

COMPARING WASHINGTON COUNTY'S District Attorney Candidates

Pacific Northwest Family Circle's Report Card and Voter Guide



Irene Kalonji and Sylvia Dollanson of Pacific Northwest Family Circle are arm and arm leaning into each other warmly. Unfortunately Sylvia passed away earlier this year, but Irene and Sylvia shared the unfathomable tragedy of losing loved ones to police violence. For Irene, it was her son, Christopher Kalonji, shot and killed by a Clackamas County Deputy Sheriff in his own home, and for Sylvia, it was her grandson, Moose Hayes (Quanice), shot and killed by a Portland Police officer. Irene wears a hat with the acronym P.O.S.T. ([Protect Our Stolen Treasures](#)).

This voter guide and report card includes a brief summary on the powers of the district attorney (DA) from Pacific Northwest Family Circle (PNWFC)—a coalition of families who have lost loved ones to police violence. Here, we grade the public statements and policy proposals of Washington district attorney candidates Kevin Barton and Brian Decker.

Across the United States, there is a growing movement to demand that district attorneys (DAs) work to hold police accountable for acts of misconduct, excessive use of force, and homicide. The Pacific Northwest Family Circle has developed a platform for DA conduct that we believe will accomplish this. Before voting in the crucial **May 17th, 2022** DA election, we hope you'll read our platform (see page 5), learn about the issues, research the candidates, and join our movement.

Disclaimer: The purpose of this campaign is to hold the DA accountable to the demands of the people no matter who is elected. For this reason, PNWFC does not endorse either candidate.

Summary of our Report Card

Washington County deserves a DA who will take action on addressing the harm caused by police misconduct and violence. While the candidates often use similar language, their policies are very different. In this report card we focus on policies that would hold police and prosecutors accountable for protecting all community members, including the most vulnerable, without reinforcing the power of a violent system.

If we come off as tough graders, it's because we know that the status quo fails to protect our community and keep us safe.

Topic	Kevin Barton*	Brian Decker**
Overall Grade	F	B
Hold police accountable	F	C
Hold prosecutors accountable	F	B
The DA should not be acting as defense attorney for police	F	B
Build trust in the DA's office	D	B

***DA Barton's grades:**

DA Barton's team responded to our short, 7-question survey with, a single generic response. Therefore, our data is based on two debate forums family members attended, lived experience from family members, news articles, and his website.

****Attorney Decker's grades:**

Attorney Decker's grades are based on his thorough responses to our short, 7-question survey, two debate forums family members attended, lived experience from family members, news articles, and his website.



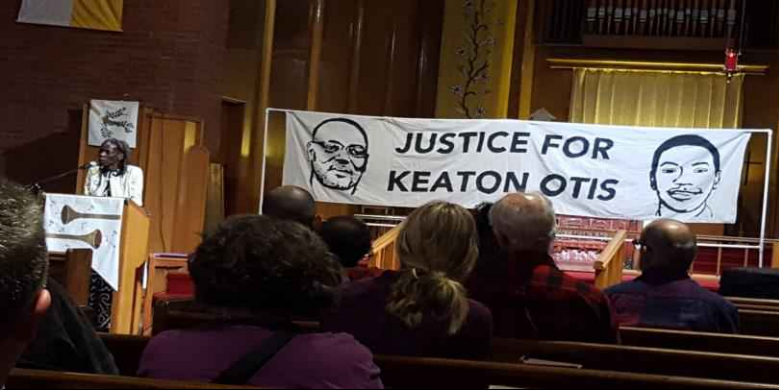
PNWFC "protests" are peaceful, loving events that center loved ones killed by police and educate the public.

[ID: Irene Kalonji, Co-Founder of PNWFC is smiling warmly and hugging a supporter who wears buttons on their backpack picturing loved ones lost to police violence. Photo credit: Kendall Kendall]

This voter guide and report card draws on responses to our survey, statements made by the candidates on their websites, statements and conduct of candidates at debates and other events we've attended, news articles, family members' lived experience, and statements and conduct on social media. We note in our report card where we lack information on a particular position of either candidate.

