

## **ACLU Commends Oakland County Voters for Choosing the Oakland County Prosecutor Candidate Who Pledges to Embrace Smart Justice Values**

*ACLU to hold Karen McDonald accountable following pledge to help end mass incarceration and racism in the criminal legal system*

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OAKLAND COUNTY, Mich. – The American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan (ACLU) commends Oakland County voters for embracing the ACLU’s Smart Justice campaign goals, which include ending mass incarceration and advancing racial justice in the criminal legal system. Karen McDonald defeated Republican candidate Lin Goetz.

McDonald embraced a criminal justice reform platform, while Goetz did not, campaigning instead for the status quo.

“We are proud of Oakland County voters who recognize that for far too long we have been locking up people because they are poor or because of the color of their skin,” said Jessica Ayoub, ACLU public engagement strategist. “Oakland County voters have elected a prosecutor who has pledged to end mass incarceration and eliminate racism in the criminal legal system. People deserve a prosecutor who is working for true justice, and we will continue to hold the new Oakland County prosecutor accountable for her pledge to carry out Smart Justice reforms.”

The ACLU’s Smart Justice campaign educated Oakland County voters through a digital ad campaign that reached over 500,000 residents, logging 1.7 million views. The campaign sent more than 200,000 texts. This is a continuation of the investment the ACLU made during the primary election, which included sending mailers to 80,000 households, a cable and digital TV ad campaign that reached 98% of Oakland County residents, logging 40,000 phone calls, as well as sending over 400,000 texts.

The ACLU Smart Justice campaign sent both Oakland County candidates a survey in which McDonald pledged to do the following if elected November 3<sup>rd</sup>:

- Support marijuana expungement applications for amounts that are now legal, and support statewide legislation that creates automatic and retroactive expungement of marijuana charges;
- Decline to seek life without the possibility of parole, including for any person under 18 at the time of the offense;
- Invest in alternatives to incarceration for people with mental illness, substance abuse disorders, indigent defendants, and veterans;

- Appoint an independent investigator in all cases of police-involved shootings and publicly share the investigative findings when deciding whether to charge the officer with a crime; and
- Acknowledge that prosecutorial practices have been responsible for racial disparities in the criminal legal system.

“Across the nation, we are seeing voters elect county prosecutors who lead with compassion and common sense, not with failed tough on crime policies that fuel mass incarceration and racist outcomes in our criminal legal system,” said Dave Noble, ACLU of Michigan executive director. “Oakland County voters clearly are part of this emerging trend. The work does not stop with one election. Every community deserves a fair and just system, and we will continue to push prosecutors across the state to embrace Smart Justice values.”

The ACLU of Michigan is a nonpartisan organization and does not support or endorse candidates.