

VID Candidate Survey for the Position of NYC District Attorney

Email address *

lizcrotty2021@gmail.com

Name: *

Liz Crotty

District Attorney • Questions

Will you prosecute drug possession? Will you prosecute sex workers? What about sex purchasers or those who facilitate sex work? *

This question does not have a simplistic answer. As to drugs, what kind of drug is it, how much makes up the possession, etc. For instance, currently marijuana possession case are not prosecuted. As to sex work, while I do support decriminalization and the different aspects that intersect with the law. I cannot say what I would do until I know the specific facts of the case.

If you don't charge crimes of poverty and other minor crimes, how will you help get services to those in need of them? *

I have not made a declaration that I would not charge crimes of poverty as an arrest, as the initial charge is done by the police. That said, in lieu of prosecution, I would look to get the person (potential defendant) the services they need. However, I would also consider the number of arrests, the time frame of those arrests, and whether that person has gotten the correct services. This is just some criteria I would look at before I decided whether to prosecute charges.

What management experience do you have to prepare you to run an office of this size? *

First, I worked in the office and I have firsthand knowledge of how the office runs and the different functions it serves. Additionally, I started and have been running my own law firm (small business) for the past 12 years. In that time, the firm has assisted close to 3,000 clients. It is no small feat to start a practice and keep it running for 12 years. While this is a micro level, this has given me the tools to run the District Attorney's office on a macro level of a large scale city agency.

What prosecutorial experience do you have, to understand the jobs of those you are supervising? What experience do you have with this office specifically? *

As a practitioner in the race, and someone who has done close to 4,000 cases, I know firsthand what changes we can make on day 1 of the job. I have been working at 100 Centre Street for 20 years. I was a Manhattan District Attorney from 2000 to 2006 in both the trial division and the investigative division. I also have my own criminal defense practice and have been representing defendants in Manhattan for the past 12 years. I have firsthand experience not only as a prosecutor, but as a defense attorney and understand what the office has been doing for the past 12 years. I know what they are getting right and what they can do better. I feel as a practitioner in the race, we must get the practice of law correct and stop some regular practices of the DA's office, which fundamentally promote unbalanced outcomes.

How aggressively do you plan to prosecute police officers for excessive use of force? What about lying? If aggressively, how do you plan to turn around and work with them in your other cases? *

I plan on treating any and all cases the same way, by looking at the facts in each and every case. If there are allegations of excessive force they will be fully investigated. However, I would remind the committee that there is still qualified immunity and a reasonableness standard. The existence of the standard does not excuse bad behavior but it also has to be looked at with the crime charged. They are fact-specific scenarios and to answer questions in the abstract, remains abstract. Perjury is a serious charge and I firmly believe that there is no way to have someone who has been found to be a liar as a police officer to later be found credible in another case. These are serious issues in how the police go out and investigate cases. And once an office is found to be not credible, it would be hard to prosecute any case beyond a reasonable doubt based on testimony of someone who is not credible. Thus there would have to be some sort of arrangement with the police department and the District Attorney's Office stating that police officers who have been found to be not credible should not be on patrol making arrests.

What is your vision for using this office to make Manhattan a better place? *

My vision is to create a District Attorney's Office based on fairness and facts. Cleaning up the practice of law and creating a more efficient office. While this might not have all the bells and whistles of a slick answer, it is an honest one. The practice of criminal law is a huge bureaucratic mess and to the extent you can stream line and stick to the deadlines set by statute, as one example, trying misdemeanors within 6 months. At is core, listening to victims, hearing their voices and treating defendants with fairness will also go a long way. But at the same time, making hard choices and listening to the problems in the different communities and being proactive in protecting those communities. This is a delicate balance and I have the necessary experience after 20 years in the courtroom on both sides to achieve this and thus creating a Manhattan that is safe for everyone.

Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?

Thank you in advance for your consideration. As a member of VID for the past several years I appreciate all that the Club stands for and would value their endorsement.

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