

# Dane Dems Endorsement Questionnaire

Thank you for seeking an endorsement from the Dane County Democratic Party. You do not need to answer all of the questions below, but please answer all of the ones you feel are pertinent to your campaign. We will ask more detailed questions and followups during our interview, if we choose to have one, so feel free to answer these questions as briefly or thoroughly as you desire. These answers will be shared in full with our membership before they vote on your endorsement.

Email \*

barushok.for.2@gmail.com

Candidate name \*

Colin Barushok

Position you are running for (include municipality) \*

City of Madison Common Council, District 2

Campaign website

colinbarushokforalder.com

## Professional Experience \*

State Senate 2017-20, Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services 2020-22, State Senate 2022-present

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## Political/Service Experience \*

UW Madison Student Services Finance Committee 2015-17, Madison Vending Oversight Committee 2019-22, Alcohol License Review Committee 2022-present

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## Why are you running for this seat? \*

I'm running for District 2 Alder because after living in downtown Madison and working in public service for almost a decade, I'm ready and able to serve the residents of District 2. I learned the value of constituent services while working in the State Senate. I want to serve my neighbors in District 2 by communicating with them frequently about projects and plans in the district. I want to help them navigate city government and make sure they are able to get in touch with the relevant city offices when they need service. I will always work to make sure that the needs of residents, workers, and local businesses shape our agenda in City government by advocating for their interests at the Common Council and other committees, commissions, and boards. In conversations with my neighbors, I already know that they are concerned about the cost of housing, traffic safety on downtown streets, preserving historical landmarks, and other issues. I believe my experience makes me the most capable candidate to understand the concerns of my neighbors, learn from experts and stakeholders, and work with other alders and the mayor to solve the problems facing our city.

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What are the three most important issues in your race? \*

The three most important issues facing District 2 are housing access and affordability, safe streets, and transportation. We must aggressively pursue increases in the housing supply across the city and downtown to create competition among landlords for tenants. We must preserve the naturally occurring affordable housing in our downtown neighborhoods and defend our historical assets. We should enact more by-right zoning, reduce the timelines for discretionary approvals, and find incentives for affordable development.

The city should remain committed to Complete Green Streets and ensure new street projects discourage speeding and otherwise reckless driving while encouraging more pedestrian and bicycle traffic. We should support and improve Bus Rapid Transit and be ready to iron out any kinks or bugs that might be discovered as the program comes online.

The city and its leaders should engage in advocacy at the state capitol to demand additional shared revenue, revenue flexibility, and the right to use technologies like red-light cameras to achieve these goals.

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What are the largest environmental concerns you aim to deal with in office?

We must continue creating policies that defend our lakes, including improving stormwater management and reduced use of salt for snow and ice removal. The city should work to increase tree canopy across the city in an effort to mitigate urban heat islands.

We should pursue bicycle, BRT, and pedestrian safe streets to encourage reduced reliance on automobiles. Finally, we should provide incentives for large business to operate more efficiently.

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How will you use your position to create more equitable opportunities and help those living in poverty?

I've proposed providing a first month of rent and security deposit to eligible renters. Upfront costs can present a barrier to housing and entrance into the workforce. At a time when businesses downtown and across the city are experiencing labor shortages, it is crucial that we support people who want to get to work. This will provide access to housing, strengthen the workforce, and support business success.

I've also proposed providing a right to counsel for tenants in eviction proceedings. The city should recognize housing as a right the same way the U.S. Constitution recognizes freedom as a right. Leveling the playing field between tenants and landlords supports these values and encourages landlords to maintain safe housing.

Governor Evers recently added a tenant's right to counsel to his biennial budget proposal. The city and its leaders should advocate to the legislature to pass the governor's proposal, but we also must be ready to pursue it independently if it doesn't survive the state legislative process.

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What will you do to address racial inequality?

We should advocate for the use of red-light cameras in an effort to enforce traffic safety without introducing the consequences of unconscious bias during police stops. We should make sure our police have sufficient resources for professional development and training in anti-biased and community policing.

City leaders must support economic goals, like increasing the housing supply, so that there is adequate safe and affordable housing for the residents in our city.

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How will you promote restorative justice and address racially biased policing?

I will maintain excellent relationships with all city departments, including the police, so that I can make good decisions about the resources needed to ensure their success. I will oppose policies that do not achieve our goals, and, from personal experience, I know that taking away resources will not make a government agency better.

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How will you improve the public health of our community in your position?

Safety is public health. I will improve public health if I am successful enacting my other campaign goals, namely, safe streets.

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What are the largest transportation issues you wish to work on and how will you address them?

The biggest transportation goal is to make sure BRT and the new transit network are successful. This means ensuring that residents with limited mobility aren't excluded from public transportation or that transit dependent residents don't experience reduced coverage. Strong oversight over BRT and the redesigned network is required for the council to respond appropriately to any gaps or failures.

Additionally, we must work to increase access to intercity and regional transportation by fighting to get an Amtrak station in Madison.

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

I've been working in public service for the entire time I've lived in Madison. As the chair of the Student Services Finance Committee, I successfully advocated for reductions in unexpected out-of-pocket course costs. I helped several student groups navigate the system and helped them gain access to increased levels of funding to provide campus programming.

I defended citizens' right to observe and participate in their government as a support staffer in the State Senate. I guided many healthcare professionals through the licensure process during the COVID-19 pandemic. I connected homeless individuals to local services on my own and with local organizations. Every day at my current job, I assist State Sen. Tim Carpenter's constituents navigate state government and get their voices heard by their senator.

I plan to maintain an open communication with my District 2 neighbors so whenever they need assistance, have a question, or need something communicated to the city, they can contact me. I will work hard on their behalf.

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Any other issues/topics you wish to discuss?

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