

**Carl Lamb, Republican Candidate for Monroe County Circuit Court Division 1  
Responses to questions from the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce  
For the Nov. 3, 2020 General Election**

- 1. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected the way that the court system is handling its work. In some ways, the period offers an opportunity to reset. Are there any changes to the circuit court system that you'd support post-pandemic? How would you advocate to implement those changes?**

*Absolutely*, I personally know the impact of COVID-19 on families and individuals in our community. As the workload and demands of the courts increase, the citizens of Monroe County deserve the same, equal, impartial, and fair treatment as is mandated in the Constitution. One way to handle the increase would be to continue to hold virtual or telephonic pre-trials, hearings, and other proceedings to minimize potential exposure to the people of Monroe County. In fact, by moving some basic proceedings to virtual hearings, it will be very advantageous to the parties, the attorneys and overall to the administration of justice. I would use “case management plans,” to keep cases moving in a more consistent and organized manner. This sort of reset has made us reevaluate how we think about the speed, availability, and access to courts, pointing out the flaws and necessary steps to make our justice system more available.

- 2. Monroe County government has undertaken a criminal justice study. What changes to the current system do you support, and why?**

The Criminal Justice study undertaken by the Monroe County government is a necessary step that hopefully highlights the flaws and offers solutions. It is imperative that the study receives input not only from sources such as the prosecutors, but also from ordinary citizens who come in contact with the justice system in Monroe County. The people are the ones who can truly judge the shortcomings based on their personal experiences and it is essential that their voices, opinions, and concerns are given proper consideration. I applaud the decision to hold this study and to continually ask for input from the people. Leaders in the county; however, must truly consider these opinions and act to solve the pressing issues facing our community in the areas of incarceration, mental illness, poverty, addiction, and housing among many others. These issues evidently are seen throughout our nation, but they require leaders and communities to work together for real solutions that start at the local level. As an attorney in Monroe County for over 36 years, I have witnessed some successes and the defects of the justice system and I believe my knowledge and experience can help amplify locals’ voices and implement changes that can benefit all people who come in contact with the Monroe County justice system.

**3. What are the top challenges facing Monroe County Circuit Court, and how do you propose addressing those challenges?**

One of the top challenges I have witnessed as an attorney practicing in Monroe County for 36 years is the increase in the number of people that require court services. These individuals deserve an efficient and effective system that always prioritizes justice to all people and that is impartial and equal. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated and exposed many of these flaws, but now we have a chance to confront these challenges and make improvements for everyone involved, from the citizens, staff, attorneys, and judges. This increase needs to be addressed by making long term solutions that trace the root of the problem facing our community instead of short sighted, easy solutions that benefit those who control the justice system at the expense of the people. Everyone is aware of how intimidating coming to court can be for people, especially those vulnerable groups in our community. While aspirational plans to review and reform the system can sound good on paper, this means nothing if no real action occurs. If I am fortunate enough to be elected judge by the people of Monroe County, I will assure them that I will always work my hardest with my background of 36 years in law and 42 years as a community member to represent them. A judge is a person too and I will be one who will listen, be fair, and be impartial.