

## **Candidate for Mecklenburg County Commission District 2 – Vilma Leake**

**VILMA LEAKE** is the incumbent Democrat running in District 2. She was first elected to the county Board of Commissioners in 2008. She received her Bachelor's degree from Livingstone College, a Master's Degree in education from University of Buffalo and has completed coursework for a doctorate degree from the University of San Francisco. A retired teacher, she is active in numerous local state and national organizations, she was elected to the Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Election where she served for eleven years.

### **ON SCHOOL CHOICE:**

Leake does not support charter schools because they “don't have the same restrictions, guidelines and expectations. Teachers don't need to be certified to teach in a charter school.”

### **ON MEASURES TO INCREASE SCHOOL SAFETY:**

Leake believes parents and students should be trained in school safety and the Sheriff's Office should prepare a school safety plan.

### **ON MEASURES TO ADDRESS STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES:**

Leake says more mental health professionals are needed in schools to provide professional support and for the entire family.

### **ON POPULATION GROWTH ISSUES:**

Leake believes that population growth issues must be part of a community discussion.

### **ON PANTHER STADIUM FUNDING:**

Leake believes funding for a new stadium is the responsibility of the city not the county

### **ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING:**

Leake believes the lack of affordable housing is a city issue but affects everybody. She believes the county, faith organizations or non-profits could purchase tax-foreclosed homes to be add to the affordable housing .

### **ON 287(G):**

Leake believes immigration is a federal government issue. “

### **ON OTHER ISSUES:**

She notes the county should focus on developing the family strength through efforts such as early childhood education.

1. **Name** Vilma D Leake
2. **Age** Still Living
3. **District 2**
4. **Party Affiliation** Democratic
5. **Political background or other civic engagement endeavors:** I am currently in my fifth term on the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners, representing the citizens

of District 2, which is located in Southwestern Mecklenburg County. I am an active member and leader in numerous local, state and national organizations. I have been active with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Order of the Eastern Star, Black Political Caucus of Phi Lambda Theta, North Carolina Association of Educators, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Association of Educators, Business and Professional Women, Charlotte Juvenile Services Board, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Charlotte Mecklenburg Executive Human Relations Board. A retired teacher, I led teachers in a protest in Raleigh over teacher salaries on February 14 1989. My humanitarian service and church involvement includes being an active dedicated member of the historic Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church.

6. **What are your qualifications for this office: All of my lifetime experiences are my qualifications?** A motivational speaker, I began my career in public service when I was elected to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education in 1997, where I served for 11 years, including as vice chair of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) Policy Committee. I was first elected to the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners in 2008. She currently serves on the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners Public Education Steering Committee and the National Association of Counties (NACo) National Board of Large Urban Counties Caucus Steering Committee. I felt there was a need to create a platform for small business owners to meet, collaborate and network bi-monthly; from this vision came the Small Business Consortium Group, founded by me in 2011, this group started with five attendees and has grown to 100. For my service, I have received numerous community service awards and recognitions, recently among them are the 2013 Legends Award in recognition of “Valuable Contributions” made to the Charlotte Community, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Association- “The Maya Angelou/Elizabeth Ross Dargan—Lifetime Achievement Award.”, The Broad Institute “Broad Fellows” Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Award and a Lifetime member of the, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) . During my tenure, teaching at Independence High School, I founded Project Motivation Inspiration, this successful initiative encouraged males and females to stay in school. Among several awards, I have received the Paul Leroy Robeson Award from the A.M.E. Zion National Church and the Outstanding Leadership Award from the A.M.E. Zion Local Church. I actively participated on the Women’s Home and Overseas Missionary Society of the A.M.E. Zion Church; and was the founder of the Vilma D. Leake “Walk-a-Mile for Second Mile”, an outreach program that promoted good health and provided monetary funding for overseas and home missions. I have completed all course work for her doctorate at the University of San Francisco. I earned my Master’s degree in Education from the University of Buffalo in New York and graduated from Livingstone College with a Bachelor’s of Art degree in Education.
7. **Do you support the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School choice plan and other options such as charter schools and magnet schools?** I am not a supporter of charter schools as they take away from public schools. People say that charter schools are just like public schools but charter schools don’t have the same restrictions, guidelines and expectations. Teachers don’t need to be certified to teach in a charter school.
8. **What measures do you support to increase school safety?** We must implement measures to ensure parents and the kids are trained about school safety and have discussions about school safety. The Sheriff’s Office must prepare a plan and process

with the schools and parents for school safety. It is sad that we have to answer this but it is a reality we live with today.

9. **What measures can Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools take to address student mental health issues?** More mental health professionals are needed in schools to provide professional support. We also need to communicate with parents and work on these mental issues with the total family.
10. **What problems do you believe that Charlotte/Mecklenburg population growth creates?**  
Growth in itself creates its own problems and we should not be afraid to discuss all these problems out in the open in our homes and in the community.
11. **How can the county address those growth problems?** The community needs the right resources to ensure we have first awareness of these issues and then to address them appropriately. See my responses to 13 and 15 below.
12. **Do you support the use of County funds to build a domed stadium to guarantee that the Carolina Panthers remain in Charlotte?** This is the responsibility of the city not the county. I am not in favor of draining the funds for this purpose but if asked to do so I would look at the proposal and how it impacts the total community.
13. **What measures can the Board of Commissioners take to increase the stock of affordable housing in the County?** Again this is a city issue but because it has become such a major problem it affects everybody. I believe we need better training for better jobs, have a living wage and encourage more self-supporting entrepreneurs. But this still wont address the affordable housing stock. If the county has homes with delinquent taxes we should make those homes available for purchase by the county, faith organizations or nonprofits to be used to help with this problem.
14. **Are you in favor of a resolution calling on the Sheriff's Department to discontinue its enforcement of federal immigration law (287(g))?** This is a federal government issue. But I am a supporter of children who have become citizens through being born in America. America is a melting pot and a rainbow. My people were brought here on a slave ship so you see where I stand.
15. **What other issues do you believe the Board of Commissioners should address?**  
We should focus on developing the family strength. The family forms the base of our society and we need to provide the necessary support to strengthen the family unit which will then lead to a stronger community, along with early childhood education and faith.