

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 *

dinaninaformadison@gmail.com

Candidate name *

Dina Nina Martinez-Rutherford

Position you are running for (include municipality) *

Madison Alder-D15

Campaign website

<https://dinaninaformadison.com>

Professional Experience *

I am a small business owner whose work has centered around women and queer people in comedy. As such, I've created a strong community around the work and continue to uplift voices that are often not represented. I have worked alongside LGBTQ+ organizations to proliferate understanding of who we are and how we live. As a speaker and trainer, I provide trans & gender identity training to organizations and companies who wish to foster a more inclusive environment. I have volunteered with organizations like Abortion Access Front and independent clinics in the Midwest that provide abortion and gender-affirming care.

Political/Service Experience *

I have not held office nor worked in the public service arena, but my experience with creating community and my volunteer work has prepared me for the work ahead.

Why are you running for this seat? *

I am running for alder because I believe that representation matters. As a transgender woman, we are often not invited nor allowed to be at the table when people are making decisions about our lives and our bodies. I'm also a traditionally under-resourced individual. I am not in the position to be able to own property and I know what it's like to have to prioritize bills and rent over being able to eat.

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

Housing affordability and increasing the city's housing stock. With vacancy rates below 5% it's essential that we do something now. Our artists, gig workers, service industry and entrepreneurs are being priced out of our community.

Mental healthcare is vital to improving all of our lives. Expanding the CARES program will greatly impact our community. I support programs such as Public Health Madison and Dane County's Violence Prevention Program and their Roadmap to Reducing Violence. I support partnerships with organizations doing important work in addressing and preventing violence, such as Focused Interruption.

Representation. Having voices that differ from those traditionally represented in government makes our democracy more robust. As someone who is Transgender, my lived experiences give me a perspective that is not currently represented, especially when decisions that impact my body are at play. I am an individual who has been under-resourced much of my life. I know what it's like to not have enough money to pay bills and not to be able to take advantage of healthcare.

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

I will be focused on making sure that we are able to have safe and clean drinking water. I believe that finding new ways to encourage developers to incorporate sustainable elements, such as green roofs, energy efficiency measures, solar panels, reducing car trips, etc is crucial given how much we are prevented by state statute to require. We also need to support current programs that help homeowners be more energy-efficient, such as MadiSUN.

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

As I've mentioned before, I know what being in poverty is like. I've been there before. I support development of lower income properties within mixed income areas, close to public transportation and public accommodations. Incorporating and valuing those experiencing poverty and homelessness make for better communities. Cultivating collaborative relationships with organizations doing the hard work of caring for those experiencing poverty is a priority for me.

What will you do to address racial inequality?

When we value the voices of those who are racially diverse, when we welcome them to the table, and when we center our work on equity we build a better city where everyone can thrive and grow. I will defer to BIPOC individuals. I will work with organizations that are built around empowering those voices and will do all I can to include and value all perspectives.

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

I will work to ensure the city continues the work included in the OIR Report and the recommendations of the MPD Ad Hoc Committee to address racial bias, accountability and transparency in policing.

I will work to ensure the Civilian Oversight Board and the Independent Monitor have the resources they need and are unfettered in their ability to be effective.

We must increase our funding for partnerships and organizations such as the YWCA who are doing the work in providing restorative justice for youth.

We also must prioritize violence prevention and supporting youth and families to stop the cycles of violence.

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

Many of the most pressing issues facing our city are tied to public health, and my priorities are all connected to public health. I will work to increase access to mental health care. I will work to ensure we regard violence as the public health crisis that it is and treat it with a public health lens. I will work to increase housing and to shelter the unsheltered, as shelter is one's most basic need and deeply connected to one's health. I will work to make sure our drinking water is clean and not poisoned by PFAs or any other contamination.

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

Our transit system is in a state of transition and many immediate-term and long-term improvements are coming, with the Transit Network Redesign and Bus Rapid Transit. These are critical to the success of our city. We must prioritize transit and options that reduce the number of cars on the road as we see our main arteries, such as East Washington Avenue, projected to become extremely congested over the next few years. We need to also prioritize the walkability and bikeability of our city, and develop in ways that achieve walkable neighborhoods, with businesses that can easily serve their local communities.

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

My career is centered around uplifting underrepresented voices. My business, Lady Laughs Comedy, is about developing and supporting women to find their comedic muses in an industry that has always been overwhelmingly male. I provide trans and gender identity training that aims to grow understanding and empathy, and educate on the need to have everyone at the table. As an alder, I will do the work of reaching out to under-represented voices to make sure that they are heard and represented.

Any other issues/topics you wish to discuss?

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