



**BILL PETTY DISTRICT 10 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONER SPEECH  
AUGUST 13, 2024**

Hello everyone.

Thank you all for being here tonight to take part in this important election for your next District 10 County Commissioner. I also want to extend my gratitude to the Williamson County Republican Party for ensuring that the voices of District 10 residents are heard and to the Convention Committee for their time and hard work in organizing this event.

I'm running for County Commissioner in District 10 because we need public servants with real-world problem-solving experience and a deep understanding of the issues facing Williamson County. My goal is to represent the interests of all residents of District 10, not just a select few.

Cheryl Brown and I share a common faith, which puts the needs of others before our own. We both want what's best for the people in our community. However, we differ in our approach to solving the challenges facing Williamson County.

Many of you know me as the "Friday Recap" guy. After I moved here, a top priority was to get involved in my community for the sake of the children and future generations. So, I began attending the meetings of various commissions and boards to learn about the community and share that knowledge with others. For the past year, I've been publishing a weekly email newsletter I have cleverly named "Friday Recap." In it I cover the County Commission, the Election Commission, the Franklin Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BOMA), and the school board providing meeting agendas, videos and my own summaries. When I can't attend a meeting, I review the meeting video. This commitment has given me a strong grasp of the issues facing these governmental entities and our county.

Williamson County is a great place to live, work, worship and raise a family. But it also is facing a number of issues that the County Commission must address. I have the background, knowledge and experience to address those issues head on.

What has helped prepare me for this challenge?

Growing up, my family moved a number of times. My father was a pastor known as a church builder. Every time we moved, I had to make new friends and find a way to fit in. The big lesson I learned from that is that people are basically the same everywhere you go.

After high school, I joined the Army and served with the 82nd Airborne. And, yes, I jumped out of perfectly good airplanes. After the service, I attended the University of Nebraska where I met my wonderful wife, Mary, and started our family in Omaha. Mary and I have a son and a daughter and four grandchildren. I earned two degrees that led to a career in teaching and coaching. Years later, I started my own construction company, specializing in residential and commercial buildouts.

Community service has always been a big part of my life. While living in Omaha, I was president of the Nebraska Kidney Foundation, on the board of Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and was very active in my church. Here in Franklin, I'm a volunteer at Grace Works, teach Guitars for Veterans and attend Franklin Community of Faith Church.

Why am I running for this position?

While my opponents' campaign presents a highly optimistic view of Williamson County – and, indeed, there are many positive aspects to our community – we CANNOT overlook the significant challenges we face.

First, our **county's debt is around \$1.2 billion dollars**. That's over \$4,000 for every man, woman and child in Williamson County. This exorbitant debt will severely restrict our future options and flexibility. Right now, our debt service is a whopping 10% of our budget. If we continue on this trajectory, another tax increase is inevitable. Which raises a critical question: Are we trying to be another Davidson County... with unchecked spending and soaring debt?

Secondly, our law enforcement and first responders are doing a first-rate job of protecting us. They are our heroes, and I will ensure they are fully funded and well paid. But right now, there is a proposal to build a **\$325 million-dollar jail and juvenile center** that is three times larger than our existing jail and eight times larger than our current juvenile facility. An alternative has been proposed that could save us up to 30% of the overall cost. I think solutions like THAT should be strongly considered.

A third area of concern is the seemingly **uncontrolled growth of Williamson County**. We must closely examine our infrastructure and our capacity to support not only Williamson County residents, but also commuters from surrounding areas. It's essential to collaborate with state and local officials, as well as economic development leaders, to manage growth in a way that preserves our unique quality of life.

A fourth area of concern for me – and I am sure it is for you -- is **our schools**. As a former teacher, I appreciate the difficult job educators face each day. We need to focus our resources on the classroom not on administration. We need to increase teacher salaries, provide excellent classroom materials and prudently manage the remaining expenses.

Just this past April, the school board passed a five-year capital plan which includes upgrades to existing schools, ongoing maintenance and the construction of new facilities. The estimated cost for this is nearly \$1 billion dollars.

Adding all this to the proposed \$325 million cost for a new jail, the total projected additional capital expenses over the next five years exceed \$1.3 billion dollars. This could potentially bring our overall debt to well over \$2 billion dollars. That's going to affect all of us, even if you don't have children in school.

It seems we are constantly either increasing debt or increasing taxes. Or both. Many of our residents are struggling in an economy where the cost of living has greatly increased; I see them every week at Grace Works. We cannot keep digging our financial hole deeper.

Throughout my career as a veteran, teacher and small-business owner, I've learned how to be an effective problem-solver, collaborator and communicator, skills that are vitally important for a county commissioner.

I'm a consistent Conservative, not a conservative just at election time.

And if I am fortunate enough to be elected to the County Commission, those are the skills and values I intend to use in finding solutions to Williamson County's many challenges.

So, here are my promises to you.

- I promise to treat all people the same... and not be influenced by special interests in our county...
- To be dedicated to transparency and fact-based decision-making...
- To ensure the county does not waste money on "wants" versus "needs..."
- To be true to the principles of limited government, low taxes, low regulations and efficient use of taxpayer money.
- And most importantly, I promise to be true to YOU. To prioritize the needs and rights of the people and put YOU first.

As a soldier, I fought for the Constitutional Republic in which we live. As your county commissioner, I will fight for you and be your voice. I will make the tough decisions to protect our quality of life and for the future of our children and our children's children.

I simply ask you to give me that chance.

Thank you.

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