

Charles Kuffner

I'm speaking today with Sara McGee, who is the Democratic candidate for State House in District 132. Sarah, thank you very much for speaking with me today. Let me start by asking, why are you running for this office?

Sara McGee

Yeah, you know, it's crazy. I have spent my entire life in healthcare and then I just started getting more politically active over the last few cycles and then actually had the opportunity to meet the incumbent that I'm running against. And those two things kind of clashed together and all of a sudden I realized that I couldn't sit on the sidelines anymore because when I met him, he was an absolutely horrible person.

And I had been fighting for all of these other candidates, not even necessarily in my district, but walking for federal races and Senate races and phone banking for presidential races, even calling other states. And then meeting him, I realized, wow, like I've been working on all of these much larger issues when I can make a difference right here in my own community. So just said, I'm going to go for it and put my name in the hat and fight for my community that I grew up in. So here I am.

Charles Kuffner

Your background is in radiology. You're, I believe, a manager of a radiology practice. Is that right?

Sara McGee

No, I'm a director of radiology department. So yeah, so I'm the director of the people that take the pictures, not the people that read the pictures.

Charles Kuffner

Got it. So tell me a little bit more about that experience and how that has informed your politics and your campaign.

Sara McGee

Right. You know, it's funny because I went into healthcare because I have an overarching, like helping people is what gets me out of bed in the morning. I've been that way my entire life, which is why I chose healthcare as a career in the first place.

So going from direct patient care, you know, being the one that actually took the x-rays to then moving up into a management position where I could take care of the people and get the, you know, who were taking the x-rays and then going even further than that. Now I want to be able to take care of, you know, the companies and the healthcare providers and the downstream consumers and find ways to make healthcare more affordable for everybody. So it's crazy because it's in the same vein of just always waking up and wanting to find a way to improve patients' lives.

But seeing how restrictive our laws are and how many more things we could be doing from a statewide and a national level to provide healthcare access to people is what has made this kind of a smooth transition from, you know, jumping into healthcare world 22 years ago to where I am today.

Charles Kuffner

I mean, obviously there's any number of things that the legislature has done or not done in both recently and in the farther ago past that have directly affected both people's access to healthcare as well as the way providers do it, you know, or the supply of providers, where they are, what they can say and do, all these sorts of things, you know, from going all the way back to the decision to, you know, going all the way back to the tort reform law to the decision to not expand Medicaid to, you know, the continued closure of, you know, rural hospitals to, you know, more recently the Dobbs decision and, you know, crackdowns on immigration and rescinding, you know, medical research grants.

I mean, I don't know how much of that directly intersects with radiology, but, you know, again, from your perspective, I'm sure you have seen how some or all of these policies have impacted the ability of providers to provide care and residents to receive it. Talk to me about what your priorities would be as a legislator based on what you've seen and observed, seen and experienced.

Sara McGee

Yeah, absolutely. And, you know, the craziest thing, and when I'm having conversations with people online, is when you hear the phrase of people saying, I'm not paying for that, meaning they don't want to pay for somebody else's healthcare. And the message that I want people to understand is that the fewer people that have healthcare coverage, the more everybody pays through increased premiums, increased cost of care.

And so when people say, I don't want to pay for that, first, I need people to understand you already are paying for that, because the cost gets, you know, divided somewhere. And it's usually to, you know, the people that are still insured. So in order to fix that, we've got to insure more people.

It is just inexplicable to me that we have not expanded the Medicaid, I am so sorry, that we have not expanded Medicaid access in Texas, because expanding Medicaid access would bring down the healthcare premiums that everybody pays. Again, more people would be insured. It would keep rural hospitals open.

Refusing to expand Medicaid has been one of the most damaging things to rural hospitals that this state has just, again, inexplicably decided to do. And I don't think a lot of people understand, at least a lot of people, I've gotten to explain this to more people than I realized didn't know, but not expanding Medicaid, those are federal dollars. Like our federal dollars, Texas people who go to work and they pay into the federal government, those are our federal dollars that Greg Abbott has just said, no, you know, the Fed can keep those dollars, we don't want them.

