

Kootenai County Commissioner District 2

	Steve Em	Bruce Mattare
1. What is your name, what office are you running for and why are you running for this position?	<p>Steve Em Kootenai County Commissioner District 2 To provide the constituents of Kootenai County with better transparency, integrity, and truth. No backroom deals and no Non-Disclosure Statements. Provide the people with the ability to control a budget that is currently not sustainable.</p>	<p>My name is Bruce Mattare, and I am your current Kootenai County Commissioner for District 2. I'm running for re-election because the rapid growth is affecting our quality of life and we need to implement responsible growth strategies to avoid taxing people out of their homes. I'm also running to ensure that your county government operates with transparency and accountability. My policy focus is on responsible growth, fiscal discipline, and making sure government decisions reflect the interests of all county residents—not special interests or select groups. More about my policy platform can be found at www.BruceForCommissioner.com.</p>
2. What is your opinion of eminent domain? Under what circumstances do you believe it should be used?	<p>Eminent domain is a governmental tool that has not been favorable upon those that I have seen used against in Los Angeles and Las Vegas. Two places that I lived in for some time. The people that were "evicted" from properties due to freeway expansion were paid monies that determined their properties to be undervalued. If freeway expansion is necessary then it should be used only under the premise that valuation of property is fair for the owner. Any other circumstance needs an equation where the owner is treated fairly in a current market value.</p>	<p>Eminent domain should only be used as a last resort and strictly for essential public infrastructure projects. Private property rights are fundamental, and government should not take property unless absolutely necessary for the public good, such as critical roads or utilities. When it is used, property owners must be treated fairly and compensated appropriately.</p>
3. If faced with a budget deficit, would you support cutting spending or increasing taxes? What would be your reasons for this decision?	<p>In the past I have worked for government agencies where we have had to lay people off. Fortunately, I was not one of them but friends were. I have seen a large county government in Los Angeles implement temporary tax increases on goods to increase tax revenue. I am conservative enough to say that I would cut spending before I would implement a tax. I would also say that I, if elected as Kootenai County Commissioner, would take a pay cut of up to 20% of my salary, if I could have it amended and under extraordinary times. If my county workers are gonna take a pay cut, I will also.</p>	<p>I would prioritize cutting spending and improving efficiency before considering tax increases. Government should live within its means just like families and businesses do. By focusing on better policy decisions, reducing waste, and ensuring growth pays for itself, we can address deficits without placing additional burdens on taxpayers. However, growth does not currently pay for itself, which means current residents are forced to pay for those costs as a result of growth.</p>
4. Do you support or oppose forced annexation? Why or why not?	<p>I oppose forced annexation. I know that Texas was annexed in 1845. With the expansion of the US at the time, it is something I cannot debate because of the year it took place. This was something we studied in US History in High School that I remember. Today you have Russia attempting to annex Ukraine which has resulted in the loss of millions of lives. Lives that cannot be replaced. Men that fought in that war that cannot be replaced, devastating both Russia and Ukraine for decades. This matter usually results in the loss of massive life and I am opposed to it.</p>	<p>I oppose forced annexation because property owners should have a voice in decisions that affect their land and governance. Forcing residents into city limits without their consent undermines individual rights. Growth and expansion should be based on cooperation, not coercion.</p>

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5. Our county is growing very rapidly, where do you see we need to improve infrastructure and what are your plans to improve it?	I can only speak about infrastructure at a county level because I am not running for a higher office. Our county facilities, services, and physical systems that are necessary for our county to operate like a well oiled machine need continual upkeep and inspection. Last Tuesday, April 2, at 3:28 am, I received a text that the Kootenai County Network had an outage. Recently, the Kootenai County Jail had a power outage endangering deputies and prisoners. Why? Because we are not inspecting and holding county managers accountable. The way to improve is to possibly outsource services to private companies that have an excellent proven track record. Maybe for possibly less than what we are paying currently using a county employee. But that has to be investigated thoroughly before it ever is implemented.	Growth does not pay for itself. My number one priority is to implement impact fees, but not all cities will collect the fee for us. Fortunately, we recently expanded our courthouse and jail facilities, which gives us some time before the need to expand again. However, we are not saving enough to pay for future expansion. My policy has been to require growth to pay for itself through the use of impact fees and responsible growth planning. Strong planning and fair cost allocation are essential for keeping individual property taxes lower.
6. What is your opinion of red-light cameras and license plate readers? Should they be used by the County?	From past law enforcement experience, red light cameras have worked in Los Angeles and Las Vegas in preventing people from running red lights. Large proper signage is effective if the person driving the car can read English. The ALPRS, license plate readers, are something I am opposed to. The reason: give a cop the ability to use Probable Cause instead of a machine to pull someone over and it looks better in court if the subject should receive a ticket. I believe ALPRS would make police lazier and give them a chance to hone in on that sixth sense that good cops have.	I'm not a fan of either. Red light cameras are a hard NO. Those typically become revenue mechanisms for local governments. License plate readers have helped solve crimes, but the opportunity for abuse is great. When talking about this issue during community events, there were strong opinions on both sides. I was open to a one-year trial where results could be presented to the community, but those numbers were never shared. Unless there are compelling reasons for them and the community wants them, then I am generally not in support of them.
7. Do you support or oppose Urban Renewal Districts? Why or why not?	When I was a gang unit officer I saw both Urban Renewal project and gentrification in my gang areas. Subsequently, both pushed gang members out of the area because of rent increases along with higher home valuation. Urban Renewal Districts can be costly, but the return using TIF's (tax increment financing) would make it lucrative for the city in future property tax revenue. If city and county departments did their jobs thoroughly, then how would we create blighted neighborhoods? At this time I cannot say anything about supporting or opposing it because if county and city departments did their jobs, we wouldn't come to the fork in the road of having to deal with blighted neighborhoods.	The intention of them is good, but the execution has often been poor. I am extremely cautious about Urban Renewal Districts, particularly when they lack transparency or shift financial burdens onto taxpayers. These programs should be carefully evaluated to ensure they truly benefit the community and do not create unintended consequences like unfair tax burdens on residents.

