

Candidate Questionnaire
Mesa County Clerk & Recorder
Jeffrey Waldon (D)

By now, you have read and considered the seven political principles we feel should guide political conduct in Western Colorado.

1. Do you endorse each of the seven principles Restore the Balance feels should guide political conduct in Western Colorado? If you endorse them all, please explain how you will work to execute these principles. If there are one or more principles you do not endorse, please identify them and explain why.

YES to all 7 Principles. On competing ideas, neither party has a monopoly on solutions. Compromise is required in order to move our County and Country forward. Stalemate and intransigence always prevents forward progress, gridlock is not an option or a solution. On the facts, everyone is entitled to their own opinion. No one is entitled to their own facts. Alternative facts are lies. Misinformation, propaganda and hyper-partisan rhetoric are destructive to the democratic process. On the public interest, officials who have been entrusted with a public office should never put their own personal political ambitions above the public interest and when push comes to shove, its country over party not the other way around. On campaign finance, my candidacy for Mesa County Clerk and Recorder is a stand-alone campaign. I have not raised a single dime for this campaign and I am beholden to no one. If elected, I would be responsible to the citizens of Mesa County, not any political party. I am campaigning as a non-partisan public administrator and hope to return this office to its historically a-political civil service place within Mesa County government. On extremism, political violence and intimidation tactics have no place in American democracy. In this country, we settle our differences at the ballot box. My two opponents in this race are not the enemy, they are my competitors. I trust that whoever has the best ideas will be able to share that message with the Citizens of Mesa County and whoever has the most votes wins.

2. What experience do you have that can give voters confidence that you are qualified to run the Clerk and Recorder's office? Be specific.

I believe I have the education and experience as well as the demonstrated leadership and organizational skills to be Clerk & Recorder. I earned a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Political Science and Public Administration with an emphasis on American government. I know how this stuff is supposed to work. I have experience in banking and finance, formerly a specialist in operations involving large sums of cash and complex reporting criteria for which I had to be bonded. In addition, I hold multiple teaching credentials and spent 23 years teaching American government, politics and public policy as well as bureaucratic functions. Teaching requires tremendous organizational, interpersonal, and

motivational skills and given the workforce at the Clerk's Office as well as the diversity and complexity of tasks to be performed, I believe I have the character, skills and ability to help restore what has been broken and to improve upon what works well. Finally, there is no substitute for personal responsibility and accountability. I believe if you accept a privilege, you incur an obligation (Privilegium Obligatio). If elected Clerk & Recorder, I will fulfill my oath of office and will to the best of my ability restore the public trust in this local institution.

- 3. As Clerk and Recorder, you will oversee elections in Mesa County. Thinking only about Colorado, do you believe Colorado 2020 election results were legitimate? If you do not feel results were accurately reported, why do you feel that way and what factual evidence supports your belief?**

The 2020 elections just like in 2018, 2016 etc. going back in time were free and fair elections just like the recent 2022 primaries were and I do not expect there will be any significant or problematic issues with Colorado's 2022 Midterms in November, statewide or here in Mesa County. Colorado knows how to conduct elections, ranked one of the best in the Nation. I have particular confidence in Mesa County's elections as the two women running the office just received the 2022 Excellence in Elections Award from the Colorado County Clerk and Recorder's Association. Moreover, after being selected as an Election Judge in the 2020 Election as well as my participation in the 2021 hand count here in Mesa County last year, I got to see firsthand how professional the operation really is. In terms of any alleged election fraud or claims malfeasance, there has been zero proof put forward publicly or been put in front of a state or federal judge to substantiate any such claim of wrongdoing.

