



MICHELLE BECKLEY

DEMOCRAT

Email: michelle@michellebeckley.com

Website: www.michellebeckley.com

Facebook: [MichelleBeckleyTexas](https://www.facebook.com/MichelleBeckleyTexas)

Residence: Carrollton, Texas

Current Job/Profession: I am a Carrollton business owner. Kookaburra Bird Shop was founded by my entrepreneurial parents in 1979, and I bought the business and took ownership of the store in 2003.

Education: B.S. in Biomedical Science – Texas A & M University

Highlight of Current Civic Involvement/Accomplishments:

As many Democrats, I voted but was not civically active in my community other than attending to my business and day to day life. I attended the Women's March in 2017 and knew I needed to become more active. While running for Mayor of Carrollton, a citizen brought to my attention that Carrollton was the only Texas city that had a 287(g) agreement with ICE. I felt this agreement added undue stress on our community police & citizens as well as was fiscally redundant. I made it part of my platform and this brought attention to the issue while I was running. Due to our efforts Carrollton has since canceled this agreement.

In 2017, I was a late entrant into the race for Mayor of Carrollton, and my campaign was successful in increasing voter turnout and motivating first-time voters to go to the polls with an end result of the City of Carrollton having one of its highest voter turnouts for a municipal election.

Why are you running for office?

I'm in this race to fight for the issues which matter to everyday families in our community — better education, more equality, and affordable health care; my goal is to return common-sense community values to the Texas Legislature. After attending the first Women's March in January 2017, I decided I needed to do something greater for my community. After filing and running for Mayor of Carrollton, I knew I was not done yet and research shows there is vast, untapped democratic energy in my area.

The 2017 legislative session was dominated by the “bathroom bill” debate. Do you believe the state should require people to use the bathroom designated for the biological sex listed on their birth certificate?

As an Aggie, I might know a thing or two about cow manure and this “bathroom bill” authored by my opponent is the biggest load of cow manure to come out of the state house in 2017. The amount of tax dollars that were wasted debating this could have been spent on common sense legislation like funding our public schools, taking the Medicaid expansion, or improving our roads & infrastructure. Instead, our Republican legislatures attempted to create a problem where one didn't exist and targeted an already at-risk population which has one of the highest suicide rates. No one walks around with their birth certificate and who is going to enforce this? At the end of the day this was just a publicity stunt that my opponent used to get attention, instead of actually doing his job and legislating.



GALA CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

During the last legislative session, Texas passed the Freedom to Serve Children Act which allows foster homes and adoption agencies, including those that receive public funds, to choose to only place children in homes with a mother and father. This coming session we anticipate once again seeing "Religious Liberty" bills which offer protection to businesses that deny services such as counseling, wedding planning, etc. to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Texans when based on "sincerely held religious beliefs." Would you support such legislation? If so, please explain your justification of the expenditure of state funds defending such a law, as several similar laws are already actively involved in court cases and have been found to be discriminatory and unconstitutional? If you do not support such a proposal, please explain how you would justify your decision to a business that doesn't wish to provide a specific service, such as baking a wedding cake, to an LGBT individual.

I absolutely oppose this law. If a loving family wants to give a home to a child it should not matter their race, religion, or sexual orientation. If these institutions want to take public funding then they should NOT have the right to discriminate against any loving family. This is cruel and senseless discrimination. Our foster care system needs a complete overhaul beginning with ending such discriminatory laws like the Freedom to Serve Children Act.

A recent study by the National Center of Transgender Equality found that 82% of transgender youth feel unsafe at school and 44% report having been physically abused. This coming legislative session, we anticipate that we will once again see the introduction of a "Bathroom Bill" which requires transgender students use the bathroom that matches their sex assigned at birth. Would you support such legislation? If you support such legislation, what steps would you include to ensure that transgender children are not bullied or physically attacked when they enter a bathroom? If you oppose such legislation, how would you explain your stance to a constituent concerned about their child's right to privacy in the school bathroom?

As an Aggie, I might know a thing or two about cow manure and this "bathroom bill" is the biggest load of cow manure to come out of the state house in 2017 authored by my opponent. The amount of tax dollars that were wasted debating this could have been spent on common sense legislation like funding our public schools, taking the Medicaid expansion, or improving our roads & infrastructure. Instead our Republican legislatures created a problem out of thin air against an already at-risk population who has one of the highest suicide rates. No one walks around with their birth certificate and who is going to enforce this? At the end of the day this was just a publicity stunt that my opponent used to get attention, instead of actually doing his job and legislating.