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8. Do you support or oppose requirements for developers to pay for community infrastructure?	When you understand the amount of ROI(return on investment) that a developer has in a large project, then you realize that they should pay for community infrastructure, but to a point. Physically infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, pipes for water and wastewater, etc. But, the city or county should help with electrical substations for that community along with sewer and water hook up in and out of the community. The developer cannot be responsible for everything because the city or county takes over for the upkeep and care for all the community's infrastructure while benefiting financially from the revenue brought in.	I strongly support requiring developers to pay for the infrastructure impacts created by their projects. This ensures fairness and prevents existing residents from subsidizing growth. It aligns costs with those who generate them.
9. In your opinion, if elected, who do you see yourself accountable to and why?	Always accountable to God, but accountable to my constituents as well. God gave me life, and my constituents are paying my salary. You will not catch me on a golf course, but instead catch me at the community center in downtown Worley accessible to my constituents when not in Chambers with the other commissioners.	I am accountable to the voters, taxpayers and residents of Kootenai County. I'd like to think that my record reflects that. Taxpayers are the ones who fund government and are directly impacted by the BOCC's decisions. My role is to represent their interests with transparency, integrity, and sound decision-making. I also write about important issues facing our community with links to BOCC meeting videos and supporting documentation at my website www.bruceforcommissioner.com/blog .
10. In recent years some groups have advocated for legalizing marijuana in our state, do you support or oppose the legalization of marijuana? Why or why not?	I personally do not support the state legalization of marijuana. As a former drug counselor during my tenure as a probation officer, we are seeing major psychosis in teens and early twenty year olds that will be detrimental to our economy and functioning as a country down this road. Some officials are eyeing this as possible tax revenue without thinking about the health complications those people are going to suffer and we will all be paying for. My belief is that you have an individual right to use it, although illegal in Idaho, but I have never smoked it and believe in it.	I disagree with legalization. While my focus is on ensuring proper public safety funding, decisions about marijuana legalization should ultimately reflect the will of Idaho voters. As commissioner, my priority would be how such policies impact safety, fiscal resources, and the community.
11. County Commissioners have an enormous responsibility with the many departments that run our county. Which departments in your opinion should receive priority for increased budgets?	Looking at current and predicting future budgets for Kootenai County, it appears that the Sheriff's Office uses, and most likely will continue to have the biggest budget of any department. Emergency Management(EMS) is a department, other than Sheriff, that deals with PTSD due to the stress of their job. Personnel retention is a priority and should receive priority. At this time I do not have numbers on staff turnover and retention but would appreciate seeing numbers on what departments are having high turnover and what solutions can be sought to keep employees.	I don't believe any department or elected official should get priority funding unless he or she can illustrate effectively the fiscal need. Too often commissioners are presented with emotional, verbal arguments as to why they should get additional funding. To achieve true accountability, departments must develop standard reporting metrics that you, the taxpayer, can see and understand, to determine funding priorities.

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12. What should the county's policy be regarding federal funding of county projects?	That should the county be involved in any and all federal funding of county projects, the county has no strings attached made by the feds and that full oversight of the project have no federal intervention or oversight. All the feds should worry about is that they get their funding back as said on such contract, even if there were interest rate involved on that agreement.	It generally comes down to what "strings" are attached to the funding. Most federal grants are to spend the money for the intended purpose and then close out. I have no issue with that. However, I believe the county should 100% AVOID AT ALL COSTS any funding that compromises local control or creates future financial burdens.
13. What is your opinion on restricting public comment at county meetings? Why do you hold this opinion?	I believe that you cannot limit the first amendment. At county meetings, all behavior should be professional. Plain and simple. I know people can become emotional on particular issues, but when you get irate at a county meeting, what type of message are you sending? That goes for public employees and private citizens. I hold this opinion because we will become a fascist society if we restrict free speech.	Public comment should never be restricted, with the exception of a time limit. We offer it at the beginning and ending of most BOCC meetings and I'd like to keep it that way. Transparency and citizen participation are critical to good government. Restricting public input undermines trust and limits accountability.
14. What is your background and why do you feel it qualifies you for this position?	My main background involves being a Probation Officer with a strong mental health background. I have worked special assignments such as narcotics, gang unit, Probation Headquarters, along with juvenile detention facilities. I was an investigator the majority of my career as a Probation Officer and have worked Child sex abuse for Child Protective Services. I have been an over the road truck driver for a major trucking company and am currently a Refuse Collector II(Trashman) for the city of Spokane. I am a blue collar worker with a Bachelors of Science in Business Administration and a Minor in Personnel Management. I have been the voice for the voiceless, and have represented people that had difficulties in representing themselves. I have taken on bullies, lost battles, but won wars that were spiritual and physical. I am the one that will not turn his back on the constituents. I will not do back room deals, will not sign Non-Disclosures, but will represent and listen to the people.	My business and education background includes: building and managing successful multi-million dollar businesses, along with experience in finance, technology, policy making and having earned an MBA. This has given me real-world leadership experience, budgeting skills, and a results-oriented mindset that I bring to county government. As your current District 2 County Commissioner with 3-1/2 years of experience, we have already made significant improvements in public safety staffing and reducing costs in your county government but there is more work to do. I hope to earn your continued support. You can see more about me at www.BruceForCommissioner.com .