

AFSCME DISTRICT COUNCIL 47

2023 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

(City Council District and City Council-At-Large)

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

**Candidate Personal Contact Information (Fields marked with asterisks are required)**

Name: \*Nina Ahmad

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**Campaign Contact Information**

Full Name of Campaign Committee: \* Nina for Philly

HQ Address: \* P.O. Box 27339 Philadelphia, PA 19118

Campaign Manager Name: \* Bilal Rice-Campaign Coordinator

Campaign Manager Phone: \*908-294-1632

Campaign Manager E-Mail: \* info@ninaforphilly.com

**Candidacy Information**

What office are you seeking? \*City Councilmember-at-Large

If you are running for a district seat, in which district are you running? \*

Are you the incumbent? \* Yes \_\_\_ No X If yes, year first elected:

With which party are you registered? Democrat

Please list union leaders you seek input from when developing your legislative agenda:

- Ryan Boyer (Business Manager of the Philadelphia Building and Construction Trades Council)
- Vanessa Fields (Retired DC 47 & current chair of Philadelphia NOW)
- Ernest Garrett (DC 33)
- Janet Hill (United Steel Workers)

**AFSCME DISTRICT COUNCIL 47  
Candidate Questionnaire 2023  
(City Council District and City Council-At-Large)**

- Mike McGuire (AFSCME DC 13);
- Mungu Sanchez (Carpenters),
- Evon Sutton (DC 33)
- Jim Savage (United Steel Workers)
- Elizabeth Shuler (President, AFL-CIO)

Who are your opponents?

**Declared At-Large candidates (in addition to myself) for the Democratic Primary are (for five slots):**

Declared At-Large candidates (in addition to myself) for the Democratic Primary are (for five slots):

Katherine Gilmore-Richardson (incumbent), Isaiah Thomas (incumbent), Jim Harrity (incumbent in 2022 special election),

1. Nina Ahmad
2. Jalon Alexander
3. Abu Edwards
4. Christopher Gladstone Booth
5. Sherrie Cohen
6. Ogbonna Paul Hagins
7. Terrill Haigler
8. John B. Kelly III
9. Gregg Kravitz
10. Rue Landau
11. Amanda McIlmurray
12. Will Mega
13. Daniel Orsino
14. Michelle Prettyman
15. Eryn Santamoor
16. Curtis Segers
17. Donovan West

**CAMPAIGN**

1. Briefly describe your campaign's path to victory. What issues will you be emphasizing throughout your campaign and why?

I am a proven vote-getter and plan to re-mobilize the cross-racial, labor and progressive coalition that enabled me to win the statewide Democratic nomination for Auditor General in 2020 that garnered almost 200,000 votes from Philadelphia voters in the six-way primary and over 550,000 votes from Philadelphians in the general election. In May 2022, I received the most votes in the 4th Senate District as a State Committee member to the PA Democratic State Committee. While I only announced my candidacy in

**AFSCME DISTRICT COUNCIL 47**  
**Candidate Questionnaire 2023**  
**(City Council District and City Council-At-Large)**

December, I have already received endorsements from DC 33, South Asians for America and Second Generation PAC.

For effective policy we must involve those directly impacted to craft solutions, which was the basis of the office of Public Engagement, that I established as Deputy Mayor. As an elected official serving in our legislative branch of government, I would continue to create accountable policies and initiatives to further engage those most in need. My specific goals would focus on the following:

- Recognizing gun violence for what it is: a public health epidemic: A public health approach to prevent gun violence is a population level approach that addresses both firearm access and the factors that contribute to and protect from gun violence.
- Making Philadelphia the Healthiest Big City: As a health care leader since our country's founding, there's no reason Philadelphia shouldn't be a national model for community and mental health and create jobs for Philadelphians in the science, medical and technological sector.
- Putting the Environment Front and Center: Making Philadelphia a cleaner, greener city will have positive impact on the overall health and strength of our neighborhoods.