- 4. What changes, if any, do you intend to make from your predecessor, Tina Peters, in policy or training?**

If elected, I should have ample time to complete the two now required courses for new Clerks and to do so before I take office in early January 2023. Following that, I will immediately enroll in the course to earn my National Certification in Elections so as to be on par with several other women in that office who hold that designation. As best I can tell, there is no formal mentoring program in the Clerk's Office nor do I know how robust a program may be in place for the recruitment, retention, and training of qualified staff. As a professional educator recently retired, 3 months to train new clerk staff sounds very inefficient and disorganized. I believe significant improvements are in order. I will put a more focused program in place and I will attempt to secure funding for extensive and ongoing professional development opportunities for the staff through the many courses offered by the CCCRA. As for most everything else, I believe my first obligation will be to listen and learn from the folks already in place. Once I have a solid grasp of operations, then we can start a conversation about what can or cannot be changed as I will have no authority whatsoever to change or alter that which is required by statute. Finally, I want to ensure a safe, cordial, professional

work environment. I will not tolerate a hostile workplace where harassment and discrimination go unchallenged.

5. What plans do you have to ensure that election workers will be safe and free from intimidation and threats?

There have been some precautions put in place and I am not yet convinced that what has been done is sufficient to protect the workforce given the current political climate. Unfortunately, I am not prepared to discuss publicly what additional steps may be taken to protect the staff. Suffice it to say, there are possibilities for improvements related to the building's physical security, enhanced security during election windows, electronic measures to be added etc. What is really sad and disappointing is that it is necessary to even think about this stuff, but for the fact that someone told a lie, and what has traditionally been a non-issue has become hyper politicized putting many lives at risk. This is unacceptable !

6. Can you provide some examples of how you worked with members of the opposing party in developing your ideas or policies as a candidate?

My family is Republican, all of them. So too are most of my neighbors. I came to this election with my own ideas informed by both my personal and professional experiences. In sharing my ideas with them, surprisingly enough, we are all on the same page when it comes to the non-partisan, a-political nature of this particular government position. There is no place for partisan politics in this race because the statutory role and responsibilities of Clerk and Recorder are clearly spelled out. The scope and authority vested in the Clerk does not extend beyond following the laws as written.

7. In Mesa County there are more registered unaffiliated voters than there are Republicans or Democrats. Do you support the idea of including independents in election campaign oversight? Why or why not?

As I understand it, the law as written says when we select individuals to form our bi-partisan election teams the two major parties come first, then you may start to include unaffiliated voters. Personally, I have no problem with those who chose to be unaffiliated and if I was allowed under the law to be more inclusive of that group I would be as the label is less important than being an active registered voter. Whether the Clerk has the statutory authority to include more of those folks in the process I cannot say definitively, but I would not be an obstacle to making those changes if possible.

8. Aside from election administration and oversight, what are the most important improvements needed in the Clerk and Recorder's office?

I intend to bring my experienced leadership, organizational skills, honesty and integrity to a department that has suffered greatly at the hands of the out-going Clerk. That means the staff will be my top priority: recruitment, training, mentoring, professional development and retention. The out-going Clerk violated her oath of office. I will not use this Office for personal, political gain and have no intention of ever running for higher office. I am running now to ensure a competitive race and to ensure we do not have another disastrous Clerk by Default. The out-going Clerk betrayed the public trust and has sewn enormous distrust within the electorate. I will do my utmost to restore that trust with the Citizens of Mesa County. Overall, I intend to beef up and run a more robust public education campaign to help prevent voters in Mesa County from having their ballots not counted and their voices silenced for technical errors like the 1,000+ ballots that were rejected in the 2022 primary. And if it is within my authority to do so, I intend to support a robust voter registration campaign to drive up voter participation in Mesa County. In my campaign, I say it is Your Voice, Your Vote that counts and I am running to protect Your right to vote. If I am fortunate enough to win this campaign and become the next elected Clerk, I will live up to my oath of office and collectively We will run an honest, transparent, efficient and professional operation to help restore the Clerk and Recorder's Office to its traditional and rightful statutory role in Mesa County.

Thank you for your support !

Jeffrey Waldon

8.18.2022