And it's just crazy to me, because I'm like, why would we leave our tax dollars in Washington when we could bring them back here to serve the people of Texas? So that's one thing.

And, you mentioned the Dobbs decision. So many people don't realize that as hard as it was to see an OB physician beforehand, it's gotten even harder, because I was in, you know, working in radiology in the front lines of seeing what happened immediately after that law was passed, because I'm over ultrasound. So, and my department is right next to the ED. So doctors not knowing what to do, not knowing when they could act, not, you know, having to have repeat ultrasounds and repeat lab work.

Like I have seen firsthand the delays that it caused in patient care, and in women's health care, immediately following the Dobbs decision. And so a lot of physicians saw that and were like, you know what, like, I just can't practice in Texas anymore. Because I'm afraid if I use my medical, you know, medically trained judgment to treat this patient, that I might end up in jail for 100 years and lose my license. So we're actually losing physicians at a greater clip than any other state for that reason. And so many people don't understand like the ramifications of trying to legislate medical decisions like that.

Charles Kuffner

You started that answer by talking about talking to people online. That's how I first encountered you and your campaign. Quite the active presence on Twitter. Sorry, I can't call it anything but Twitter.

Sara McGee

Oh, no, I won't. Yeah, never. It's the end of time. Yeah.

Charles Kuffner

But you do spend a lot of time responding to comments from people I could only describe as trolls. Yeah. Which, you know, God bless you, but that would drive me absolutely batty.

So, you know, what is it that sort of draws you to that kind of interaction? Or, you know, not necessarily specifically squatting trolls, but being online in that way. What draws you to that? How has it affected your campaign? You know, just talk a little in the broad strokes about it.

Sara McGee

Yeah, you know, what's funny is so many people look at that. And it there was a crossover that happened once my following started growing, where people started calling me an influencer candidate, which was wild, because that account, I didn't start using it until I decided to run for office. And it had all of three followers.

So every single tweet from that account has been sent since I announced that I was running for office. So at the beginning, you know, me being a first time candidate, I didn't have any political connections or didn't know exactly where to start. But I knew one of the ways that I could, you know, start to get my message out there was by setting up my social media accounts.

And the only reason I even went on Twitter was because that's one of the only places you can find the Texas Republicans, because, you know, obviously, they're not hanging out on Blue Sky or Threads or, you know, Twitter is the place to go if you want to see what the Texas Republicans are up to. And so I just went and, you know, I started just kind of like hitting back at them a little bit, and I'd get a couple

followers, and I'd hit back on this and get a couple followers. And then, you know, kind of started doing the Greg Abbott would tweet something out. And I'm like, this is not even like kind of true.

And so I started doing that. Well, actually, like when he says this, what he actually means is this. And next thing I know, it just it just blew up. And so to answer your question, I don't like it. Oddly enough. I do it. It's a necessary beast. And then responding to the trolls is is something that that's actually a strategic move, because it's not. First of all, I'm not scared of them.

But secondly, I realized that I'm never going to change their minds. But the responses that I give, I will only respond if I have something to say that I am hoping to reach someone who might be reading it, but isn't the type of person to actually put their thoughts out on the internet. So my responses are very targeted. I never respond from a place of emotion.

Like sometimes you'll read this stuff. And I might be just completely blowing my cover here. But sometimes you'll read this stuff. And I'll be like, oh, you know, she's mad. I'm never actually mad. Like, I'm just portraying, you know, the emotions and putting them out through my words. But yeah, whether or not I like it, no, I absolutely hate it. In fact, I've said this, and I'll go on the record, I will do absolutely everything I can to win this seat.

But if for some reason I am unsuccessful in this, in this quest, I hate to disappoint people, but that Twitter account's gone. It was there for campaign purposes. And you know, great to get the message out there. But it is not something that I enjoy doing now. It's become a necessary evil.

