

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 *

duncanformadison@gmail.com

Candidate name *

John W. Duncan

Position you are running for (include municipality) *

Madison Common Council District 1

Campaign website

www.duncanformadison.com

Professional Experience *

I have spent my entire career in the legal healthcare field, advocating for those who don't have a voice. My professional experience includes working with Medicaid-eligible individuals, expanding health benefits for low-income populations, and ensuring equitable care for patients living with HIV/AIDS.

I am a former non-profit leader and a community organizer who is passionate about good government. I have been immersed in the fight for LGBTQ+ equality and civil rights for much of my life, and I am ready to continue advocating for all my neighbors here in Madison.

Political/Service Experience *

I am currently active with the Dane County Democratic Party, Progressive Dane, and my local church. Over the past couple of years, I have participated in canvassing and co-hosted an LGBTQ+ community fundraiser to get progressive candidates elected; helped organize the Madison Interfaith Transgender Day of Remembrance and Pride services, AIDS Walk group, and Hands Off Our Bodies Rally group through my church; and supported the work of local LGBTQ+ groups, including Outreach LGBTQ+ Community Center and Fair Wisconsin. This is my second time running for office. I previously ran unsuccessfully for U.S. House of Representatives for the 6th Congressional District of Texas.

Why are you running for this seat? *

I believe that my professional and personal experiences make me the right person to represent my community. At a critical time when the rights of vulnerable populations are being chipped away at the state and federal levels, I believe I can be a powerful advocate to fight for these rights and protections at the city level.

Our city is at an exciting crossroads. I know that bold, progressive leadership can help make Madison a better place for everyone – no matter who they are, where they come from, or how they imagine their future. To accomplish this, we need elected officials who will listen to the stories and experiences of their constituents and use what they learn to represent the needs of their district, with particular attention on the needs of historically marginalized communities. I am running for Common Council to be that kind of compassionate and responsive representative for my community.

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

Affordable Housing:

Homelessness and a broader lack of affordable housing is a policy failure. As Alder, I will fight to ensure everyone can seek out and obtain housing without going into debt. No one should be pushed out of Madison because of the cost of living. We must continue to invest in affordable housing units across the city to ensure diverse, mixed housing opportunities for all.

Transportation:

We must continue to invest in a 21st-century transportation system that connects our entire city--from East to West. Access to our public transit system should not be limited because of someone's location. We must also do more to ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists throughout the city.

Climate & Sustainability:

Climate change is the defining issue of our time. Madison must continue to lead the state on innovative solutions to curbing emissions, expanding clean energy sources, preserving our natural resources, and protecting air and water quality. We must take action now to ensure a livable Madison for future generations.

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

The most significant environmental concerns I aim to address in office are reducing greenhouse gas emissions and water pollution.

We are fortunate to live in a city committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Already, the city has invested in a fleet of all-electric buses and the first electric fire engine in North America. I support the continued expansion of the city's investments in all-electric municipal vehicles. Further expansion of Madison's transportation system is also a priority issue for me. Connecting our entire city with high-quality public transit will reduce the number of cars on our roads, reducing traffic and thereby decreasing the amount of greenhouse gases emitted from idling cars. Further expansion of bike paths and increased safety measures to protect cyclists and pedestrians will also promote alternate modes of transportation.

As our city grows, new buildings are constructed, and old buildings are renovated. As this happens, we must take advantage of opportunities to build sustainably by promoting ideas like alternative energy sources, energy efficiency, and green roofs. We must also protect and even expand green spaces in the city to combat greenhouse gas emissions.

I also support the continued testing of city wells to ensure safe water and imposing limits on the use of chemicals that cause dangerous run-offs into our lakes and groundwater. Bans on PFAS in firefighting foam and limits on the amount of salt used to treat ice and snow are two examples of actions I support.

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

Equity and inclusion are among my primary issues in this campaign. Who you are or where you live should not determine your access to city services. Further investments in programming and infrastructure within our most under-resourced communities are desperately needed. We must continue to build a public transit system that connects our entire city. Access to affordable housing, clean water, utilities, and reliable, high-quality city programs and services should be a guarantee for every resident.

As representatives, we must consider how our actions impact historically marginalized and under-resourced people and communities. One of my primary commitments is to consider my votes and actions through an equity lens. To accomplish this, I will prioritize building relationships with local leaders and residents of underserved communities to ensure their voices are heard, and their concerns are taken into account when the city is discussing proposals.

What will you do to address racial inequality?

Racial inequality is so pervasive that it impacts every part of our lives. Every action and vote we take as Alders must consider the impact on BIPOC communities. Our goal must be to do what we can to address inequities in infrastructure and development in communities of color and access to jobs, education, city services, clean water, healthy food, and healthcare. We must also address inequalities in policing and the judicial system, as mentioned below.

I will employ the same strategy in considering the impacts of communities of color that I would use when considering the impacts on under-resources communities--to prioritize building relationships with local leaders and residents of color to ensure their voices are heard, and their concerns are taken into account when the city is discussing proposals.

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

Our city leaders are responsible for ensuring public safety in a fair and equitable manner. I support further investments in relational community policing, updated sensitivity and bias trainings for all police officers and civilian staff, and programs that prioritize alternative responses to non-violent emergency calls, such as the existing Madison CARES Program. I look forward to partnering with law enforcement and the city's Police Civilian Oversight Board to develop further plans that guarantee accountability and professionalism. I also support alternatives to incarceration that focus on treatment, rehabilitation, and diversion programs.

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

There are several ways in which our city can improve community health. As Alder, I will support environmental policies that promote cleaner air and water for all our neighborhoods. I will also support investments in affordable, stable, and inclusive housing. Lastly, I support addressing the public health crisis of gun violence through the implementation of comprehensive safety plans that prioritize prevention and intervention.

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

The unfortunate reality facing growing cities throughout the country, including Madison, is that budget dollars are limited. This often leads to tough decisions, especially when it involves public transportation. I support the decision to increase the frequency and capacity of bus service along high-demand routes in the city, even though it required reducing service and the number of stops throughout other parts of the city. I believe that the city has carefully considered how these changes will fit into the overall expansion of Madison, and I applaud the Common Council's recent creation of a Transit-Oriented Development Overlay District to maximize access to public transportation along those routes.

However, we need significant additional investments in transportation to connect more of our city. Where you live should not determine your access to reliable public transit. As Alder, I look forward to working with my colleagues to identify ways to fund the expansion and improvement of our transit system to meet the demands of our growing city.

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

I believe strongly that representation matters. Over the past several years, I have been personally involved in campaigns to elect diverse candidates--especially women of color. For example, I campaigned for Jana Lynne Sanchez (TX CD06) and served as campaign treasurer for Alissa Simmons (TX HD94) while living in Texas. I was also active with the Tarrant County NAACP, directly supporting their efforts to host candidate forums that specifically addressed the needs of BIPOC communities. As Alder, I will continue to support diverse candidates and lend my own voice to amplify diverse voices in government and public discourse.

Any other issues/topics you wish to discuss?

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