Grading Guide

A Highest Grade	B	C	D	F Lowest Grade
Candidate supports all or the majority of the platform demands on this topic, with very specific plans for how to implement them.	Candidate supports some of the platform demands on this topic, with some specific plans for how to implement them.	Candidate makes general statements in support of the platform demands on this topic, but uses vague language without specific policy commitments.	Candidate calls for some minor changes to the status quo but is not aligned with the platform demands on this topic.	Candidate supports status quo policies that harm communities; or, candidate has not taken a clear position on this topic, claiming a need for further study or more information even when provided with additional resources.



Many Families choose to hold annual memorials on the date that a loved one was killed, such as this one for PNWFC Loved One Keaton Otis. The month after his death, his father, Fred Bryant established a monthly vigil in the location where Keaton was killed by police, and initiated Keaton's Angelversary. Although Fred died of a heart attack brought on by his justice struggle years before PNWFC was established, his leadership continues to resonate and serve as a compassionate pro-Family approach that our organization adopted. Centering loved ones gives families the chance to counter police narratives that demonize them.

[ID: JoAnn Hardesty, a long time leader and attendee of the Keaton Otis Vigil speaks at this annual memorial in 2018. A banner with Fred Bryant and Keaton Otis' face. The words Justice for Keaton Otis are pictured between the two. Photo credit: Rossi Cahill]



PNWFC Loved One James Chasse was brutally beaten to death by three Portland police officers in 2006. Although his murder was found to be legal, the family brought a civil lawsuit against the City of Portland. Community outcry and pressure from police accountability advocates resulted in a rare Consent Decree with the U.S. Department of Justice, mandating changes in Portland policing meant to reduce harm from police on people with mental health disabilities. Even after 8 years, the mandates have not slowed the rate of homicides by police.

[ID: A picture of Cinema 21's marquee with the words Brian Lindstrom's "Alien Boy: The life and Death of James Chasse" Photo credit: XXXXX]

The Close Relationship between the DA and Police

Your vote in Washington County's district attorney (DA) election on May 17th will be one of the most important you cast this year. [The DA is one of the most powerful positions in the local criminal legal system.](#) As top prosecutor in the county, DAs decide who gets charged with a crime and who doesn't, and how severe the charges will be.

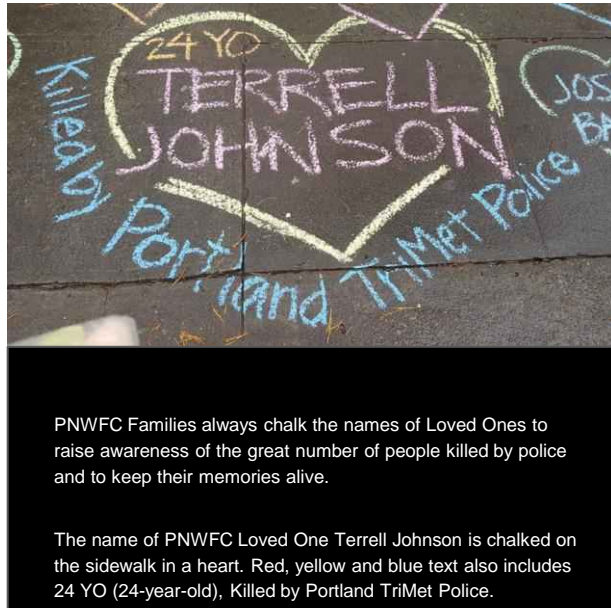
DAs impact every stage of the legal process, like bail, plea deals, and the grand jury. They decide when—and whether—evidence will be turned over to defense attorneys. Each DA shapes the culture of prosecution in their county by setting policies that all prosecutors in their office must follow. Tough-on-crime DAs are maintaining the daily violence of the racist, unjust criminal legal system.

DAs have the power to hold police officers accountable for misconduct. They decide who is prosecuted and who isn't. DAs have a close working relationship with police officers and police leadership as they work together to find and prosecute criminal conduct in the general public. But because of this close relationship, they rarely charge or fully prosecute police officers accused of racial profiling, corruption, brutality or homicide.

There is a deep bias in favor of police that makes it hard to administer the law fairly. Despite their vast authority, **DAs themselves can't be prosecuted** for their conduct when handling cases.

