

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 *

derek.w.field@gmail.com

Candidate name *

Derek Field

Position you are running for (include municipality) *

City of Madison Alder, District 3

Campaign website

voteforderekfield.com

Professional Experience *

Six years working in data and analytics roles in human services policy at the WI Department of Public Instruction and the WI Department of Children and Families.

Political/Service Experience *

I interned in Sondy Pope's office in winter/spring 2012, interned for Sondy's reelection campaign in summer/fall 2012, interned with WI Progress from 2013-2014, and served as an elected rep in UW-Madison's student government (ASM) in the 2014-15 school year, volunteered canvassing for Planned Parenthood and Hillary Clinton in 2016.

Why are you running for this seat? *

I'm running because I have strong progressive values and I strongly believe in the importance of public service. The neighborhoods in my district on the far east side are safe, beautiful, and affordable and I want to keep them that way. Madison is in a housing crisis driven by strong demand (our City is very desirable) and limited supply. My partner and I offered on twelve houses two years ago before finding the house for us, and the difficulty we faced shocked me and woke me up to the scale of the crisis and how much worse it affects folks with less privilege than we have. I'm a data and analytics professional with experience in human services policy and I want to bring a data-driven mindset to City policymaking and policy/budget decisions.

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

My top three campaign issues are: addressing Madison's housing crisis by bringing more housing options to Madison (including affordable housing), testing for and treating PFAS and other contaminants in our drinking water, and traffic safety on the main roads in my district that see hazardous driving behavior and speeding and that threatens the safety of pedestrians, bikers, and other drivers.

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

Madison has been finding industrial contaminants, such as PFAS, in groundwater near our drinking wells. This is one of my top three campaign issues: supporting testing and treatment projects that protect our water supply and protect public confidence in our drinking water. Climate resilience must also be a key priority of the City's when investing in infrastructure and public spaces in our neighborhoods: flooding is already a serious concern and will become worse as the climate becomes more volatile, and cooling centers in every neighborhood will be necessary for the public to endure hotter summers. Finally, I want to see the City continue its work to reduce our community's greenhouse gas emissions through sustainable building practices and low-emissions transit options, investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy generating projects, and beginning to draw down carbon from the atmosphere through active, sustainable management of our community's natural spaces and planting more trees.

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

Supporting working and low-income families is one of my core moral values. I grew up on my parents' farm and put myself through college by holding multiple jobs and taking out student debt. I've spent my career in roles that use data and analytics to support human services policy in public education, child care, and child welfare because I believe in the policy goals of each and every one of these programs. I will put the needs of low-income, less powerful members of our community first and prioritize housing (and affordable housing), food security, and human services that reach these members of our community. I commit to working with experts in nonprofit service providers and advocacy groups in my district and nearby who best understand the needs of those living in poverty.

What will you do to address racial inequality?

I commit to working with nonprofit service and advocacy groups who are in and who serve Madison's racial/ethnic group communities to understand their needs in areas like housing, neighborhood investments, nondiscrimination in City services, and will support all efforts that make the city responsive to the needs of folks of color in our community. Further, I will support programs that help entrepreneurs of color and encourage homeownership among these groups to build wealth and power in our communities of color.

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

I strongly believe that we must offer emergency services for those who need help or are in crisis as an alternative to police. I support Madison's CARES alternative response program: its first year of data, posted in November 2022, shows that they do a great job at resolving calls for service on-site and without referring patients to police officers in almost every case. Not everybody wants a police officer's help in a crisis situation and I respect that. I favor the model of community policing that requires officers to spend time in neighborhoods, building relationships with residents and learning to understand and communicate to partner organizations the challenges that residents face because I believe most crime (especially property crime) is rooted in poverty and desperation. I support policy changes that prevent arrests or reduce jail length of stay for people facing nonviolent charges. I also support bias and inclusion training for police officers and the efforts to improve diversity among the police force.

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

I will support public health education efforts and health-oriented programs for the public like vaccine clinics in neighborhood centers and community centers. I also believe in environmental justice priorities like cleaning up sources of water pollution and other contaminants in runoff, and in reducing and preventing air pollutants because marginalized groups usually bear most of the impacts of water and air pollution.

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

I strongly support a frequent and convenient public transit system with coverage that meets residents' needs. With the implementation of BRT, I am excited about the improved frequency of service along core transit corridors, but I'm also concerned about the loss of three through-neighborhood lines in my district. I believe density should be encouraged along core, high-frequency transit routes to offer residents an alternative to single-rider car trips. We have several traffic safety problem spots in the district along roads experiencing hazardous driving behavior and excessive speeding, where I support intersection redesigns and radar speed signs that remind folks to slow down and watch for bikes and pedestrians. Finally, I'm very excited for the possibility of bringing high speed rail to Madison and I look forward to the development of those plans! Improved passenger rail service would benefit the entire community and offer better alternatives to car trips on our crowded and crumbling road infrastructure.

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 spent my career so far working in human services policy and data in areas like public education and child welfare, and have found that, due to systemic racism and similar factors related to racially-driven privilege, race is a key factor in determining child outcomes in both of these areas. From 2017 to 2021 I worked at the WI Department of Public Instruction analyzing student outcomes data and reported these trends to schools and to the public, demonstrating how schools performed serving their students - with a focus on target student groups like students of color, economically disadvantaged students, English learner students, and students with disabilities. This work of mine helped the public and helped school staff to understand the severity of Wisconsin's and Madison's achievement gap in academic assessments, graduation rates, and more. I joined technical assistance calls with school district leaders and educators to help them understand how they should use those outcomes data to target investments and improvements to reach the students who need support: in particular, Black students and students with disabilities.

Any other issues/topics you wish to discuss?

I am an experienced data and analytics professional in human services policy and I want to bring a data-driven mindset to policymaking in Madison. I want to help improve and support transparency in public decision-making through the use of, visualization of, and communication about data.

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