

Dane County Democratic Party Candidate Questionnaire

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Professional Experience:

After college, I was an assistant social worker and became Director of Employment Services for the YWCA and a Program Analyst for RFW, Inc. Eventually I co-founded a grassroots organization, Urban Triage, a nonprofit that addresses critical needs in the Black community in particular by way of services, transformative education, and developing partnerships between organizations and institutions.

Political/Service Experience:

None in elected office - previously organized to fire Officer Matt Kenny and to halt construction on a new jail through the grassroots coalition Young, Gifted, and Black. I have spent my years in Madison fighting for representation and rights for Madison's Black community, from supporting local businesses to holding elected officials accountable.

Why Are You Running In This Election?

I am running for alder because I want to continue to work hard to ensure that all Madisonians have a chance to succeed. Born on the Southside of Chicago to a mother who struggled with addiction and was a victim of abuse, my family moved to Madison when I was 10 in search of a better life. I know we have some of the best opportunities in Madison but I also know access to those

opportunities is hugely disparate along racial and class lines. Prioritizing investing in the people is at the heart of my effort and I understand that affordable housing, a livable wage and equitable opportunity go hand in hand with ensuring our City is a safe and prosperous space for all to work, live, and raise a family.

What Are The Three Most Important Issues In Your Race?

Housing, public safety, and equitable opportunities. It is next to impossible to address people's barriers if there is no stable housing. Madison has a crisis where housing prices are skyrocketing, rent is skyrocketing, and the families being left behind are the ones who have always been left out. The City must do more to build truly affordable housing as the private market and incentives for developers just will not keep up with demand. A goal I want to set is 1,000 new units of truly affordable housing every year.

Public safety is a very real concern but we have to reinvent how we think of public safety. Strong, healthy communities make safe communities. Creating a truly safe community means making sure everyone has access to opportunities, people are not punished for trying to survive, and mental health and substance use should be treated as health issues. We should invest in a KAHOOOTS style model of first responders to deescalate tense situations and expand restorative justice models to give people an accountability measure that does not result in a life-altering criminal record or incarceration time.

Finally, equitable opportunities means that Madison's institutions are accessible to ALL. We need to expand routes and coverage of our bus system for the north and south side. If and when we implement Bus Rapid Transit, this is the only way we can ensure that will benefit all Madisonians, not just the professionals and

suburbanites. Additionally, we need to treat broadband as a public utility that is available to everyone. We must also set an example in respecting workers by treating city workers' associations as equal partners in deciding personnel policy, addressing workplace conditions, and wages.

What Are The Largest Environmental Concerns You Aim To Deal With In Office?

Expanding public transportation is a critical way to both reduce pollution and support equity. We should also work to retrofit city owned property to be environmentally sustainable - this can create living wage jobs, as well.

How Will You Use Your Position To Create More Equitable Opportunities And Help Those Living In Poverty?

As stated before, this is the driving reason for my running and my platform revolves around this, from increasing affordable housing to accessible public transportation to municipal broadband. I am connected to my communities and have experience organizing with community members and community organizations to push for change; this is my strength in office, to channel that energy to push the City to commit to more equitable policy.

How Do We Address Racial Inequality?

Madison is one of the best places to live - if you're white. This is a unique opportunity because it means we have a blueprint of what works; we just need to make sure it is truly accessible and catering to the needs of people of color.

How will you promote restorative justice and address abusive and racist practices by the police force?

At the school level, we should expand restorative justice policies to cover misdemeanors, similar to the Dane County Restorative Court. We need to expand what is eligible for restorative justice; it is, in fact, a better model for more serious crimes because it is about repairing the harm. Many victimless crimes shouldn't even be crimes to begin with - serious crimes with victims should be addressed through restorative justice.

For police accountability, we need to:

1. Reform police procedures to prevent police abuse and push police accountability by adopting the 177 recommendations on police accountability put together by the Ad Hoc Committee on Police Policy and Procedure Review.
2. Investigate informal quota systems that the police department may use and prohibit law enforcement agencies from using the volume of an officer's arrests or citations as a factor when evaluating that officer's overall performance.
3. Lobby the state to allow the city to require police to live in the city in which they work.
4. When firing police for misconduct, not allow them to work again in law enforcement.
5. Ensure police do not remain on the force after unlawful use of force by restructuring civilian payouts from taxpayer money to police department insurance policies.
6. Demilitarize the police! Stop all participation in the federal 1033 program for procurement of military surplus equipment. Remove assault rifles from patrol vehicles - increasing the presence of guns only increases the likelihood of gun use, by police and civilians.

7. Continue to cut off any coordination or cooperation with ICE.

Due to the ongoing economic impact of Coronavirus, many local governments are expecting unprecedented budget shortfalls. What would you prioritize in the budget? Where would you make cuts?

The police make up the largest portion of the budget. While respecting their contract, freezing hiring new officers as officers leave or retire is a major saving. Reassessing commercial property value may also increase revenue. Fundamentally, though, the police has escaped the bulk of budget cuts in the past while making up a huge percentage of the city's budget, and this must be an area that faces cuts if they are needed, especially since other programs are more effective at reducing crime rates.

How have you elevated diverse voices in government and public discourse? How would you continue to do so if elected to this office?

This is a key factor in why I'm running. I also have community members, friends, and others in my circle I want to pull into local politics so they get engaged, as well. I hope to set an example to Black women, in particular those that have viewed themselves as too radical or too blunt or too outspoken, as people who should be involved in the political system. In fact, we are often the voice of moral clarity on so many issues.

What Are The Largest Transportation Issues You Wish To Work On And How Will You Address Them?

We have to expand bus service to increase frequency of stops and routes. Right now, the most diverse communities often have to deal with longer wait times, multiple transfers, and other time-consuming barriers to utilizing public transportation. This

pushes them to rely on cars, which is both bad for the environment and costly. Being forced to drive a car when insurance, registration, etc. are unaffordable can lead to unnecessary interaction with the criminal justice system.

We must focus bus service expansion to the north and south side so the Bus Rapid Transit initiative benefits all Madisonians, not just the middle class and tech employees who already have easy access to transit on the Isthmus and near West.

Any Other Issues/Topics You Wish To Discuss?

Madison has many advantages that allows it to tackle its worst problems, such as its racial and socioeconomic inequality, in ways that many other communities cannot. We have not yet experienced the tax base loss that Milwaukee has through white flight. We have not had our schools be entirely re-segregated. These opportunities must be utilized to advance true equity before the opportunity is lost.