Charles Kuffner

Fair enough. One of the issues you talk about a lot on there, and it's also on your website, is the hemp situation in Texas. You know, there was that effort to, I mean, there was the law from 2019 that accidentally, quote unquote, accidentally on purpose, made hemp products legal in a way that they hadn't been before. Certainly in a way, in a weird way, in a state that, you know, has no interest in decriminalizing marijuana.

And so all these hemp shops, all these THC products popped up all over the state. And then last session, you had Dan Patrick's obsession with trying to ban all of that. And he actually managed to get a bill passed, which Greg Abbott then vetoed. He had a special session in which they tried again and couldn't come to an agreement. So Abbott passed this executive order that sort of banned some things, but not everything, and nobody really likes it. And here we are.

So first of all, what is your take on this? And what would you do as a legislator with regards to hemp of whatever form? You know, do you want to make it all legal? Do you want to regulate? You just want to regulate some of it? Where are you on this?

Sara McGee

Yeah, so it's crazy. This, for me, it's very personal, but it doesn't come from a place. I personally don't, and you might not be able to tell this by how aggressively I, you know, fight for this issue. I personally don't use, you know, I work in healthcare. We're tested routinely. And even in my younger days, when I

tried it, you know, a handful of times, like I could literally count on both hands how many times I've tried hemp products. It just wasn't for me. Like I just, it just wasn't for me.

But I fight this fight because for me, this is about freedom. And it's about standing up for what Texas is supposed to represent, which is like personal liberty, individual liberty, let people make their own conversations. And it's something that I casually put on my platform when I first started running, because it's part of the Democrat platform. But my platform is very informed by actual conversations that I've had in communities.

So as I've had those conversations, I've become even more vocal and more, you know, aggressive in defending that right. Because I, even I personally didn't realize how many veterans rely on it for pain control. How many, one of the biggest shockers was how many of the, as I affectionately refer to them, the wine moms who, you know, current or they used to, you know, sit down after dinner and homework and bath time and putting the kids to bed, they'd sit and have a glass of wine. And how many of those glasses of wine have been replaced by like a CBD gummy.

They're mad. Like that's a whole group of people. I had no idea that was mad about this, but I'm just, enough is enough. Like Texas, again, is supposed to represent freedom and they're messing with our freedoms when they mess with hemp. So yeah, full legalization, regulation and taxation, but taxation to the point where it doesn't make, you know, it's not so taxed that it pushes people back to the black market because of overtaxing. There's a balance to be held there.

But yeah, full legalization, regulation. That's my only, like there's no, to me, there's not a middle ground there because they tried to do the middle ground and it's just ended up where we are now where people don't know if a product they bought last month is legal this month. Like it's ridiculous. Just stop messing with people. Like just leave us alone and let us live our lives.

Charles Kuffner

Does that extend to marijuana as well or is this just about hemp THC?

Sara McGee

No, it extends to marijuana as well.

Charles Kuffner

Okay. And I mean, you are also a proponent for legalizing sports betting, you know, which Texas is one of the states that doesn't have that. I mean, the broader question about expanded gambling, which, you know, has, you know, in the past meant like horse racing, but also, and slot machines, but it's also now about casinos.

You know, I personally am kind of on the fence about all that. On the one hand, I don't quite, you know, I don't see the value in banning it. On the other hand, I don't see any of it as being particularly good.

I see the downsides more than I see the upsides. And I think the visions of the money that we might get from it are overly optimistic. Being that as it may, we've also got now the question of prediction markets,

which are operating in sort of a gray area in Texas in that they're legal federally. And we don't have a law on the books here that controls them.

So, you know, talk to me a little bit more about your support for legal, you know, expanded gambling. I mean, I'm assuming, I may be putting words in your mouth if it goes beyond sports betting, but talk about that, but also your view on prediction markets and what, if anything, you would want to do as a legislator about those.

