

Candidate for Mecklenburg County Commission District 4 – Leigh Altman

LEIGH ALTMAN is a 45-year-old lifelong Democrat running for County Commissioner in District 4. She started Indivisible-Uptown Charlotte and became a board member of Indivisible NC District 9. She is a Chairperson of precinct 9 for the Mecklenburg County Democratic Party and a Board member for the County Democratic Women. She worked as a staff attorney for the Council for Children’s Rights and advocates for consumer protection, fair housing, the elderly and children and other vulnerable populations.

ON SCHOOL CHOICE:

Altman supports CMS magnet programs but opposes North Carolina House Bill 514 which would allow Mint Hill and Matthews to operate their own charter school.

ON MEASURES TO INCREASE SCHOOL SAFETY:

Altman supports sensible gun reform to protect students.

ON MEASURES TO ADDRESS STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES:

Altman says she supports increased funding for more onsite mental health support.

ON POPULATION GROWTH ISSUES:

Altman says that county’s population growth is taxing the capacity of many CMS schools, especially in District 4 and reducing the stock of affordable housing.

ON MEASURES TO ADDRESS POPULATION GROWTH ISSUES:

Altman says that county, city, and the school board officials need to start working collaboratively to deal with issues like the shortage of affordable housing. She believes the county must retain its stock of naturally occurring affordable housing in addition to building new affordable units.

ON PANTHER STADIUM FUNDING:

Altman is not in favor of using County funds to build a new Panthers stadium.

ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

Altman is in favor of using county owned land for affordable housing and exploring the possibility of using foreclosed homes for low-income residents and managed by affordable housing non-profits.

ON 287(G):

Altman says she will continue to end Mecklenburg County’s participation in the 287(g) program.

ON OTHER ISSUES:

Altman believes other issues the Board needs to address is improving economic mobility by providing access to pre-Kindergarten programs for all 4- year-olds, creating training programs that reflect Mecklenburg County’s labor demands, and prioritizing the County’s greenway system.

1. **Name:** Leigh Altman

2. **Age:** 45

3. **District:**4

4. **Party Affiliation:** Democrat

5. **Political background or other civic engagement endeavors:** I am a lifelong Democrat. Last year, I started *Indivisible - Uptown Charlotte* which had almost 1,000 followers and later became a board member with *Indivisible NC District 9*. I am chair of Precinct 9 for the MCDP and a board member with the Democratic Women of Mecklenburg County.

6. **What are your qualifications for this office?**

From consumer protection and fair housing to advocating for the elderly and children as a staff attorney at the Council for Children's Rights, I have dedicated my legal career fighting for kids, families, vulnerable populations, and the betterment of my community.

7. **Do you support the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School choice plan and other options such as charter schools and magnet schools.**

I support CMS's magnet programs as they bring a rich diversity of academic offerings to CMS students, but I oppose HB 514 allowing Mint Hill and Matthews to operate their own charter school with priority for town residents and related proposals which would further harmful trends towards school segregation.

8. **What measures do you support to increase school safety?**

When Sandy Hook happened, I had two elementary-age kids. It has been five years of daily worry since then and nothing has changed. This is an American crisis caused by our uniquely lax gun laws. We urgently need sensible gun reform to protect our students without affecting their learning environment.

9. **What measures can Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools take to address student mental health issues?**

I will advocate for increased funding for more onsite mental health support. I saw as a staff attorney at the Council for Children's Rights that many students are in urgent need of mental health support, which can make all the difference in learning outcomes, suicide rates, and violence in schools.

10. **What problems do you believe that Charlotte-Mecklenburg population growth creates?**

Charlotte's booming growth provides opportunities but it is also taxing the capacity of many CMS schools, especially in my District 4. The growth is also causing investors to buy lower-income housing units and flip them for higher rents, leaving approximately 40,000 residents without affordable housing.

11. **How can the County address those growth problems?**

County, city, and the school board officials need to start working collaboratively to deal with tough issues like the shortage of affordable housing and I intend to build those working relationships. Together we must work to retain our stock of naturally occurring affordable housing and build new affordable units too.

12. Do you support the use of County funds to build a domed stadium to guarantee that the Carolina Panthers remain in Charlotte?

No. While keeping the Panthers is a huge business priority for Charlotte, nevertheless the Mecklenburg County budget funds social services such as health, education and the environment. We cannot fund stadiums while we have homeless children, overcrowded schools, inadequate mental health access, and neglected environmental priorities, to name a few.

13. What measures can the Board of Commissioners take to increase the stock of affordable housing in the County?

Whenever the County has land to sell, we should work hard to redirect that asset for affordable housing wherever possible. I am also interested in exploring the possibility of repurposing homes in foreclosure where there is no other bidder for them to be managed by affordable housing non-profits to help low-income residents.

14. Are you in favor of a resolution calling on the Sheriff's Department to discontinue its 287g collaboration?

Yes. I have already gone on record that as a County Commissioner I will continue fighting for the well being of children and families by working to end Charlotte's participation in the 287g program.

15. What other issues do you believe the Board of Commissioners should address?

Improving economic mobility by providing voluntary, universal access to pre-K for all 4- year-olds to help level the educational playing field, creating training programs to connect residents who are ready to work with our County's labor demands, and prioritizing our greenway system to create connectivity and walkability between neighborhoods and commerce centers.