

Tyler County GOP certifies Koi & Johnson

from the CEC by [Michael G. Maness](#)
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The Republican Tyler County Executive Committee (CEC) certified Brooke Koi for District Attorney and Matthew Johnson for Pct 4 Commissioner Thursday evening, July 30, at the Alan Shivers Library, to be the Republican (GOP) options on the Nov. ballot.

We thank all the candidates for their courage to come forward to serve our beloved Tyler County. Know that it was not an easy task.

This was a rare responsibility and a first for Tyler County in living memory.

The CEC is composed of County Chair Robert Poynter and the precinct chairs. With the departure of Lucas Babin and the passing of Buck Hudson, who both had won the GOP primary, the sophisticated process required the CEC to choose the GOP candidate for Tyler County on the Nov. ballot.

Koi had served as first assistant DA, the only candidate submitting, and so that choice was easy. She was not only appointed by Gov. Abbott to fill out Babin's term, Koi came with endorsements from Babin, Judge Milton Powers, Sheriff Bryan Weatherford, her Asst. DA "Hawk" Hardy, and many others. Plus, Poynter and a few pct chairs investigated Koi and found her sharp and well respected. That made Koi a proud shoe-in for us.

For Pct 4 Commissioner, the task could have been nearly as easy as with Koi. Many may not understand or appreciate that. Poynter and the CEC could have simply picked one and certified that one to be on the Nov. ballot—end of story.

Even after the story below, one of our number petitioned the State Republican Executive Committee (SREC). Poynter talked with several authorities in the SREC (and others), and the SREC chose not to invalidate our vote. We are human and had a lot of latitude.

The larger story is about Poynter's leadership to include a wider array of citizens, leading the CEC to be far more inclusive. Despite a few differences along the way, nevertheless, we unfurled our sails into the storm.

Poynter orchestrated a "meet-and-greet" forum at the Spurger Fire Station Hall near the center of Pct 4. Sal Baldovinos moderated several hard questions and audience questions. Tyler County Treasurer Leann Monk, County Clerk Janet Brown, Melissa Riley, and Kimberly Murray aided in collecting votes of confidence from pct 4 residents. That was a straw poll, not an election, and no voter registration cards were demanded. There was just a trust that Monk, Brown, Riley, and Murray knew who the pct 4 residents were, and there was a trust in those good residents.

Johnson got the most votes of confidence from that poll. One got zero.

From the beginning, the forum's purpose was twofold: (1) to give those in pct 4 a voice and (2) to allow the CEC to see how the candidates interacted with pct 4. The forum turned out better than expected, a packed house needing extra chairs with many standing.



The CEC looked at each candidate carefully, looked at their backgrounds, their roots in pct 4, their education and work experience, and their voting records. Their Republican values of faith, family, and country. The candidates were questioned on a host of topics. They submitted their resumes and were interviewed one-on-one.

The commissioner is a key person in Tyler County management and part of a team. The pct 4 budget is negotiated with the rest of the court as they work with the other elected officials in managing our precious county. This was not merely for pct 4 but for the whole county. Varied experience was as important as working with people under Republican platform values that respected all county residents, of whatever creed, color, party, or even of no party at all.

Poynter led us through a big thicket within a short span of time. Indeed, several in the CEC would have preferred spending more time vetting. Time was limited. We pray all will appreciate that we spent vastly much more time than was required.

We, the CEC, were a motley crew this year. Nearly as many women as men. Mostly seniors with a few younger chairs (less than 40). We had two attorneys, two city mayors, several small business owners (or former), and several retirees from the public and the private sectors. Several had worked for decades with county, state, and federal governments.

The men and women of this CEC love Tyler County and had several hundred years of experience from super-broad vistas of the world. The decision was not made in a vacuum, not flippantly, but from the lens of well-travelled, well-worked, and well-seasoned home folks.

What also needs to be said, though few outside our small enclave know, is that our County Chair Robert Poynter worked hard for over a year before the CEC even came to this never-anticipated auspicious table.