Sara McGee

Yeah. You know, what's funny is the betting was something, like I just said about my platform changing, was something that I originally had on my website and that I actually ended up taking it off. Not because my thoughts on it necessarily changed, but because when I'm going out and talking to my community, people want lower property taxes, fully funded public education, increased access to healthcare.

The hemp thing became a larger issue than I even ever anticipated that it would be. I haven't had a single person from my community tell me, hey, I want you to go to Austin and legalize gambling. And so with it not being, and again, going back to my platform is very, it's very informed by what I directly hear from people in my community, because I believe that's the only way it should be.

I haven't heard a ton of people asking for it. So I've really backed off even like talking about it. And if it's something that came up in the legislature, I've talked before about how I want to be like an interactive legislator, meaning like I want to have town halls. I want to send out surveys to the community and say, hey, you know, let your voice be heard. This major issue is coming up, you know, for debate this week. What are your thoughts? How would you like me to vote on this situation?

So honestly, my thoughts are my personal thoughts. I would need a lot more feedback from the members of my community before I took a strong public stance on how I feel about that. But that's for sports betting, not prediction markets. I mean, I don't like them, but I'm not exactly sure what we do about them. And the reason I don't like them is because I feel that now that they're getting, oh, and especially all, I mean, they're showing up all over the Twitter feed, like they're actual polls.

But when you look at the volume of trades, those are very easily manipulated by some billionaire coming in and dumping, you know, a million dollars into a prediction market to make it look like, you know, a certain candidate is leading when they're not. And I wouldn't even know how to begin on how to regulate that without deeming them basically a worthless product. So there's conversations to be had there. I do not believe that they are a benefit to society in their current capacity.

Charles Kuffner

Okay. And I guess we can't not talk about data centers since that is a big talking point. It's a big issue that a lot of people feel very strongly about now. There's a lot of antipathy. I don't know how much of it is towards the idea itself and how much of it is just towards the extreme proliferation where everyone feels like they don't have any say over whether or their county or whatnot. You know, even Greg Abbott is sort of having to retreat on this after being, you know, the single biggest cheerleader for them in the state.

What's your position on data centers in general? I mean, that's kind of a broad question. What would you advocate for as a legislator regarding data center permitting, construction, what locals have to say about them, all of that?

Sara McGee

Yeah. You know, it's funny that this has really started to become loud because I've been talking about this for probably a year. And I even like on the record did an interview with the Katy Times about my stance on data centers. And it really hasn't changed since then. I filled out the questionnaire in April. It was published in May.

I'm not anti-data center, which would be difficult to tell if you were to read my, you know, most recent social media posts. But I am anti them coming in and just completely wiping out the communities that they want to be in. You know, because you cannot go on a national broadcast and be like, oh, this is amazing. Amazing technology is going to completely eliminate the need for jobs. It's, you know, AI is taking your job and then we're going to build next to your community and we're going to take your water and take your electricity and do this and do that.

And then when people start pushing back, they're like, oh, this is unfounded, you know, outrage. It's absolutely not. Like you can't tell people that something's going to come take their jobs and expect them to be like, oh, okay, build it next door. So if I were, if I had been put in front, you know, in charge of the PR for data centers, like right off the bat, the first thing that they should have done when they came into communities has been like, hey, like there's a lot of land here. This would be a great, you know, great place for a data center because that's the other thing. In addition to saying, we're going to take your land, water, electricity and jobs, they're also getting massive tax breaks to do this while our property taxes are skyrocketing. And then they're bragging about like, you know, Elon Musk is becoming the first trillionaire.

So there's, you know, just understandably so people are like, so you're taking our jobs, taking our electricity, taking our water, taking our land, making us live noise pollution and light pollution. And we're getting nothing in return except for screwed while you brag about being the world's first trillionaires.

Yeah. So if these companies that all advertise themselves as being multi-billion dollar companies want to build next to a community, they need to come in the community and be like, hey, great piece of land here. We want it. This is what we're going to do to earn our place in your community. We're going to build schools. We're going to completely revamp the water infrastructure. We're going to completely revamp the electric, you know, infrastructure.