**PHILADELPHIA ECONOMY**

2. Do you support raising the Living Wage requirement of employers that do business with the city from its current rate? What would your approach be to promoting a Living Wage requirement for employers not covered by the Living Wage Ordinance?

Yes. In Philadelphia, city lawmakers have made efforts to increase wages for workers despite the state's abysmal minimum wage of \$7.25 since 2009!. Mayor Jim Kenney signed a law requiring a gradual increase in the minimum wage for city workers, contractors and subcontractors, which brought it up to \$15 per hour last year. In 2021, City Council passed a wage increase for airport workers that brought their pay up to \$15.06 per hour and added a benefits supplement. From July 1, 2023, forward, the minimum wage will continue to increase pursuant to a calculation based on the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers. It is critical to note that according to The MIT Living Wage Calculator (based on the assumption that the sole provider is working full-time i.e 2080 hours per year) estimates that in Pennsylvania, single adults with no children need \$16.67 per hour to support themselves; a single adult with one child needs \$32.42 per hour; and a household with two working adults and two children needs \$23.28 per hour, per adult. Clearly, we have to continue to work on a truly living wage.

As to the private sector beyond those receiving City contracts or subsidies, this has to be fought at the state level, where the minimum wage is still \$7.25/hr. Recently elected Democratic Governor, Josh Shapiro campaigned on raising the minimum wage. I will

**AFSCME DISTRICT COUNCIL 47**  
**Candidate Questionnaire 2023**  
**(City Council District and City Council-At-Large)**

certainly advocate for that change by utilizing the many relationships I have developed as a result of my statewide leadership as the PA President of the National Organization for Women. Additionally, as the 2020 Democratic nominee for PA Auditor General, I made relationships across the 67 counties of PA. I will leverage these contacts to build a strong coalition to support Governor Shapiro's efforts to increase the minimum wage along with my relationships with legislators and unions who endorsed to collaborate to come up with strategy to advocate effectively.

3. The City requires companies with 10 or more employees to provide paid sick leave. Many states and cities have similar laws with no exemptions. Would you support updating the legislation to put it in line with what other states and cities have passed?

I believe healthcare is a basic human right. Paid leave improves workers' and workplace health. It boosts productivity and morale. It enables small businesses to have the security they need to manage employee absences when they are necessary, and it helps smaller businesses compete with larger ones. sectors of the U.S. workforce have little or no access to paid sick days or paid vacation, and paid parental or family leave is even rarer. The situation is particularly acute for low-wage workers, as well as the growing numbers of independent contractors, freelancers, and others who lack any stable connection to an employer.

We need a National paid family and medical leave program with federal funding. In the absence of that, California, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and New York have their own state paid leave programs. PA with the large budget surplus should look into such a program. Currently in employees who work at least 40 hours a year in Philadelphia can earn sick leave. Employers with 10 or more employees must provide paid sick leave. Employers with 9 or fewer employees must provide unpaid sick leave. Employees not eligible for sick leave are: independent contractors, seasonal workers, adjunct professors, employees hired for less than 6 months, interns, pool employees, employees covered by collective bargaining agreements, state & federal employees.

I would be very interested in looking at crafting local City legislation to address this issue and making sure it is a fully funded mandate.

**PENSION/RETIREMENT SYSTEM**

4. What is your position on the current cap on annual contribution in the defined benefit plan by employees in the stacked hybrid plan of the Municipal Employee Pension system? Should the cap be indexed to include automatic increases tied to salary increases?

Indexing tied to salary increases only seems fair. Employees should be allowed to have their pension contributions raised when they receive salary increases. Additionally, indexed Cost of Living Increases should be extended to retired pensioners.

**AFSCME DISTRICT COUNCIL 47**  
**Candidate Questionnaire 2023**  
**(City Council District and City Council-At-Large)**

**EDUCATION/SCHOOL BOARD**

5. What qualities and experience would you look for in appointees to the School Board? What standards should School Board appointees use to evaluate current or proposed privatization measures (e.g., charter schools)?

