



## Jefferson County Candidate Questionnaire

### Candidate Information

Full Name: **Craig Jay Knierim**

Office Sought: **County Commissioner, District 2**

Political Party (if applicable): **Republican**

Email Address: [Knierim2026@gmail.com](mailto:Knierim2026@gmail.com)

Phone Number:

Website / Campaign Page: **Knierim2026 (Facebook)**

### 1. Why are you running for this office?

Please describe your motivation and what qualifies you for this position.

**I'm motivated by a desire to serve this community I've called home for over 25 years. I've dedicated my life to service and team building. From high school quarterback to 27-year Air Force career to a senior executive leadership position with an international health and human services nonprofit organization, I've spent a lifetime building and leading teams. I believe that along with a genuine love for this community qualifies me for County Commissioner.**

### 2. Military Service

Are you a Veteran?  Yes  No

If yes, please provide:

- Branch of Service: **USAF**

- Dates of Service: **1987-2014**

- Areas Served: **U.S. (CA, NJ, TX, SC, AL, The Pentagon, AZ, IL); Qatar, Uzbekistan; Operations - Panama, Desert Shield/Storm, OEF, OIF; Various world-wide locations flying the C-141 and Combat Search and Rescue C-130.**

- Highest Rank / Position Held: **Colonel/Director of Command and Control, Tanker Airlift Control Center**

- Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) or Equivalent: **Master Navigator, Squadron Commander for Combat Search and Rescue**

- Awards or Decorations (optional):

**Legion of Merit; Defense Meritorious Service Medal; Meritorious Service Medal w/5 oak leaf clusters, Air Medal w/1 oak leaf cluster; Aerial Achievement Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal w/1 oak leaf cluster; Air Force Achievement Medal w/2 oak leaf clusters; Joint Meritorious Unit Award; Meritorious Unit Award; Air Force Outstanding Unit Award w/ Valor Device w/5 oak leaf clusters; AF Organizational Excellence Award; Combat Readiness Medal w/4 oak leaf clusters; National Defense Service Medal w/1 service star; Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; Southwest Asia Service Medal w/2 service stars; Afghanistan Campaign Medal w/1 service star; Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal; Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; Armed Forces Service Medal; Humanitarian Service Medal w/2 service stars; AF Overseas Ribbon Short; Air Force Expeditionary Service Medal w/Gold Border; Air Force Longevity Service w/5 oak leaf clusters; Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon (Pistol); Air Force Training Ribbon; Kuwait Liberation Medal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Kuwait Liberation Medal Government of Kuwait.**

### **3. Previous Support of Veterans**

If you have served in an elected position in this Jefferson County or any other political offices in the past, what have you done to support Veterans?

**I served as Vice President of Veteran Services for an international health and human services organization providing services for substance abuse, mental health, and homelessness.**

### **4. Priorities to Support Veterans**

Jefferson County has a growing veteran population of more than 4,000 veterans. Please outline your top 3 priorities to support veterans and their families.

- 1. Health care – many Vets don't know what VA benefits they qualify for - we need to help them find care.**
- 2. Family Services – Veteran families serve alongside the Vet and deserve assistance as needed.**
- 3. Employment Support – I'd like to see a "Hire a Vet" program developed in Jefferson County.**

### **5. Veteran Services and Resources**

What specific actions would you take to improve access to veteran services at the county level?

**I'd advocate for:**

- The Vet Services area to be expanded to include a "computer café" for Vets so they can access opportunities online.**
- More transition assistance services at the county level to help Vets acclimate and find employment or volunteer opportunities.**
- Greater outreach and marketing to inform Vets of available services.**

### **6. Veterans Service Officer (VSO)**

What do you know about the Veterans Service Officer (VSO) program in Jefferson County and do you have a stance on reporting structure or if this should be a Director position?

**The VSO program has improved exponentially with the most recent VSO hire. I've personally met with the VSO to get a better understanding of her goals and what she needs. I advocated to the County Commission to hire an assistant VSO.**

**The VSO should report directly to the Mayor.**

What would you do to strengthen and support the VSO to ensure Veterans receive timely and effective assistance?

**Whether or not I'm elected, I'll continue to advocate for the VSO's requirements as she strives to improve outreach to our county Veterans and to educate the county about the Veterans in our community.**

### **7. Additional Veteran-Related Issues**

Please identify any other veteran-related issues you believe need attention in Jefferson County and how you would address them.

**Our county and community leadership should sponsor and support Veteran education, awareness, and appreciation events.**

Closing Statement or short biography

**I appreciate the opportunity to provide my stance and opinion on Veteran Services in Jefferson County. I see a gap in what's needed and what's currently provided. The current VSO has greatly improved the outreach and visibility of services to Veterans...but much more needs to be done. As a Vet and private citizen, I've already been engaged to assist the VSO. As a County Commissioner, I'll continue to advocate for better support and services to our county Veterans.**

Signature: *Craig J. Knierim*

Date: March 11, 2026