

Dane Dems Endorsement Questionnaire

Thank you for seeking an endorsement from the Dane County Democratic Party. **This questionnaire is due by no later than Friday, January 24, at 11:59 PM.**

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 and mark the questions you do not feel are pertinent N/A. 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 *

vote4badri@gmail.com

Candidate name *

Badri Lankella

Position you are running for (include municipality) *

City of Madison Common Council - District 7

Campaign website

badrilankella.com

Professional Experience *

I bring over 25 years of leadership and administrative experience in both private and public sectors. My educational background includes degrees in Civil Engineering, Computer Engineering, and a Master's in Business Administration, giving me a unique multidisciplinary approach to addressing challenges and creating innovative solutions.

For the past 20 years, I have served as Chief Application Architect at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. In this role, I have worked to bridge the gap between the public and state government, ensuring accessibility and efficiency in public services.

As a dedicated father of two students at Vel Phillips Memorial High School, I have also been actively involved in Madison's public schools through PTO participation, coaching school clubs such as 4H, First Lego League teams, and soccer teams, and supporting family-centered activities.

Political/Service Experience *

My commitment to service and community leadership is reflected in over two decades of active involvement in various boards, committees, and non-profit organizations:

- Transportation Policy and Planning Board: Contributing to the development of policies and strategies that improve our city's transportation infrastructure and sustainability.
- Joint Campus Area Committee: Collaborating on initiatives that improve the relationship between the city and the university, ensuring a thriving, connected community.
- Neighborhood Involvement: Serving for the past 7 years as both Treasurer and a board member of the Ice Age Falls Neighborhood Association in West Madison, I have worked closely with residents to address local issues and improve the quality of life.
- Dane Dems Executive Board: Providing leadership and supporting Democratic initiatives in the region.
- North South Foundation: Organizing and coaching regional contests for over 20 years and currently serving as regional director, promoting educational excellence for youth in our community.
- Public School Support: Actively involved in Madison Public School Foundation and several subcommittees to improve educational outcomes for local students. In 2019, I ran for the District 7 seat of the Madison City Council and in 2023, I ran for the Madison School Board. These experiences have further strengthened my desire to serve and advocate for our community.

Why are you running for this seat? *

I am running for this seat because I am deeply committed to serving the community that has given so much to me and my family. Over the years, I have seen the unique challenges and opportunities facing District 7, and I believe my leadership experience, collaborative approach, and diverse skill set make me well-suited to address them.

With a background in civil engineering, computer engineering, and a master's in business administration, I bring a multidisciplinary perspective to problem-solving. My professional experience, including over 20 years with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and my service on various city boards and committees, have equipped me to navigate complex issues and drive meaningful change.

Most importantly, I am running because I believe in the power of community. I want to ensure that every resident in our district has a voice in shaping our future. Together, we can build a stronger, more inclusive, and more sustainable Madison for generations to come.

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

1. **Affordable Housing:** Ensuring everyone has access to safe, stable, and affordable housing is critical for a thriving community. I am committed to policies that increase affordable housing options, prevent displacement, and promote equitable access for all residents.
2. **Transportation:** With years of experience on the Transportation Board, I understand the challenges our city faces. I will advocate for efficient, equitable, and sustainable transportation systems that meet the evolving needs of our district and city as a whole.
3. **Community Collaboration:** Strengthening collaboration between residents, local businesses, and government is essential to addressing our district's challenges. I will prioritize open communication and partnerships to ensure every voice is heard and our decisions reflect the diverse needs of our community.

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

- **Climate Change and Sustainability:** The ongoing climate crisis demands immediate action. I will prioritize policies that reduce our carbon footprint, promote renewable energy, and encourage sustainable urban planning. By investing in clean energy solutions and green infrastructure, we can create a more resilient city while reducing our environmental impact.
- **Waste Management and Recycling:** Efficient waste management and increasing recycling efforts are essential to maintaining a clean, healthy environment. I will work to enhance our city's recycling programs, reduce waste, and promote waste diversion strategies. These steps will reduce landfill waste and ensure a cleaner, greener Madison.
- **Preservation of Green Spaces:** Our parks, wetlands, and natural habitats are vital to the quality of life in Madison. I will advocate for policies that preserve these green spaces, prevent overdevelopment, and promote environmental conservation. We must protect these spaces for future generations to enjoy and benefit from.
- **Water Quality and Conservation:** As someone who has worked with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, I understand the importance of protecting our water resources. I will champion policies that ensure clean water for all residents while promoting conservation practices across the city.