PNWFC Platform

We want a district attorney who will:



The DA is an elected position. Voters can demand a DA who will reduce the violence of the criminal legal system, hold police accountable, and truly respond to the needs of the communities to whom they are beholden.

1. **Prosecute police misconduct and violence.** DAs can and should remove unethical officers from the police force and the criminal legal system.
2. **Require accountability and transparency from the prosecutors they employ.**
3. **Present only relevant facts about victims of police violence.**
4. **Build trust in the DA's office and law enforcement:**
 - a. Prioritize true public safety over special treatment of police, prosecutors and other privileged individuals.
 - b. Prioritize root cause solutions and restorative justice over punishment by investing in communities.
 - c. Never use plea deals or mandatory minimums to coerce people into pleading guilty or accepting unjust sentences.
 - d. Protect victims of crime, and their families, friends, and neighbors.
 - e. Measure success by outcomes that heal the community instead of high conviction rates.
 - f. Establish a zero-tolerance policy for misconduct by prosecutors that includes all ethics violations.
 - g. Ensure that all law enforcement agencies in the county promptly and accurately report police use of force and discipline data as required by [Senate Bill 111](#) (2007) and [House Bills 2932](#) and [House Bill 3145](#) (2021).

Brian Decker endorsed the PNWFC platform
DA Kevin Barton declined to endorse the PNWFC platform

Hold police accountable

Prosecute police misconduct and violence and remove unethical officers from the police force and the criminal legal system.

Kevin Barton

- DA Barton's team responded to our short, 7-question survey with a single generic response that said, in part, "DA Barton supports holding anyone in a position of trust or authority (including police and prosecutors) fully accountable to the highest ethical and legal standards."
- DA Barton initially refused to file felony charges on a sheriff deputy for excessive use of force (i.e. skull fracture) on an incarcerated individual until the public applied pressure on the issue. [News article](#)
- In one case of police homicide, DA Barton waited four months before sending the case to the Oregon Attorney General's (AG) office for review instead of using his power to prosecute directly from his office. [News article](#)
The AG review would be based on findings from the Washington County Major Crimes Team (not an independent third party source from outside the county). Another four months later, the AG's office presented to a Grand Jury who refused to indict. [News article](#)

Brian Decker

- "We need to hold accountable those police who commit crimes. One problem is that the DA's office... has a cozy working relationship with law enforcement." He wrote that police get the benefit of the doubt that is rarely given to ordinary folks.
- Supports having an impacted family member or survivor of police violence as the community member required by [Senate Bill 111](#) to be on the Use of Deadly Force Planning Authority. The Planning Authority consists of six members, one of which is the DA, four of which are law enforcement, and one of which is a community member. The Planning Authority is responsible for developing and overseeing the plan by which the County investigates use of deadly physical force incidents.
- A PNWFC Family Member first met Decker attending a memorial event for a loved one killed by police. He exhibited empathy for the family and appeared to understand the deep damage police misconduct can cause.

Barton: F

F Grading Rubric: *Candidate supports status quo policies that harm communities; or, candidate has not taken a clear position on this topic, claiming a need for further study or more information even when provided with additional resources.*

Decker: C

C Grading Rubric: *Candidate makes general statements in support of the platform demands on this topic, but uses vague language without specific policy commitments.*

Hold prosecutors accountable

Establish a zero-tolerance policy for misconduct by prosecutors that includes all ethics violations. Prosecutors amplify police practices by criminalizing people in the courtroom unless district attorneys demand otherwise. Like police, prosecutors can have a history of unethical behavior in pursuit of cases.

Kevin Barton

- DA Barton's team responded to our short, 7-question survey with a single generic response that said, in part, "DA Barton supports holding anyone in a position of trust or authority (including police and prosecutors) fully accountable to the highest ethical and legal standards."
- Found guilty of prosecutorial misconduct for illegally disqualifying juror for Ethiopian name. DA Barton claimed that it was because the juror was a student, but allowed white students to sit on the jury. [News article](#)

Brian Decker

- "I will also build an oversight body, prioritizing diverse membership from communities most impacted by crime and the criminal justice system, to hold the office to account for these decisions."
- Commits to a transparency plan to show data around decisions made in the DA office.
- States prosecutors' power needs to be balanced [Brian Decker web page](#)
- In a discussion with PNWFC Family Member, Decker indicated he would staff the DA's office with prosecutors who value decriminalizing houselessness, mental illness, addiction, and poverty.