And not only are we going to provide enough electricity for our own operations, but we're going to create surplus electricity that can be put back into the grid and directly credited on your bill in this community. We're going to, you know, through the taxes, the property taxes that we pay while we're here, we're going to reduce your personal property taxes by X, Y and Z. Like if all of those things, and I've seen every single one of those things proposed. And like I said, this is something I've been talking about since April.

I've seen every single one of those things proposed, but not a single one is happening right now because Greg Abbott has basically like, they didn't think anybody would pay attention or care, or maybe he thought that it would happen or wait to happen until after the election. But now he's backtracking when he never in a million years had any intention of backtracking. He fully invited these people to come in like, hey, here, because people are like, oh, why are all these businesses moving to Texas? Because Greg Abbott created a tax haven for them at our expense. Like, you know, he was basically like, come here tax free.

We'll just pass the, you know, we'll pass the bill onto the people who already live here. We'll do all the energy grid infrastructure upgrades, and we won't even make you pay for them. We'll just trickle it down to the frontline consumer, which is why our electricity bills are going up.

He had no intention of putting any of these regulations into place, or he would have done it already. So yeah, but yeah, if you want to change the public's perception, it's going to have to be on an individual community level, and these companies are going to have to come in, and they're going to have to actually give back to the communities that they want to build in. Or you can go out, because that was another question I've seen a lot, is why are they not just building in the middle of the desert?

Why are they building next to neighborhoods? And the reason that they're building next to neighborhoods is because all the infrastructure that they need is already there. They don't want to build their infrastructure from scratch because it would cost them too much money.

So either make deals with these neighborhoods that turn them from, you know, like the Beverly Hillbillies, like overnight from struggling communities to, you know, River Oaks with the best of schools and the best of, you know, allow these communities to share in the funds from that. Or go out to far west Texas where there's absolutely nothing but miles and miles of desert, and you're not bothering anybody, and build your own freaking infrastructure and stay out of our hair. Like, honestly, that's where it's come to at this point.

Charles Kuffner

Okay. I mean, you started our conversation off by talking about your past campaign experience. You know, we are very much in the middle of a bunch of hot campaigning, you know. We have, you know, James Talarico leading in polling. We have Gina Hinojosa doing well in polling. We have a whole lot of, you know, a whole lot of hot House races.

You know, I feel like this is a year where more than ever, everyone who's on the ballot needs to not only work to get themselves elected, but work to get everyone around them elected as well. So talk to me about, you know, beyond what we've already talked about here and your, you know, your fighting presence on Twitter, what are you doing to help, you know, lift all, you know, help lift the tide and raise all the boats?

Sara McGee

Right. You know, it's funny because, again, that was just something that when I first started running and I didn't know exactly how to structure or run a campaign, the only thing I knew was how to go talk to people. And that was, in addition to setting up social media and, you know, being loud and earning a random Twitter following, I had been out in my community for almost two years now.

And so one of the things I was like, okay, we really need to work on, you know, these issues. We were trying to get like Moms for Liberty and book banning candidates off of our local school boards because I'm running in Katy, like my district has Katy ISD and CyFair ISD.

Charles Kuffner

Y'all did a good job there.

Sara McGee

Yeah. And so immediately, like I started running, you know, immediately after the '24 election, the first campaign that I helped kind of like do coordinated work on was the Katie ISD school board elections in May of 2025. And so we did some cross pollinating, block walking with them, did some random block walking in the summer, going to school board meetings and whatnot.

And then in November, did a major co-push with the CyFair ISD school board people to get their school board flipped back to sanity. So we did that and then worked again with the municipal election, municipal and then another Katie ISD school board election this past May in May of 2026. And doing these events, through these coordinated efforts, my campaign has already spoken to over 40,000 doors in my district.

