

Candidate Column



Hello Friends:

I am Erin Shank and I am a Candidate on the November 6, 2022 election seeking to represent you in the Texas House of Representatives. I am writing a bi-monthly column to introduce myself to you, the voters in McLennan County, so that you can make an informed decision at the ballot box this November.

In prior columns I informed you that I have been a practicing lawyer in Texas for the past forty years. I also told you that I have three college degrees, from three separate Texas universities, all in politics and law. My opponent is a retired veterinarian. I therefore believe that my educational and professional experience makes me vastly more qualified to represent you in the Texas House of Representatives.

However, I believe the fact that I am a woman and a mom is the attribute that qualifies me the most to represent this community in Austin. As we all know, within the next few weeks the United States Supreme Court will repeal the landmark decision of *Roe v. Wade*. I believe that the Court's decision will insure that women's health and reproductive matters will dominate the issues in the next legislative session. It is therefore vital that this community be represented by a woman during the next legislative session.

My husband and I were older when we married and began having children. We were advised with each of my three pregnancies that I should have a test called an amniocentesis, which would let us know whether I was carrying a child with Down Syndrome, so that we could determine if we wanted to abort the pregnancy. With all three pregnancies, we declined the test. Our third child, Rachel, was born with Down Syndrome. She is the light of my life and the inspiration for me deciding to run for the Texas House. The decision to have her and her brothers, even as older parents, is a choice that John and I would gladly make again.

I hate abortion. I would love it if there was never another abortion in our community. However, to get to that goal, we must work on prevention and education. All of the legislation that my opponent has advocated while he has served

our community only punishes the woman after she become pregnant. He even co-sponsored legislation that subjects doctor, nurses and medical staff to life in prison if they are involved in performing an abortion to save a woman's life. That legislation also gives no exceptions to young women who become pregnant through rape, incest or human trafficking and it will become effective this summer.

Roe v. Wade has divided our community for decades. As we approach this major shift in the law, we can either come together and work together to navigate through this next chapter in women's reproductive health, or we can let it further divide us. I believe we women should come together and use this time to advocate for our young girls and children. Our foster care system in Texas has been under a federal court receivership for eleven years, the entire time my opponent has been representing this community in the Texas House. More unplanned pregnancies will result in more strain on our broken foster care system. We are a day care desert. We have one of the worst maternal pregnancy death rates of any state in the Union. Our current representative has also ignored the requests of Hillcrest Scott and White Hospital, Providence Hospital and Waco Family Health to expand Medicaid, which will be a vital necessity as we have thousands of more pregnancies and thousands of more children in our community. He has literally voted to have our hard earned Medicaid tax dollars given to other states and ignored our local doctors' and hospitals' requests to stop doing that.

As a woman who has made reproductive decisions not only for myself but also for my disabled daughter, I respectfully request the women of McLennan County, and the men who love them, to agree that at this moment in time we need a woman to guide us through these changing times. I want to hold town halls with women, both Republican and Democratic, and navigate us through these changing times. I have the legal skills and personal experience to unite us, not further divide us. I therefore urge you to vote for Erin Shank for Texas House of Representatives on November 8, 2022.