The over all experience and qualities for School Board should reflect the breadth and diversity of Philadelphia. This means in aggregate there should be educators, parents and former students all residents of the City. At present, Philadelphia's Board of Education does not reflect the essential stakeholder groups that are most impacted by the board's decisions – namely, students, current teachers, and parents of students attending standard Philadelphia public schools. I would support a process that allows for students, educators, staff, and parents currently involved in Philadelphia's public schools to be nominated for the Board of Education and eligible to serve on it. State legislation would be needed to allow for an elected School Board in Philadelphia, but I would support a non-partisan election if it was also coupled with publicly financed campaigns.

Evaluation of charter school measures: Regulate charter schools by making their budgetary practices transparent, ridding them of conflicts of interest, and stopping them from cherry-picking their student bodies. There is a lack of transparency regarding the myriad of opaque financial practices across charter school management companies and the ownership of facilities within which these schools operate, which often lead to increased disparities across students, irregularities in the accumulation of additional public (publicly obligated) debt, and inequities and irregularities in the ownership and distribution of what were formerly considered public assets—from buildings and vehicles right down to desks, chairs, and computers.

6. How would you work to support acquiring fair State funding for the Philadelphia School District? What experience and relationships do you have working with entities in Harrisburg that would help accomplish that?

In general, the lack of implementation of the full funding formula legislated by our General Assembly has continued to institutionalize the financial inequities between the rich and poor districts. As the current President of the Pennsylvania chapter of the National Organization for Women, I can and will use my connections with those in State government to bring adequate and equitable funding to our schools. As the 2020 Democratic nominee for PA Auditor General, I made relationships across the 67 counties of PA. Other school districts similar to Philadelphia, such as in Scranton are suffering like we are, and I will build coalitions to advocate for full formula funding to be implemented. My relationships with legislators and unions who endorsed me will afford me opportunities to collaborate to come up with strategy to advocate effectively.

And furthermore, charter schools should not be a large-scale strategy to address public education. This is a veiled attempt to dismantle teachers' unions. As a candidate, who in past elections received endorsements from AFSCME District Councils 33, 47 and

**AFSCME DISTRICT COUNCIL 47**  
**Candidate Questionnaire 2023**  
**(City Council District and City Council-At-Large)**

1199C, as well as numerous other unions, I will not support efforts to undercut unionized workers, particularly those in the public sector. A lack of transparency regarding the financial practices across charter school management companies has led to increased student disparities, irregularities in the accumulation of additional publicly obligated debt, and inequities in the ownership and distribution of what were formerly considered public assets (buildings, vehicles, desks, chairs, and computers).

**CITY SERVICES**

7. What are your priorities for funding City and Court services? How would you ensure that these services are provided equitably throughout the city?

All these services including Libraries and Parks and Recreation need to be funded in order to adequately and effectively address the gun violence that is rampant in our City. This is part of a public health approach. As an intersectional feminist I subscribe to the six core missions put forth by the National Organization for Women: Economic Justice, Reproductive Justice, Gender Equality, Combatting Racism, Ending Violence Against Women and Constitutional Equality and they will inform all my advocacy around equitably funding City services. As a Council member, while I will not have line-item control over budget expenditures, but I will be able to forcefully question and advocate during the budget process and appropriation transfer hearings. Finally, it is important to understand that we need an integrated and coordinated approach to solve some of these seemingly intractable problems. It will take political will to keep the budget on track and moving forward for the benefit of all Philadelphians.

8. What level of services should the city support to fully fund and fully staff our Library and Parks and Recreation systems? Please explain your position and how you believe those systems can be funded.

As I said in the question above, these services must be fully funded. Given that this year the City has realized a \$500 million surplus (over the fund balance), there is no excuse not to adequately fund departments like the Library and Parks and Recreation.