Please listen closely, at this table we had more GOP pct chairs than at any other time, at least in the last 20-plus years since the GOP became the dominate party in Tyler County. We had an unprecedented, greater number, a motley crew, a larger team than ever before. And that number is due to the energetic passion of Poynter over a year before this unanticipated event.

If this event had happened ten years ago, there might have been only three or four deciding. Too many do not know who their commissioner is, and even fewer know who their party precinct chair is, or even that such chair existed until this rare event came to light. That is sad for any political party. Therefore, whatever feelings one may have for the choice or the process, we gingerly ask you to join the work. Learn the criticality of primaries.

This was almost certainly a once-in-a-lifetime event.

We, the CEC, wished we had had a full table of 18 (chair and 17 pct chairs). That has never happened! Yet we were especially fortunate to have this crew for this year's table.

We are part of a large, complicated outfit that too few appreciate.

The GOP platform includes a host of values ("platform": fancy term for "list of values and priorities"). The 2026 "Reports of the Permanent Rules, Platform and Resolutions, and Legislative Priorities" is 135 pages, published by the GOP State Chair D'rinda Randall, the committee chair Trey Trainor, and 31 district chairs. Within that doc, 15 "Legislative Priorities" shine, the top four being "Secure Texas Elections," "Completely Eliminate All Property Taxes," "Ban Taxpayer-funded Lobbying," and "Don't Sharia Our Texas."

After the legislative priorities, allow us to share a tiny portion of the "platform" from the meaty 59 pages in nine broad categories. The top three categories are constitutional, business, and finance. Under the 4th category "Education," the first subtopic is "Parents' Rights" composed of items #90 thru #99: parents not the state should control their children.

Under the 7th category “State Affairs,” the second subtopic is “Individual Rights and Freedoms” composed of items #202 thru #206,” with #204 being “Freedom of Speech and Religious Practice.” The 286 items of the whole platform are detailed, daunting, and passed in June at the 2026 Texas GOP state convention, many items refined from previous years.

We share the above to highlight the breadth. Likely only a few dozen in our entire beloved Tyler County have read it. Best of all, one does not have to agree with every item, and it was passed knowing that.

Importantly, all GOP elected persons should believe the preamble and the ten principles of general historic conservatism. The preamble begins: “Affirming our belief in God, we hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights; that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. Throughout the world, people dare to dream of freedom and opportunity. The Republican Party unequivocally defends that dream. We strive to preserve the freedom given to us by God, established by our Founding Fathers, and embodied in the United States Constitution....”

The ten “Principles” begins with respecting Christianity as an influence upon our “unalienable Rights,” the rest being, #2 sanctity of human life, #3 individual freedom, #4 limited government, #5 personal responsibility, #6 self-sufficient families founded upon traditional marriage, #7 parents’ complete freedom of choice in education, #8 right of all to defend themselves and their property, #9 free enterprise, and #10 “All those who serve and protect ... our freedom, deserve to be honored.”

These cherished principles derive from a long history, most dating back 250 years. Yet under all that meat (and some fat) is solid bone and marrow, a core skeletal belief in “FREEDOM” from government interference with our personal Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness, and a belief that the government has a sacred duty to protect those unalienable rights. Look closely and one can see “freedom” as the superstructure undergirding most of the priorities, principles, and the platform’s 286 items.

Ronald Reagan once gave an anecdote of a Cuban who legally immigrated and grew a business. After hearing two citizens say “how lucky they are,” the Cuban retorted, “How lucky you are! I had some place to escape to!”

Then Reagan waxed poetic, “If we lose freedom here [in the U.S.], there’s no place to escape to. This is the last stand on earth! And this idea that government is beholden to the people, that it has no other source of power except the sovereign people, is still the newest and the most unique idea in all the long history of man’s relation to man! This is the issue of this election!”

In that spirit, we took far more time than was required, dug deeper and involved many more than was required, and we worked harder than was required.

This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity was an honor.



See www.PreciousHeart.net for more from Maness