And now to continue that trend, what we're doing now is we have a very robust Talarico for Katy organization and they're building the Talarico for Cypress organization. And so a lot of people will come and they'll volunteer based on, you know, the big names or the top of the ticket. Luckily through the school board races and the municipal races, I have, you know, kind of built up my own group of volunteers, but now we've partnered up with the Katy for Talarico people and the Cypress for Talarico people, and we're doing coordinated block walks.

So we're bringing all of these groups of volunteers together, and then we're going out and we're passing lit for both, you know, for both candidates. And I will personally also pass lit for, you know, Gina and Vikki Goodwin. And I'm just, I'm trying to talk to as many people as I can about Jon Rosenthal, because we have a really bad ticket splitting problem in Texas, meaning that, you know, someone might, the race at the top, like I think Talarico is going to win. And I think it's almost like a given at this point, assuming we continue to do the work that we're already, that we're, that we're doing. Can't take anything for granted, but as you know, as long as the national temperature keeps going the way it is, we keep doing the work that we're doing, Talarico is going to win.

But that's because we finally have enough money for people to understand that Ken Paxton sucks. But people keep saying, well, Ken Paxton won a statewide election, you know, several times. And my retort

to that is like, tell me right now who's running for Attorney General in Texas. Nobody knows the answer to that question, because down ballot races in Texas get negligible funding.

And so that's the biggest problem we're trying to overcome this year. I mean, Ken Paxton just rode the coattails of the top of the ticket Republicans forever, because you'll have these soft Republicans and these independents who will get flooded with the top of the ticket race, decide they want to choose the Democrat. Great, awesome.

They choose the Democrat and then immediately following that, they go back to their comfortable R for the rest of the ballot. So that's what we're trying to fight this year through mass campaign coordination, is to hopefully get those people excited about all the down ballot races as well. And the only way to do that is to keep coordinating in groups of candidates and talking to everybody.

Charles Kuffner

Okay, well, let's sum it up then when people go to vote on November 3, or, you know, early voting in October, why should they vote to make you the next state representative in District 132, and not your opponent, the incumbent?

Sara McGee

Yeah, well, my biggest thing, first of all, I firmly believe that representatives should be of the people, by the people, and for the people. And I have lived in this district since I was three years old. So I don't just want to change these things because I'm a politician talking campaign lines. Like I know about the tax rate, and I know about our flooding issues, and I know about our school problems, because I lived here, and I've dealt with those problems right alongside of you.

So I want to go and fight those things, whereas opposed to my opponent, who was raised in Jersey. Went to law school. Went to high school in Louisiana. Then worked for Rick Perry for 11 years. And then was just randomly plugged into a district where they thought it was red enough for him to win. He has zero community ties.

Which probably explains why he goes to Austin and continuously votes against our interests. So not only the community ties, the past community ties, but I also have made a commitment. Because if there's one thing that you know about my opponent, it is that he is impossible to reach.

He does not answer emails. He does not answer phone calls. He does not have town halls. He shows up at a couple of Republican meetings and goes to donor dinners and that's about it. I want to be the most accessible. State house representative.

And knowing that I will serve in, you know, if we win this race, I'll be serving in a very purple district. I want to work for everyone. There will be votes that I will take based on feedback from my constituents that won't necessarily align 100% with the democratic platform. And that's something that I've committed to as, you know, as a candidate running to serve this district, because me personally, I'm a Democrat. I will always vote for Democrats.

I will be blue no matter who, but when it comes to representing 200,000 plus individuals I have to take their needs into account. And not just vote along my personal ideological lines, which is exactly what is happening now. Because if, if my opponent had actually polled this district, there's no way in the world he ever would have voted for school vouchers.

We have two of the largest and proudest school districts in Texas. People move here for our public schools. And they're being destroyed right now because of the, the lack of funding and peeling students off for the voucher program. So that is why I want to be a representative. That's why I want to be a representative for this community. And why I believe that it's really time for him to go.

Charles Kuffner

All right, Sara McGee. Thank you very much for speaking to me.

Sara McGee

Thank you so much for having me.