9. How would you address staffing shortages throughout departments, including those that are a result of unfilled positions? What initiatives would you put in place to help hire and retain current City / Court workers?

With respect to recruitment, I would increase efforts to recruit from our local high schools, colleges (including and especially Philadelphia Community College). I would look into the creation of a pipeline of potential employees as a project with philanthropic city entities, to work with such candidates to add to their skills, understand the actual job categories and address any deficiencies in their resumes before applying for such jobs.

I would also look at ways to integrate those who are returning citizens having been formerly incarcerated, into appropriate unfilled positions. The law, commonly referred to

**AFSCME DISTRICT COUNCIL 47**  
**Candidate Questionnaire 2023**  
**(City Council District and City Council-At-Large)**

as 'Ban the Box,' prohibits employers from: (1) inquiring about convictions on the application or in the initial interview; and (2) making inquiries and any personnel decisions based on records of an arrest that did not result in a conviction. The Ordinance applies to City and private employers with more than ten employees but does not apply to Criminal Justice Agencies (for example, prisons, courts, police departments).

Once the potential candidate has cleared the first interview, the employers can ask about past convictions and the final background check routinely results in the candidate not being offered the job. We need to work with employers, especially those who get tax benefits from the City, to look past such convictions (as long as the convictions were for crimes that would not create any jeopardy to the specific job description).

As to retention of workers, I would want to hear from the workers themselves (through their union structures) as to what might be the best strategies to employ. This has come about because of COVID primarily but this City is worth fighting for, so we all need to get creative about the best (and fairest) ways to maintain and attract quality workers.

10. What is your position on the privatization of City services?

I am opposed to privatization of City services, this also includes PGW.

**ENVIRONMENT**

11. What steps do you want the city to take to address climate change and to shift away from fossil fuels toward renewable energy sources? Do you support the City amending its investment portfolio to divest from fossil fuel companies?

As a public official, I will be bound by the state Constitution to protect our environment. But beyond that as a trained scientist and long-time political activist, I will not only look at how prepared our City is to respond to severe weather events, but will look at how the City can be effective in prevention and a serious, scientifically and economically feasible, transition to non-polluting energy sources and methodologies. My evaluation and cost analysis will take into account not only the pricing but the health, environmental and job creation impacts. And I will pay particular attention as to the disproportionate consequences of climate change on communities of color and ending environmentally racist policies. I am committed to looking for solutions to create good-paying jobs that will move our economy forward while at the same time lower our carbon footprint.

Furthermore, I am in total support of the City divesting its investment portfolio from fossil fuel companies. Other cities, like New York have already done this recently, with their

**AFSCME DISTRICT COUNCIL 47  
Candidate Questionnaire 2023  
(City Council District and City Council-At-Large)**

two pension funds for city workers that pulled an estimated \$4 billion in investments from fossil fuel companies in order to promote clean energy use.

**TAXES**

12. What measures would you support to make sure that wealthy non-profits pay their fair share to support City and Court services?

I think that all entities within the City should pay their fair share for their use of and benefit from our common resources. That is why I am in strong support of PIOLOTS (Payments In Lieu of Taxes) for the large non-profits within our borders.

13. Would you support any changes to the city's property tax abatement program? If not, please explain why. If so, please explain how?

I would support its use, as enabled by the legislation sponsored by State Representative Jared Solomon, only in areas where there is designated need not in areas where developers choose to solely maximize their profits.

14. How would you reform city taxes to increase revenue? What is your position on the Net Income and Gross Receipts Tax and on the Wealth Tax legislation? If you have other ideas to increase revenue, please explain them.

I support the Wealth Tax legislation as it would only be applicable to the those with the highest incomes. I think the Gross Receipts and Net Income taxes need to be more amenable to start up and small businesses. The \$100K exemption form the taxable gross receipts is a good start, but it needs to be higher so that smaller and new businesses get larger tax breaks in early years as they are growing.

