

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 *

Noah@Noahforcouncil.com

Candidate name *

Noah Lieberman

Position you are running for (include municipality) *

Madison Common Council District 14

Campaign website

NoahForCouncil.Com

Professional Experience *

Technical Services Analyst, Epic Systems 2017-Present

Political/Service Experience *

Vice Chair of Campaigns, Dane County Democratic Party 2017-Present | Chair, 2nd CD Democratic Party 2019-2021 | Member, City of Madison Landlord Tenant Issues Committee, 2021-Present

Why are you running for this seat? *

In short, I believe that Madison needs alders who are committed fully to the progressive ideals of our city. Our ability to enact effective policies has been severely hamstrung by the Republican legislature, so it distresses me when good initiatives and policies are stymied in our common council by alders more interested in maintaining the status quo than pursuing real change. I am running to make sure we do not stand in our own way and live up to those ideals.

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

1. Affordable Housing - We cannot allow anything to stand in the way of housing development in Madison. I support building multi-family housing throughout the entire city, not just the areas which have historically seen this type of development. However, this does not mean building the same cookie cutter apartment complex over and over again - I believe that a sustainable housing plan involves building apartments, townhouses, duplexes, and other forms of compact and affordable housing. Solving our housing shortage is the only way we can keep the city growing and have it be accessible for all. I also would propose legislation to have the city empower renters to form an official tenants' union that could use collective bargaining power to demand more reasonable rents and better living conditions from their landlords.
 2. Transportation Policy - Madison needs to be a city that is easy to travel by car, bus, bike, or foot. Bus rapid transit is going to be a huge improvement in this regard, but there is still more that needs to be done - We have to expand bus service into neighborhoods around the city, to make it a convenient option for folks to make their entire commute, whether to work, school, or entertainment. We also have to improve our bike infrastructure on city streets so riders are protected when not on bike paths. And we have to make pedestrian safety a priority when building and refurbishing streets, slowing cars down and giving pedestrians better options to cross.
 3. Racial Justice - We must do more than pay lip service to issues of racial disparities in our justice system. I support further empowering the Police Civilian Oversight Board by allowing them to make proactive policy recommendations and giving more visibility to their actions so the public knows that we take this issue seriously. I also support reducing arrests and citations for non-violent crime and deploying more care team interventions and community resources to address the root causes of crime, rather than treating police action as a panacea for all issues in our city.
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What are the largest environmental concerns you aim to deal with in office?

Our city is clearly committed to fighting climate change, but it is apparent that the effects of this disaster are already upon us. Therefore, our focus should be on building climate resiliency to deal with the impacts of climate change. We have to improve our infrastructure to prepare for unprecedented storms and heat waves. This means building rain gardens, porous streets, and other projects to prevent flooding, as well as shaded public areas and cooling shelters to help vulnerable citizens during heat waves. We also have to work with our utility companies to ensure we have built resiliency and redundancy into our electric grid to prevent outages during heat waves.

In terms of reducing carbon emissions, my focuses would be on continuing to shift our energy production to renewable resources, and removing cars from the road by investing in public transportation and pedestrian/bike-friendly infrastructure

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

First, we have to make housing more affordable. This is expense that the city has the most control over for our residents, and one we need to pursue to the furthest extent. As I detailed above, we can do this through new housing development and further tenant support. Additionally, high density housing can also provide more affordable avenues for home ownership, which is one of the most accessible ways of building generational wealth for low and middle class families.

Additionally, we need to continue our investments in new small businesses, especially those run by people of color and others who have been historically excluded from the benefits of economic development. We also should use municipal tax incentives to ensure that these businesses are creating good opportunities for their employees, giving preference to businesses that commit to fair working conditions and allowing unionization among their workers.

What will you do to address racial inequality?

I want to start by acknowledging the connections between race and poverty, both historically and in the current moment for our city. The positions I've outlined to address housing insecurity, unemployment and substandard wages, and transportation access may not explicitly benefit specific racial groups, but will contribute to the fight to close the racial wealth gap.

In addition to this, we have to look at areas where more targeted action is needed to specifically address racial disparities. Policing and criminal justice is the most important of these areas, and I outline some ideas in the next question. I support offering more services in multiple languages and in non-traditional community centers where migrant communities and communities of color tend to already congregate. Our current offering of city services excludes those who cannot make it downtown easily and are not well equipped to serve the people most in need of those services. I also believe we must do more to cultivate an inclusive and welcoming culture in our city. The events, art, and businesses supported by the city need to be mindful of and celebrate our diversity more intentionally, so that people of color do not feel excluded from the historically white dominant culture of the city.

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

First, we need to expand the prominence and scope of the Police Civilian Oversight Board. Now that we have selected an independent police monitor, we need to make sure the Oversight Board has the strength and public voice to root out and correct the worst behavior of our police force. Additionally, we need to empower the committee to make proactive policy recommendations to the common council, rather than just acting reactively to the most egregious incidents. History has shown that true change cannot occur if we allow the police to regulate themselves, and I think the civilian nature of the committee will allow it to pursue the level of reform necessary to achieve real equality in our policing system.

I also think that the city should pare back the police presence in general. I would seek to dramatically decrease the number of arrests and citations for non-violent offenses, which are a huge driver of the racial disparities in our jail population and only further the cycle of racist imprisonment. I would instead invest in programs like our care team interventions, increased social services in poorer neighborhoods, and youth engagement outside of schools. This, along with my housing and economic policy, will address the root causes of crime in our city, save taxpayer money, and reduce racial disparities in the criminal justice system.

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

First, by trusting the incredible professionals at PHMDC and their policy recommendations, especially when it comes to dealing with the long tail of the COVID pandemic. Beyond that, my transportation policy will have a sizeable impact on public health, as reducing the number of cars on the road will lead to less air pollution and more walkable streets. I would also continue to prioritize the health of our lakes and air, especially with the increased air traffic coming to our airport and Truax field.

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

I outlined most of my chief policy points above, but I will reiterate that we need our public transit system to be a comfortable, comprehensive alternative to car travel for residents. This means going beyond Bus Rapid Transit to expand frequent service to our residential areas so that our buses are a real door-to-door transportation option for residents. I also would focus on increasing the walkability and bikeability of our city by investing in pedestrian and bike infrastructure across town. The danger of our streets is declining thanks to the Vision Zero initiative, but we need to make more changes to the actual design of our streets and public areas to complete this project.

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

I am very proud of the work I've done as Vice Chair of Campaigns. We have endorsed candidates from all backgrounds and walks of life, helping to create the most diverse city and county governments in our area's history. I would continue to do so in office, always seeking feedback from the entire spectrum of District 14 residents. I try to approach this topic in a humble manner - District 14 is one of the most racially diverse in the city, and I know that I come from a place of extreme privilege to seek public office as a white man. But I think that my experience supporting other candidates shows my commitment to elevating voices from communities other than my own and that I will do the same in office.

Any other issues/topics you wish to discuss?

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