

Candidate for Mecklenburg County Commission at Large – Pat Cotham

PATRICIA COTHAM, 67, is a Democrat running for Board of County Commissioner At Large. She has won numerous awards and was named the county's Democrat of the Year and Distinguished Democrat Woman as well as awards from the LGBT Chamber and NAACP.

ON SCHOOL CHOICE:

Cotham believes additional options are needed.

ON MEASURES TO INCREASE SCHOOL SAFETY:

Cotham says the county has already spent millions of dollars on an ID System but is waiting to see what additional measures CMS proposes. She is opposed to previous CMS proposals for additional fencing on school grounds.

ON MEASURES TO ADDRESS STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES:

Cotham said the Board of County Commissioners committed funding to CMS mental health initiatives last year but it was used for other purposes.

ON POPULATION GROWTH ISSUES:

Cotham believes the county needs to commit more funding for schools and parks.

ON ADDRESSING GROWTH PROBLEMS:

Cotham is in favor of keeping track of data and addressing the needs they reveal.

ON PANTHER STADIUM FUNDING:

Cotham opposes using public funding for a Panthers stadium.

ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

Although Cotham believes affordable housing is a city issue, she believes there should be a city, county and private donor partnership.

ON 287(G):

Cotham is a vocal opponent of 287(g) and the solitary confinement of teen inmates.

ON OTHER ISSUES:

Cotham lists homelessness and low-income housing as other issues the board needs to address.

1. **Name:** Patricia (Pat) Cotham
2. **Age:** 67
3. **District At Large**
4. **Party Affiliation:** Democrat
5. **Political background or other civic engagement endeavors:** Democrat of the Year MCDP, Distinguished Democratic Woman DWMC, DNC Member 2011-2016, LGBT

Chamber Bridgebuilder Award, NAACP Award, Chair Uptown Dem Forum 15 years, Crisis Intervention Training Partner (Mental Health Law Enforcement) Precinct Leader 10 years, Trustee Blumenthal Performing Arts Center seven years, Education Committee Blumenthal 16 Years, Numerous Boards etc

6. **What are your qualifications for this office?** I am not a "rubber-stamp"-I speak out on Issues. I am fierce-not afraid to go after a problem or Influential person who wants something (like tax dollars for stadium)—NO
7. **Do you support the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School choice plan and other options such as charter schools and magnet schools?** some aspects but still more options needed
8. **What measures do you support to increase school safety?** county already spent millions on ID System, we will have to wait and see what they present. Previous superintendents asked for massive fencing but no evidence existed that It would help, In fact kids could get trapped.
9. **What measures can Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools take to address student mental health issues?** The BOCC listens to what CMS says Is their priorities but usually priorities change which Is their right under state law. Money we thought was going to mental health last year did not. I hope to ask more about that this year. I have gone to too many CMS funerals for suicides.
10. **What problems do you believe that Charlotte/Mecklenburg population growth creates?** Need for more schools and parks-we just did a bond for about \$1B-traffic, transportation and roads are under the city and state
11. **How can the county address those growth problems?** Keep track of data-address the needs
12. **Do you support the use of County funds to build a domed stadium to guarantee that the Carolina Panthers remain in Charlotte?** NO, NO, NO
13. **What measures can the Board of Commissioners take to increase the stock of affordable housing in the County?** Typically this falls under the city. I have spoken publicly (Only one I believe) and said we should contribute. I also asked wealthy business people to help raise \$50M for Housing Trust Fund. I have been very vocal.
14. **Are you in favor of a resolution calling on the Sheriff's Department to discontinue its enforcement of federal immigration law. (287(g))?** I have been vocal against 287G. We cannot tell the sheriff what to do according to state law. I am also against solitary confinement for young teens which Is still happening. I wrote an editorial In Observer about that. Two sheriff opponents are anti 287G. Resolutions don't usually change things. Not sure we would have five votes.
15. **What other issues do you believe the Board of Commissioners should address?** We address many Issues not asked In your questionnaire. I think the county failed In January to help our homeless neighbors. We also had an opportunity to do something for low-income housing-but I was only one who voted NO to Brooklyn Village for three

reasons---not enough low Income housing, loss of five acres of Park land (we about last In the country and we sold Marshall Park) and not a local contractor who would be more sensitive to the history.