**PHILADELPHIA HOUSING**

15. Do you support increasing revenue for the Housing Trust Fund to help residents avoid displacement in communities currently facing development pressure?

I support all initiatives to increase revenue for the Housing Trust Fund to help residents remain in their neighborhoods and prevent the rampant and oftentimes unchecked development that can result in gentrification and displacement.

COVID has certainly exacerbated the problems with accessibility to affordable housing—both rental and home ownership. We cannot have a city where there is massive displacement due to gentrification, so I when I am a Councilmember I will support and initiate legislation and programs to prevent such displacement. In addition to that I would look into the practice of councilmanic prerogative by engaging with District Councilmembers to better balance district priorities with larger land use for



**AFSCME DISTRICT COUNCIL 47  
Candidate Questionnaire 2023  
(City Council District and City Council-At-Large)**

affordable housing for the City as a whole. I would call for the enforcement of the existing provisions in the Land Bank that ensure the publication of sales information in real time and put publicly held and tax delinquent land into the Land Bank as future sites for development of affordable housing. I would also support policies that provide communities control of land for public gardens and encourage the use and development of locally based small farm efforts.

16. As a city elected official, what steps will you take to ensure local government plays a proactive role in expanding permanent affordable and workforce housing in Philadelphia?

There is a growing crisis in the availability of permanent affordable and workforce housing in Philadelphia, primarily fueled by 2 decades of 10-year tax abatement awarded any property being built or renovated across the City. We urgently need to expand the supply of permanent affordable and workforce housing by taking actions in several ways: (a) I would support the targeted use of the 10-year property tax abatement, as specified in state legislation developed by Representative Jared Solomon, to induce production/increase supply of permanent affordable housing in those sections of the city that actually need it; (b) I will support increased support for the Housing Trust to help fund the cost of production of affordable housing units; (c) I support the recent legislation sponsored by Gauthier, Brooks, Bass, Driscoll, Johnson, Vaughn, Lozada, Phillips and Oh that would create a directory of affordable housing subsidies by location and make it easier for low income families to find existing housing and resources. These are some direct and proactive steps I would support to address this growing housing affordability crisis.

17. Do you support extending good cause eviction protections to all residential leases? Do you support rent control measures to protect Philadelphia tenants?

All evictions should be for good cause regardless of whether or not there is a housing crisis. Rent stabilization is certainly one option to address housing affordability gap. I would support further evaluation of such program supported by data.

**PHILADELPHIA RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

18. Do you support revising the Memo of Understanding between the Philadelphia Police Department and Philadelphia School District to close the school to prison pipeline? If yes, explain how you would accomplish this. If no, please explain why?

Yes. I believe that the police should not act as the surrogate disciplinarians within the school. Philadelphia is the only city in the country that has more school police officers than school guidance counselors. We must address the understaffing in critical student support positions, such as counselors, psychologists, nurses, and social workers. Contact between students and police can have long-lasting negative consequences, whether the young person is arrested or receives a summary citation. In addition to the

**AFSCME DISTRICT COUNCIL 47**  
**Candidate Questionnaire 2023**  
**(City Council District and City Council-At-Large)**

immediate harm, the students often end up with records that may follow them throughout their lives. The more we couple law enforcement with educational settings, the greater the likelihood of over-policing and criminalizing students. Many school administrators make decisions about school safety and policing that are not based on research. Although research on the impact of school policing on safety is not conclusive, there is strong evidence to suggest that the presence of police in schools can have a negative effect on students. It can lead to increased rates of school discipline and less-inclusive school climates. In addition, student arrests, particularly of Brown and Black children, increase with the presence of school police. Interruption of the school to prison pipeline at every phase of the pipeline can occur by establishing community-based programs for youth who have been impacted by violence in any way (physical, emotional, sexual violence, homelessness).