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

As a City Council member, I am committed to fostering equity and improving the lives of residents facing poverty through targeted policies and initiatives:

1. **Affordable Housing:** Access to safe, stable housing is fundamental to breaking the cycle of poverty. I will advocate for policies that increase the availability of affordable housing options, prevent displacement, and ensure equitable access for low-income families.
2. **Community Empowerment:** I will work to strengthen community organizations that support residents facing financial hardship. By collaborating with local non-profits, businesses, and government agencies, we can provide resources such as job training, education, and financial assistance programs that lift individuals and families out of poverty.
3. **Economic Development:** Supporting job creation and economic growth in underserved areas is key to improving living standards. I will focus on fostering small businesses, particularly those owned by individuals from marginalized communities, and work to create pathways for better-paying jobs and career advancement.
4. **Access to Education:** Education is one of the most effective tools for lifting people out of poverty. I will work to ensure that all children, regardless of their background or income, have access to quality education and resources. This includes supporting programs that enhance after-school and summer learning opportunities for youth in low-income neighborhoods.
5. **Health and Social Services:** Access to quality health care and social services is essential for reducing the burden of poverty. I will advocate for policies that improve access to mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and other essential health services, ensuring that all residents, especially those in poverty, can live healthier lives.

By addressing these issues with a focus on equity and inclusion, we can create a more just and prosperous city where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

What will you do to address racial inequality, promote restorative justice, and/or address racially biased policing?

1. **Promote Restorative Justice:** I believe in a justice system that emphasizes healing, accountability, and community restoration. I will advocate for restorative justice programs that focus on repairing harm, addressing the needs of victims, and reintegrating individuals who have committed offenses back into society in a positive way. This approach reduces recidivism, helps heal relationships, and promotes long-term community well-being.
2. **Racial Equity Initiatives:** I will work to ensure that racial equity is integrated into all levels of city governance. This includes reviewing and revising policies that disproportionately affect communities of color and ensuring that resources are allocated equitably to all neighborhoods. I will support initiatives that promote equal access to education, housing, employment, and healthcare for marginalized communities.
3. **Address Racially Biased Policing:** I am committed to ensuring that policing in our community is fair and just. I will advocate for ongoing training for law enforcement in cultural competency, de-escalation techniques, and anti-bias practices. Additionally, I will support policies that increase transparency and accountability in policing, including body cameras and independent oversight, to build trust between the police and the communities they serve.
4. **Increase Community-Police Collaboration:** Building stronger relationships between the community and law enforcement is crucial for reducing racial tensions and ensuring public safety. I will work to foster open communication between residents and law enforcement, encouraging collaboration on public safety initiatives and community-building activities that promote mutual respect and understanding.

By prioritizing racial equity, restorative justice, and reforms to policing, I will work to ensure that our community is one where everyone is treated with dignity, fairness, and respect.

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

1. **Access to Health Care:** I will work to ensure that all residents, especially those from low-income and marginalized communities, have access to quality health care. This includes supporting initiatives that expand access to affordable health insurance, community health centers, and mental health services.
2. **Mental Health Services:** Mental health is just as important as physical health, and I will prioritize expanding access to mental health services. This includes increasing funding for community-based mental health programs, integrating mental health support into schools and workplaces, and ensuring that resources are available to those who need them most.
3. **Promote Healthy Lifestyles:** I will advocate for policies that encourage healthy living, such as better access to nutritious food, safe places for physical activity, and smoking cessation programs. Community-based wellness programs and public health campaigns that educate residents on preventive care will be a key focus.
4. **Address Social Determinants of Health:** I will work to address the broader social factors that impact public health, such as access to affordable housing, economic opportunity, and education. By addressing these root causes, we can improve the overall health and well-being of our community.
5. **Environmental Health:** A clean environment is essential to good health. I will prioritize initiatives that reduce pollution, ensure access to clean water, and promote environmental sustainability. By addressing environmental factors, we can reduce health risks and ensure a healthier, more sustainable future for all.

By focusing on prevention, access to care, and the social determinants of health, I will work to ensure that our community is one where everyone can thrive in good health.