During the last legislative session, the State Legislature attempted to pass a record number of bills considered anti-LGBT. Several states that have passed similar anti-LGBT laws have faced business boycotts. Conversely, cities/municipalities wanting to be more attractive to business relocations, have passed Equal Rights Ordinances (EROs). These ordinances typically prohibit discrimination in city employment and city services, city contracts, public accommodations, private employment, and housing based on an individual's sex, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, familial status, marital status, military status, religion, disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity/expression or pregnancy. Do you support the right of local governments to pass EROs? Please explain your position.

Absolutely. If our state and federal leaders don't want to do the right thing, then we as citizens and municipalities must do everything we can to end discrimination. Discrimination is bad for individuals, families and the economy. Because of the Texas legislatures endless attacks on the LGBTQ community, businesses and families are less likely to come to our state. The attacks on the LGBTQ community are simply cruel and if municipalities want to take the matter into their own hands in order to protect their citizens then yes, I'm all for supporting EROs.

What would you like LGBT constituents and our families and friends to know about you as a candidate? Why should this large voting community support your candidacy?

We would be honored to have such a wonderful opportunity. At the end of the day, I am the only Pro-LGBTQ candidate on the ballot for this race. My opponent honestly believes the community should be treated as second class citizens and wants to deny the rights of everyday Texans simply because of who they love, or how they express their gender identity. I'm running because I want to return common-sense community values back to the Texas legislature and those values don't include cruelty and hatred. LGBTQ Texans deserve full and equal rights in every facet just like everyone else.



**VOTER GUIDE
STATE REP. - DISTRICT 65
FALL, 2018**



RON SIMMONS

REPUBLICAN

Email: ron@ronsimmons.com

Website: www.ronsimmmons.com

Facebook: [RonSimmonsforTexas](https://www.facebook.com/RonSimmonsforTexas)

Residence: Carrollton, Texas

Current Job/Profession: Chairman, Retirement Advisors of American; Texas State Representative

Education: Bachelor's Degree – Dallas Baptist University

Highlight of Current Civic Involvement/Accomplishments:

Board of Advisors - LifeSavers, Co-Chair 2018 Denton County Chapter of Special Olympics. Board of Directors - American Legislative Exchange, Commissioner of the Education Commission of the States, Past Vice Chairman of the Autism Society of America, 2011 NFL Super Bowl Breakfast Planning Committee, International Leadership Speaker for Equip International, Deacon - First Baptist Church of Dallas, Youth Sports Coach, Teacher and Director in Young Married Division at Prestonwood Baptist Church, NBA All Star Game Athletes in Action Breakfast Planning Committee.

Why are you running for office?

I come from a very humble background as the son of two public school teachers in rural Arkansas. My wife and I moved to the Dallas area almost 34 years ago in our pursuit of the American dream. We were able to live the dream by the grace of God and the people and opportunities he placed in our path. I became a small business owner, and Lisa and I raised three children and were active in our community. Through these experiences we had direct participation in how our government interacts with families and businesses here in our state. I felt that experience uniquely qualified me to represent HD 65 in the Texas House and in 2012 the voters agreed and sent me to Austin to represent them (they did so again in 2014 and 2016). While conservative, I seek to reach across the entire political spectrum to do what is best for Texas and Texans. I have been very successful at doing so and will continue this philosophy if I am fortunate enough to be asked to serve again in the 86th legislative session.

The 2017 legislative session was dominated by the "bathroom bill" debate. Do you believe the state should require people to use the bathroom designated for the biological sex listed on their birth certificate?

First of all, we need to respect all Texans without regard to gender, race, religion or sexual orientation. However, in doing so we must protect the privacy of our children. There should be no law or school policy that requires school age boys and girls to share the same multi occupancy bathroom, shower or changing facility.

The real legislative question is should cities, school districts or other political subdivisions be able to implement ordinances or policies that require the removal of privacy. If this scenario is a real issue then it does need to be debated at the state level so that there can be consistency all across Texas. In the House this is the legislation that was proposed. It simply said this issue should be discussed at the state level, so that we do not have a "hodge podge" of differing regulations across Texas.



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This follows the same principle as many issues in Texas, the most recent being the Uber (and Lyft etc.) bill. It was debated and decided that regulations for ride sharing companies need to be uniform sitewide so that there is not confusion for Texans who might utilize these services in different Texas cities. It also helps the drivers (the ultimate small business owner) from having to comply with a dizzying array of different regulations in an area like the DFW metroplex which has numerous cities.

Legislative History on LGBT Issues:

Rep. Simmons proposed HB 2899, a replacement for Senate Bill 6 which would have prevented transgender people from using restrooms that correspond with their gender identity. Rep. Ron Simmons, claims that the bill is intended to “strike a balance” between business interests and conservative groups that say that further action is necessary to protect the privacy of women and children in public restrooms. (Salon.com)

GALA CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate did not respond.