Barton: F

F Grading Rubric: *Candidate supports status quo policies that harm communities; or, candidate has not taken a clear position on this topic, claiming a need for further study or more information even when provided with additional resources.*

Decker: B

B Grading Rubric: *Candidate supports some of the platform demands on this topic, with some specific plans for how to implement them.*

The DA should not be acting as defense attorney for police

We want a district attorney who presents only relevant facts about victims of police violence and doesn't bias evidence presented to the grand jury to benefit the police. The DA should be impartial regardless of who the accused is.

Kevin Barton

- DA Barton's team responded to our short, 7-question survey with a single generic response that said, in part, "DA Barton supports holding anyone in a position of trust or authority (including police and prosecutors) fully accountable to the highest ethical and legal standards."

Brian Decker

- Believes scientific evidence that conviction rates do not provide further public safety, but convictions *do* cause further harm. [Brian Decker web page](#)
- Plans to implement a more diverse office with varied experience to help influence prosecution decisions.
- Believes all those who have been harmed by crime deserve a voice ensuring equal justice for all. No one should get special treatment.

Barton: F

F Grading Rubric: *Candidate supports status quo policies that harm communities; or, candidate has not taken a clear position on this topic, claiming a need for further study or more information even when provided with additional resources.*

Decker: B

B Grading Rubric: *Candidate supports some of the platform demands on this topic, with some specific plans for how to implement them.*

Build trust in the district attorney's office

Prioritize restorative justice principles that reduce harm in communities rather than automatic punitive actions.

Kevin Barton

- DA Barton's team responded to our short, 7-question survey with, a single generic response that said, in part, "DA Barton supports holding anyone in a position of trust or authority (including police and prosecutors) fully accountable to the highest ethical and legal standards."
- A PNWFC volunteer researching for this guide was harassed and intimidated by DA Barton's second-in-command and campaign manager, Bracken McCay. This took place right before the 2022 DA debate held by the Washington County Bar Association. It was witnessed by both candidates. Brian Decker offered empathy; DA Barton did not intervene at the time nor did he apologize later. [Video on Twitter](#)
- In the lived experience of a PNWFC Family Member in Washington County, DA Barton presented information to the grand jury that demonized their loved one. During the same proceedings, he used biased language in favor of violent police behavior.
- Has implemented some speciality programs and/or courts for a subset of the population (e.g. mental health, substance misuse)

Brian Decker

- "...punishment should fit the crime. Sentencing 'extra misery' doesn't help. That approach is choking out our ability to address the big challenges driving people into crime in the first place. We need collaborative, community-oriented solutions that keep people safe before harm takes place."
- "As District Attorney, I'll partner with community based organizations and other government officials to develop and bolster [restorative justice] programs, and I'll prioritize diverting people from the criminal and juvenile justice systems into these programs that can help solve root problems."
- "Rather than divesting from the social safety net and wastefully sweeping people into jail, we need to be investing in education, treatment, and other direct services that are easily accessible, trauma informed, culturally competent, and based in evidence."
- In an [interview with Shaun King](#), he discussed poor rates of recidivism in WA CO and how incarcerating doesn't help rehabilitate individuals.

Barton: D

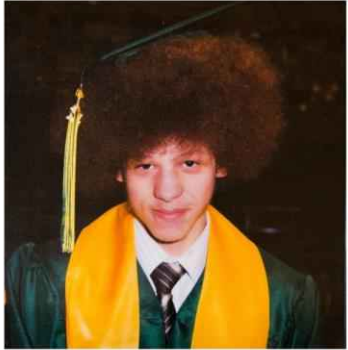
D Grading Rubric: *Candidate calls for some minor changes to the status quo but is not aligned with the platform demands on this topic.*

Decker: B

B Grading Rubric: *Candidate supports some of the platform demands on this topic, with some specific plans for how to implement them.*