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

Transportation is a critical factor in the success of our city, and I am committed to addressing the most pressing challenges. With my previous background on Madison's Transportation Policy and Planning Board, Here's how I will approach them:

1. Metro Transit Redesign Implementation
 - Monitor and fine-tune the new routes based on community feedback
 - Ensure service equity across neighborhoods
 - Work on improving frequency and reliability in underserved areas
 - Advocate for better first/last mile solutions
 2. Vision Zero Safety Initiatives
 - Focus on high-crash corridors
 - Advocate for protected bike lanes and safer pedestrian crossings
 - Support traffic calming measures in residential areas
 - Prioritize safety improvements near schools and senior centers
 3. Infrastructure Connectivity
 - Address gaps in bike path networks
 - Improve bus stop infrastructure and accessibility
 - Support better connections between neighborhoods
 - Work on winter maintenance strategies for all transportation modes
 4. Specific Policy Approaches:
 - Use data-driven decision making to identify priority areas
 - Engage neighborhood associations in transportation planning
 - Collaborate with school communities on safe routes
 - Leveraging DNR experience for environmentally conscious solutions
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How have you elevated diverse voices in government and public discourse? How would you continue to do so if elected to this office?

Past Experience:

- Through my work with multiple school communities, I've actively engaged with families from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, ensuring their perspectives were heard in school decision-making processes.
- As a board member for various non-profit organizations, I've worked to expand outreach to underrepresented communities and create inclusive programming.
- On the Transportation Policy and Planning Board, I advocated for gathering input from traditionally underserved neighborhoods and ensuring their transportation needs were prioritized.

Future Plans:

1. Active Community Engagement with following steps

- Regular listening sessions in different neighborhoods
- Multi-lingual outreach materials
- Flexible meeting times to accommodate various work schedules
- Multiple communication channels (in-person, digital, written)

2. Representation in Decision-Making

- Advocate for diverse appointment to city committees
- Create community advisory groups that reflect neighborhood demographics
- Support leadership development programs for underrepresented groups
- Ensure language access at public meetings

3. Policy Development

- Implement equity impact assessments for major decisions
 - Prioritize data collection to identify disparities
 - Create feedback loops to ensure policies are meeting community needs
 - Support initiatives that address historical inequities
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Any other issues/topics you wish to discuss?

1. Education and Youth Opportunities

Ensuring that every child in our community has access to quality education is fundamental to building a stronger, more equitable society. I am committed to supporting Madison's public schools, enhancing after-school programs, and promoting initiatives that help our youth develop the skills they need to succeed in life. By investing in education and youth opportunities, we can break cycles of poverty and empower future generations.

2. Economic Opportunity and Workforce Development

Creating pathways to economic opportunity for all residents, especially in underserved communities, is key to fostering a thriving city. I will focus on supporting local businesses, providing job training and workforce development programs, and increasing access to affordable childcare. These efforts will ensure that all residents have the opportunity to improve their financial well-being and contribute to the local economy.

3. Access to Technology and Digital Equity

In today's world, access to technology is crucial for education, employment, and social inclusion. I will work to bridge the digital divide by ensuring that all residents, especially those in underserved communities, have access to reliable internet and the tools they need to succeed in the digital age.

4. Aging Population and Senior Services

As our population ages, it's important to ensure that our senior residents have the support they need to live fulfilling, independent lives. I will advocate for programs that provide senior-friendly services, including healthcare, housing, and social engagement opportunities. By supporting our aging population, we ensure that all members of our community can continue to contribute and live with dignity.

5. Housing Affordability for Seniors and Disabled Residents

In addition to addressing affordable housing for all, I am particularly concerned with ensuring that seniors and disabled residents have accessible, affordable housing options that meet their unique needs. I will work to develop inclusive housing policies that support aging in place and accommodate residents with disabilities, ensuring everyone can live comfortably and independently.

6. Small Business Support and Local Economic Growth

Supporting small businesses, especially those owned by people of color, women, and immigrants, is vital to the vibrancy and economic growth of our city. I will work to create policies that make it easier for small businesses to thrive, including reducing red tape, offering financial support, and creating spaces for local entrepreneurs to succeed.

7. Arts, Culture, and Recreation

Our city's cultural and recreational offerings are part of what makes it a special place to live. I will work to expand access to arts and cultural activities, support local artists, and ensure that all residents have access to recreational spaces and programs. A vibrant arts and culture scene not only enhances our quality of life, but it also attracts talent and economic investment.

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