We need to hold students accountable for behavior, but in ways that build students up, not break them down. Programs that create an atmosphere of respect within the school environment, such as restorative practices and empathy training, need to be instituted. We need to institute comprehensive “Counselors Not Cops” initiative, a set of policy recommendations to end the regular presence of law enforcement in schools, limit police contact with students, and increase student support services.

There are some schools in high-crime areas that beg for a full-time officer, mostly to keep an eye out for neighborhood problems and be alert for potential intruders and keep track of neighborhood feuds, **not to enforce student discipline.**

19. Do you support additional funding for programs that are alternatives to incarceration for drug addiction, mental health treatment, and other issues? If yes, how would you measure the effectiveness of those programs? If no, please explain.

We cannot criminalize or incarcerate our way out of the drug addiction and mental health crisis. We need treatment that will actually rehabilitate. As we know, incarceration is the most costly approach, with poor results, to address drug abuse and mental health issues. But one thing we must also keep in mind, which goes along with my intersectional and public health approach to public policy, there must be a communal responsibility and destigmatization that goes hand-in-hand with any approach to eradication of these problems.

Opioid use disorder (OUD) is a public health crisis in Philadelphia. We need to treat opioid and drug addiction as medical and health issues and not manage them primarily as problems of law enforcement, leading to many unnecessary jail terms but little progress. It is an established fact that patients may be particularly open to treatment after having experienced an overdose. Therefore, I support initiating buprenorphine treatment for OUD, seen to be an effective intervention, in hospital emergency departments which could create more patient cooperation and effective medical

**AFSCME DISTRICT COUNCIL 47**  
**Candidate Questionnaire 2023**  
**(City Council District and City Council-At-Large)**

intervention. Philadelphia's hospitals have limited to no on-site intensive outpatient or residential treatment services for OUD. Such an integration of multiple levels of care would allow, for instance, a patient who comes to the emergency department for an opioid overdose to be started on medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD), have a comprehensive assessment, and be immediately placed in the appropriate level of care. Treatment programs should be whenever possible co-located within hospitals and our budget resources (of which we now have a surplus) should be directed to treatment programs.

20. What community policing initiatives do you support or propose? Please explain.

In light of the contemporary crisis of police legitimacy and recognition of the damage caused by aggressive policing and mass incarceration, community-oriented policing (COP) has reemerged as a potential policy tool for improving police–community relations and for improving public safety.

Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.

I am interested in the geographic policing model and want to investigate what parts of this strategy are already in place in Philadelphia. This approach consists of assigning officers, beat sergeants, and sector lieutenants to a predetermined geographic boundary. These individuals keep their assignments for long periods to forge relationships with neighbors, business owners, and the faith community. Working with them, officers apply problem-solving methods to reduce crime and disorder while improving the overall quality of life in their beats. As each officer's rank increases, he or she becomes responsible for more neighborhoods—not only for responding to crime, but for maintaining communication and engagement.

These officers do more than meet and greet people; they take the time to share information and learn what is of interest in different sub communities within their area—geographic, business, ethnic, age related, and otherwise. Many of them get deeply involved, especially with the kids. Some teach special projects in the local school and many mentor young people. Others are involved in athletic mentor coaching programs, which are especially important because athletes are often the most respected leaders in their schools, but are just as often at risk for disruptive behavior.

The Philadelphia Police Department has been accepted into the Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE) project, Georgetown University Law Center's national training and support initiative for U.S. law enforcement agencies committed to building a culture of peer intervention that prevents harm. The Center for Innovations in Community Safety, partnering with global law firm Sheppard Mullin, has created ABLE\* (Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement) to prepare officers to successfully

**AFSCME DISTRICT COUNCIL 47**  
**Candidate Questionnaire 2023**  
**(City Council District and City Council-At-Large)**

intervene to prevent harm and to create a law enforcement culture that supports peer intervention.

ABLE is a national hub for training, technical assistance, and research, all with the aim of creating a police culture in which officers routinely intervene—and accept interventions—as necessary to: prevent misconduct, avoid police mistakes, and promote officer health and wellness.