In Loving Memory of Pacific Northwest Family Circle Loved Ones

Christopher Kalonji



19-year-old Loved One
killed by Clackamas County, OR sheriffs
on Jan 28, 2016

Bodhi Phelps



22-year-old Loved One
killed by Gresham, OR police
on May 24, 2016

**Wesley Allen
Barbee**

No Photo Available

29-year-old Loved One
killed by Englewood, CA Police
in 1998

Brian Guy Dixon

No Photo Available

16-year-old Loved One
killed by Salem, OR police
on Aug 31, 1984

Bill Brown



37-year-old Loved One
killed by Portland, OR police
on March 17, 1988

**Herbert
Hightower Jr.**



25-year-old Loved One
killed by Seattle, WA Police
on Sep 8, 2004

Brad Lee Morgan



21-year-old Loved One
killed by Portland, OR police
on Jan 25, 2012

Chase Hammer



27-year-old Loved One
killed by Salem, OR police
on Oct 21, 2012

In Loving Memory of Pacific Northwest Family Circle Loved Ones

**Captain Brian A.
Babb**



49-year-old Loved One
killed by police in Eugene, OR
on Mar 30, 2015

James Chasse



42-year-old Loved One
killed by Portland Police
on Sep 17, 2006

**Daniel Isaac
Covarrubias**



37-year-old Loved One
killed by Lakewood, WA police
on Apr 21, 2015

Joel Nelson



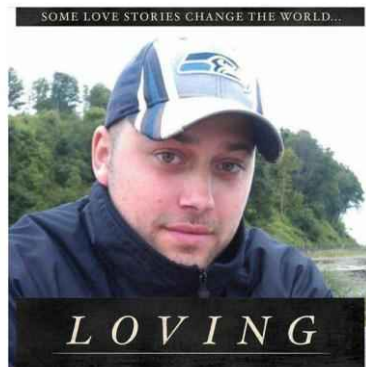
29-year-old Loved One
killed by Thurston County, WA Police
on Jan 5, 2016

**Moose Hayes
(Quanice)**



17-year-old Loved One
killed by Portland, OR police
on Feb 9, 2017

Alex Dold



29-year-old Loved One
killed by Snohomish Co, WA sheriffs
on Mar 21, 2017

Chance Thompson



25-year-old Loved One
killed by West Linn, OR police
on Apr 21, 2017

Terrell Johnson



24-year-old Loved One
killed by Portland, OR police
on May 10, 2017

In Loving Memory of Pacific Northwest Family Circle Loved Ones

**Giovonn
Joseph-McDade**



20-year-old Loved One
killed by Kent, WA Police
on Jun 24, 2017

Remi Sabbe



54-year-old Loved One
killed by Washington Co, OR sheriffs
on Jan 12, 2018

John Elifritz



48-year-old Loved One
killed by Portland Police and a Multnomah
Co Sheriff on Apr 7, 2018

Jesse Powell



43-year-old Loved One
killed by Deschutes County, OR sheriffs
on Jun 20, 2018

Deano Case



44-year-old Loved One
killed by Clatsop County, OR sheriffs
on Jul 25, 2018

Patrick Kimmons



27-year-old Loved One
killed by Portland, OR Police
on Sep 30, 2018

Matthew Burroughs



35-year-old Loved One
killed by Niles, OH Police
on Jan 2, 2019

Andre Gladen



35-year-old Loved One
killed by Portland, OR Police
on Jan 6, 2019

In Loving Memory of Pacific Northwest Family Circle Loved Ones

Titi Gulley



31-year-old Loved One
killed in Portland
on May 27, 2019

Jesse Sarey



25-year-old Loved One
killed by Auburn, WA police
on May 31, 2019

Eliborio Rodrigues



40-year-old Loved One
killed by Eugene, OR police
on Nov 30, 2019

Stacy Kenny



33-year-old Loved One
killed by Springfield Police
on Mar 31, 2019

**Andre Thompson
and Bryson Chaplin**



Loved Ones/Brothers
injured by Olympia, WA police officer
on May 21, 2015.
They survived!

Melvin Dillon

No Photo Available

(alive)

Robert Dillon

No Photo Available

(alive)

Keaton Otis



24-year-old Loved One
killed by Portland Police
on May 12, 2010