

# 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 \*

jael@jaelcurrie.com

Candidate name \*

Jael Currie

Position you are running for (include municipality) \*

Madison Common Council Alder, District 16

Campaign website

jaelcurrie.com

Professional Experience \*

I obtained a Master of Social Work degree in 2011 and have worked in human/social services since that time. I have experience working in the fields of Child Protective Services, community based youth intervention programs and private contracting. I've been employed at YWCA Madison for the past 7.5 years working in the field of homeless services.

**Political/Service Experience \***

UW-Madison Social Work student intern supervisor and guest lecturer (Fall 2016-present). District 16 Alder (4/2021-present), Common Council Vice President (4/2022-4/2023). Homeless Services Consortium of Dane County Membership Chair and Board of Directors (1/1/20-12/31/21). General member of the Urban League of Greater Madison's Young Professionals Chapter (Dec 2022-present)

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

I am seeking re-election to continue building upon the work that's been accomplished during my first term and the knowledge I've acquired in order to assist in making progressive change. Yet, there's still much work to be done. My overarching goal remains the advancement of progressive policies that move Madison forward.

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

Public health and safety for all  
Economic growth and sustainability  
Environmental justice and protections

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

Investigating more effective use of local ordinances to clean up serious pollution in our drinking water and lakes, especially when county, state and/or federal agencies are unable to act quickly. Striving towards a balance between urbanization and conserving green spaces (when considering residential & commercial developments). Ensuring the county meets the highest standards in maintaining its landfill while enhancing education and advocacy efforts through the proposed sustainability campus.

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

I will continue to bring forward perspectives and observations I've gained as a social service provider in the Greater Madison area for over a decade. When residents are unable to share directly or are too busy trying to meet their basic needs, it is my duty to use the privilege, power and platforms available to me, to amplify their perspectives and needs. I can speak to the power of resilience but also the deep opportunity and access gaps that exist in Madison.

### What will you do to address racial inequality?

Acknowledgement of the deep racial disparities we have, dialogue about them, and motivation to do better has increased throughout my life as a Madisonian. We must now translate these introductory features into concrete and actionable steps. The first of these would be authentically engaging individuals, families and communities that have been impacted by racial inequities and oppression and increase access and opportunities to be part of leadership and/or decision making entities.

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

We must continue to fight to decriminalize poverty and the slew of social and economic consequences that come from it. One of the major steps to accomplish this is reallocating funding from the police into vital, life sustaining community resources such as mental/behavioral health, affordable housing, quality education for children/youth, and increasing access to vocational training opportunities for youth and un/underemployed adults. We can, and must, alleviate conditions that foster crime by addressing inadequate and inequitable access to basic needs.

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

In short, our community has a fantastic public health department which has expanded and grown due to the pandemic as well as the loss and continued threat of access to sexual and reproductive health services. I will continue to be supportive of public health's broad scope of work which includes access to testing and vaccinations to protect our community, PFAs remediation and violence prevention. My support also includes sustained investment and growth of the CARES program and investments in quality public education, community rehabilitative programs and treatment options.

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

I am excited for the possibility of passenger rail service coming to Madison, as the City is currently undergoing a rail study to determine feasibility. However, recent changes and implementations to our current public transportation system, Madison Metro, should be our primary focus at this time. While I recognize concerns about accessibility and equity haven't been 100% mitigated during the latest network redesign, I am hopeful changes to the current system will pale in comparison to the benefits of having more frequent and direct access to the City. The City is also addressing environmental and quality of life issues by continuing to make investments to replace fleet vehicles with electric fleet vehicles, which include buses that will be part of the BRT system. We must continue to evaluate ways to make transit more cost accessible for extremely low income residents as well as expanding locations where reduced fare passes can be acquired. We must continue to keep in mind those whose primary transportation option is public transit and ensure that access to buy groceries, get children to school and run errands are as accessible and friendly as they are to those who can choose to use transit as an option.

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

To be frank, this has been a personal point of frustration during my time on Council so far. Attention to diversity and equity is necessary and long overdue in our community. However, the ways the terms have become watered down and misused, especially among colleagues that present views based on their diverse perspectives and experiences, have left me dismayed. I've spent more time than I'd like to admit, refuting comments about decisions made by the Council that claim to have been made from a lens of equity, but more about the loudest voices in the room/space and/or plain disagreement about policy. This has been counterproductive and in my opinion, has set a dangerous precedent that diverse voices are a monolith for the identities they claim.

We, as a body, need to continue understanding the influence local government has had on the many disparate outcomes within our city & strive to adopt policy and practice with equity at the forefront. We also need to ensure we are centering voices, experiences & policy that defy the status quo.

Any other issues/topics you wish to discuss?

No thank you - I appreciate the opportunity to share my perspective, values and priorities!

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