

Open Letter

A prosecutor has the responsibility of a minister of justice and not simply that of an advocate. This responsibility carries with it specific obligations to see that the defendant is accorded procedural justice and that guilt is decided upon the basis of sufficient evidence. Comments, Ark. R. Prof. Cond., Rule 3.8.

It is because of this special responsibility imposed upon a prosecutor, that we have been particularly disheartened by the recent attack ads, misrepresentations, and flat out lies that have been leveled against Alicia Walton, a candidate for Sixth Judicial District Prosecuting Attorney, which covers Perry and Pulaski Counties. Some of these attacks have come directly from Will Jones' Campaign while others have come from a group called Fair Courts America.

As African Americans, we have often received the brunt of the "tough on crime" movements in the United States. African Americans are arrested, tried, and incarcerated at far greater rates than their white counterparts for the same crimes. The very dog whistles that are used to justify the different treatment of African Americans form the basis of the recent attacks against Ms. Walton.

One mailer says Ms. Walton is supported by "defund the police activists." This is a dog whistle to indicate that Ms. Walton is anti-police. This is a flat out lie. Ms. Walton is a former Marine. She volunteered to defend our Country putting her life on the line to protect the freedom of others. She does not support defund the police.

The mailer also says that she has "championed bail reform that puts criminals back on the streets." Again, this is another dog whistle designed to suggest that Ms. Walton will "coddle criminals" or "hug a thug." This also is a flat out lie. Ms. Walton has aggressively advocated for those that should not be incarcerated and should be released on bail. This is a basic right secured by the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Ms. Walton understands that a person is presumed innocent until they are proven guilty. And, she understands that locking everyone up convicted of a crime doesn't keep our streets safe. That is why Ms. Walton helped to start the Veteran's Court program and other treatment programs that have reduced recidivism.

For his part, Will Jones has sent a mailer with the number of cases that he has prosecuted compared to the number of cases that Ms. Walton has prosecuted. Prosecuting cases does not make you a minister of justice. Mr. Jones misses the point of the special responsibility of a prosecutor. We need balance. We deserve a prosecutor who understands that African American males' encounter with the police is more likely to lead to some type of physical altercation, arrest, and even death, than their white counterparts confronting the same scenario. We deserve a prosecutor who understands the pain of having a loved one murdered, who will exercise authority and hold the guilty accountable, and who still takes seriously the responsibility of securing the rights of those accused of murder. We deserve a prosecutor who is not as concerned about the number of cases that they have tried as they are about the number of cases that they have diverted from ever becoming crimes because of effective prevention and intervention programs.

The only candidate in the race for Prosecuting Attorney for the Sixth Judicial District that meets these requirements is Alicia Walton. While Mr. Jones has gone low, Ms. Walton has consistently run a positive campaign. Even the most recent attack ad proves Ms. Walton is a great trial lawyer. The mailer lists six newspaper ads where Ms. Walton either got an acquittal for a wrongfully accused client, worked out a great deal for a guilty client or defended someone that no one else had the courage to defend.

Please stand with us and pass the word. We deserve better. We demand better. We will get better if we elect Alicia Walton as our next Prosecuting Attorney for the Sixth Judicial District.

Respectfully,

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| Willard Proctor, Jr. | Olly Neal | Sarah Howard Jenkins |
| Austin Porter, Jr. | Lawrence Walker | Crystal Okoro |
| Pamela Abrams | Dominique King | Bobby Forrest, Jr. |
| Malcolm Simmons | Agather McKeel | Ashley Stepps |