or physical conduct based on a person's sex, race, color, religion, or national origin" - just one place where language must be changed to make policy more inclusive. Strong policy should also exist to protect and support transgender employees transitioning on the job, in the same way that something like pregnancy is supported. And we must look for answers about other missing policies within the AISD and Austin community. I would support a workgroup focused on issues impacting LGBTQIA+ employees, with the goal of reviewing and revising policies to add inclusive language, reflect best practices, and address evolving issues. I support revisions of AISD policy to make our district a leader in ensuring equality for LGBTQIA+ employees. Models exist from other communities, including Toronto and Los Angeles. I believe the best solutions and deepest knowledge come from studying other district's responses and looking for wisdom within our own community. No one knows better what AISD's LGBTQIA+ employees need than AISD's current, former, and future employees.</p>
<p><b>Piper Stege Nelson</b></p>	<p>I am sure that there are some schools where LGBTQIA+ staff and teachers feel comfortable, like the district is enough, and others where they do not. Part of the work of the trustees is to determine how to create structures and policies, but also cultural awareness and responsibility, so that every LGBTQIA+ staff and teacher feel safe and welcomed on every campus. There are most certainly organizational ways that the Trustees could work to further equality, including addressing the administrative, language, health care, and support needs of transgender employees when they are transitioning.</p>

<p><b>Question 5</b></p>	<p><b>Are you familiar with the organization Out Youth? If elected, what would you do to help this organization and others that provide services to LGBTQIA+ youth?</b></p>
<p><b>Jennifer Littlefield</b></p>	<p>Yes! The work of Out Youth is needed now more than ever as students are isolated from peers and school support networks. We know that many of our queer youth are not accepted at home. I will advocate for continued partnerships with Out Youth and Communities In Schools to bring Out Youth curriculum and programs to AISD campuses. I will also encourage every middle and high school campus to create a Gay Straight Alliance club to support inclusive campus environments.</p>

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<p><b>Lynn Boswell</b></p>	<p>I have learned from friends and media coverage about Out Youth and some of the important work it does - creating a safe and supportive place for young people, celebrating at the Out Youth Prom, and supporting students in local schools. I believe strongly in the importance of partnerships between AISD and the rich mix of advocacy groups in our city. It's a powerful way to offer more services, tap into expertise, and create a network of advocates who support the success of AISD's students and schools as essential to the success of our community. As a trustee, I will work to highlight Out Youth and other groups, to be a visible presence when I am invited to events, to seek more opportunities for partnerships, and to look to Out Youth and other groups for expertise in ensuring that AISD is serving and supporting all LGBTQIA+ students.</p>
<p><b>Piper Stege Nelson</b></p>	<p>I am very familiar. Kevin Haynes is a board member and a good friend. And their Development Director, Lane Strickland, just came from AIDS Services of Austin and is amazing. Every school should have signs, listings and opportunities for students to learn about Out Youth - and, frankly, other organizations that are serving the LGBTQIA+ community. Having posters up around school, providing speaking opportunities to Out Youth (and others) on LGBTQIA+ issues, allowing students to convene LGBTQIA+ affinity group meetings on campus - these outward actions do not only provide a network of support to LGBTQIA+ students and staff/teachers, but they also send an important message to the rest of the community that LGBTQIA+ folx are an important part of our community.</p>

<p><b>Question 6</b></p>	<p><b>Describe a step you would take, or have taken, or a proposal you would make, or have made as a member of the Board of Trustees that would <u>specifically</u> benefit LGBTQIA+ students.</b></p>
<p></p>	<p></p>





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<p><b>Jennifer Littlefield</b></p>	<p>In addition to the policies mentioned above, I would advocate for continued investments in AISD's Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs and continued investments in campus modernizations. Examples of current successful SEL programming in AISD includes elementary PRIDE activities that celebrate what makes a student's family unique, middle and high school programs that teach students about the spectrum of gender identification and sexual identity, and parent programming that raises awareness about the high rates of suicide of among queer teens. I served on the 2017 bond campaign that led to a \$1 billion investment in AISD facility upgrades. The modernized schools include many features that make our schools accessible and inclusive for all students, including gender neutral bathrooms. Unfortunately, access to bathrooms and changing areas remains a real concern for transgender students. Having gender neutral bathrooms in the new campuses is a purposeful detail that is a testament to our commitment to inclusivity for all students.</p>
<p><b>Lynn Boswell</b></p>	<p>I support an honest and thorough equity audit for AISD, and I support including LGBTQIA+ issues in that study. I also support gathering stories of lived experience along with more traditional measures. Establishing a shared understanding of our strengths and weaknesses is a crucial step toward addressing them. I know that LGBTQIA+ students can face many issues in our schools. I also know that some schools are considered safer - both physically and emotionally - than others. I have been told by friends, teachers, and others who work in AISD that there is a "secret list" that circulates among families - passing along information about which schools are friendlier and more welcoming to LGBTQIA+ students, especially young people whose families are supportive and have the privilege to choose. An equity audit is the first step to ensuring that all schools and all classrooms belong on that list. We owe that to each and every LGBTQIA+ student, to our district, and to ourselves.</p>
<p><b>Piper Stege Nelson</b></p>	<p>It is imperative that students see themselves reflected in the stories and messaging from AISD. Just like we can not talk only about racism during Black History Month or Latinx Culture Month, we must also talk about the needs and the work of our LGBTQIA+ students even when it is not Pride Month. I have talked a great deal about the communications office over the course of this campaign - because I feel strongly that the district needs better and more empathetic communications and more community engagement. I would love to see LGBTQIA+ students highlighted in our communications - in the brochures and on the website and in our videos - thereby ensuring that LGBTQIA+ students know that they are a huge part of the success of and the pride that we feel in AISD.</p>