

Debate Questions for 2024 Special Election

The Candidate Special Election Debate scheduled for 9/27/2024 was cancelled due to Tropical Storm Helene, and the potentially dangerous conditions created by the storm. Instead, candidates were given just under 24 hours to answer the questions below. Candidates may answer none, any, or all of the questions below, at their discretion. Candidates are encouraged to reach out to Laney Buckley via phone for clarification on any question; Laney will attempt to answer all questions in as timely a fashion as practicable. Documents submitted will be published on the Catawba Nation website at Catawba.com/election.

Candidate Name:

DeeDee Foxx-Gillis

Questions

1. What qualifications or experiences do you believe best prepare you to serve our Nation as an Executive Committee member? Having more than 25 years of leadership experience in a governmental setting as well as being open to new ideas and concepts while embracing continuity and support among our tribal administration and our citizens.
2. What are your top priorities if you are elected to serve on the Catawba Nation Executive Committee? 1. Ensure all tribal laws, resolutions and ordinances are adhered to in a transparent and open government process; Provide our citizens a means to communicate among each other and our administration/services; ensure services are publicized to all citizens and everyone is given equal opportunities in every service offered; seek processes to create unity, trust and understanding among our staff and citizens;
3. What, if anything, do you think you would like to do differently from the existing Executive Committee? I want all meetings publicized, transcribed and made available to citizens. I want all citizens to be able to review and understand financials, budgets and opportunities both past & present; I want to see a strategic plan for our Nation and our community and priorities set off the plan in order to move forward in an organized and transparent manner.

4. Please discuss your understanding of the Catawba Nation Settlement Agreement. I understand first there is a time limit placed on our settlement agreement basically giving us limits as to our place in government, I believe there are portions that undermine and negate our sovereignty and they should be removed.

5. What is your position on the substance use disorder problem within the Catawba Nation? Substance abuse is a systemic epidemic among all people and ages. I am not sure of how our percentages line up against the national average however we should use every grant and opportunity available to create a safe environment, counseling and medical treatment of our affected citizens. I further believe due to these disenfranchised individuals not always being able to speak or advocate for themselves an advocacy team of citizens should always oversee the management and progress of these programs & individuals.

6. Regarding enrollment, do you believe DNA tests should be required regardless of whether the Catawba parent of the proposed enrollee is the mother or the father? I believe we should protect our roll through any means necessary. I also believe if we use DNA we need to ensure we have vetted and contracted with a genetic specialist to review the results of the DNA test and not just utilize the mother/father/relative appropriation of results.

7. Do you believe there should be a timeframe for enrollment eligibility? No, we may have children now or in the future who have been adopted or fostered by individuals who are not familiar or do not know the process of tribal enrollment, I believe there could be cases where an adopted child is able to find their birth parent years later and want to be introduced into their birth culture.

8. What is your approach to providing transparency regarding decisions made with tribal businesses, entities, funding, and staffing/staff engagement? I believe all meetings of the EC should have a pre-planned agenda, pre-planned time and day of meetings and they should be open to our citizens via in person or zoom. All meetings should be recorded for non-local citizens to be able to participate and become familiar with the processes. There should be no reason to not be transparent with all information that is considered nation

available documents. A special meeting or section of a pre-planned meeting can be dictated for confidential and sensitive information.

9. What is your position on developing a cannabis industry on the Catawba reservation? I am open to any economic development that is for the good of our nation, however I believe a strategic plan and priorities would be the best way to find where this issue and others rank among our citizens.

10. The Nation's government has had serious issues with turnover and employee morale. What do you believe is the cause of this and how would you address it? I don't believe anyone could answer why with a single sentence. However, good positive leadership is vital in bringing an employee group together and working toward a common goal. I believe "scare tactics" in the workplace including those of political pressure coming from any person is toxic and inappropriate. We must provide knowledgeable, experienced and qualified individuals to hold key positions within our nations administration. It would be the responsibility of these key individuals to lead not just manage these departments and for them to foster positive ideas, open government and respect for everyone. My motto is to never be afraid to hire someone smarter than yourself and always be willing to be questioned on your decisions as this will build a stronger and smarter team moving forward.

11. As a Nation, unity is important for our prosperity and longevity. What is your approach to creating unity within our Nation? Unity is very important to me as I want my children and grandchildren to want to be involved with our culture and our nation. I believe unity is created by gaining respect for each other and realizing although we may not agree we must acknowledge our difference and respect the outcome. We must be able to trust our leaders, both elected and hired, to carry through with the priorities set forth and to comply with the Nations laws. Again creating a strategic plan and prioritizing projects within this plan can help Bring us together in Unity working toward common agreed upon goals.