I will investigate the outcomes of both ABLE training and COP to see how public safety can be improved.

21. What funding and staffing proposals would you support to enhance probation and parole services for Philadelphians under supervised release?

Probation and parole are intended to be alternatives to incarceration. However, people who failed on supervision account for a significant percentage of prison and jail admissions. Research has demonstrated what types of supervision, interventions, and treatments help reduce recidivism and incarceration. Public resources must be allocated accordingly to promote justice, enhances public safety, and produce cost savings.

Overextended supervision officers have less time to devote to high-risk, high-need individuals. As caseloads grow, many agencies struggle to prioritize supervision and services for individuals at a high risk of reoffending as well as those with significant needs related to substance misuse, housing instability, or financial insecurity. As a result, probation and parole officers often lack sufficient resources to promote success for the people who are most likely to fail on supervision.

We need to have adequate staffing so workers in these critical but high stress positions to reasonable load of cases, have no longer than eight-hour shifts with adequate time off. We also need to They should also receive stress management services.

22. What funding and staffing proposals would you support for the Department of Prisons to ensure incarcerated citizens are best prepared for return to the community from incarceration or from alternative detention programs?

Research has demonstrated that health, housing, skill development, mentorship, social networks, and the collaborative efforts of public and private organizations collectively improve the reentry experience. More than half of the formerly incarcerated are unable to find stable employment within their first year of return and three-fourths of them are rearrested within three years of release.

A well-developed, evidence-supported action plan for enhancing transitions from prison to society needs to focus on increasing independence, reducing racial and ethnic disparities, and achieving public safety. There must be investment in pre-release

**AFSCME DISTRICT COUNCIL 47**  
**Candidate Questionnaire 2023**  
**(City Council District and City Council-At-Large)**

programs, instead of the focus predominantly on release programs. Successful reentry programs for inmates rely on more than just helping ex-offenders find jobs; it also requires helping offenders change their attitudes and beliefs about crime, addressing mental health issues, providing mentoring, offering educational opportunities and job training, and connecting them with community resources. Most, if not all, of these things, can and should begin long before a person's release date. A huge contributing factor to the high death rate following release is the healthcare coverage gap: People lose health insurance coverage while in jail or prison and their lack of coverage continues post-release, leaving many without access to adequate, timely, and appropriate health care in those critical first weeks of reentry. Coordination of medications for opioid use disorder post-release continuity of care requires training supporting staff in reentry planning and bridging partnerships between in-jail medications for opioid use disorder programs and community providers. Ensuring Medicaid coverage upon release is an important, feasible component of structural change to alleviate health inequities and reduce recidivism.

This is an area I worked on during my tenure as Deputy Mayor of Public Engagement, which housed the Office of Black Male Engagement. Black men are overrepresented in the incarcerated population of Philadelphia. Our office worked with the Department of Prisons and the Office of Criminal Justice to work to create successful re-entry and reduce recidivism.

23. What steps do you believe the City can take to reduce the availability of guns in Philadelphia?

It is critical that we recognize gun violence for what it is: a public health epidemic: A public health approach to prevent gun violence is a population level approach that addresses both firearm access and the factors that contribute to and protect from gun violence.

The issue of gun availability in our City is a multi-factorial one and one that ultimately is a question of political will. With so many resources on the law enforcement side it is incomprehensible why this problem continues. This is a fundamental issue. If you give someone who might have no impulse control or mental health problems a lethal tool, then the consequences will be deadly. So we must stop the proliferation of illegal guns; we must stop the straw purchases. But we must also take responsibility as to how we are helping our young people, the ones disproportionately impacted by all these illegal guns. Are we using our budget dollars in an equitable way to address their trauma, alienation and isolation? It is all intersectional. As a scientist I have been trained to look at what works and what doesn't. I will exercise the necessary leadership both in Philadelphia and beyond to stem this rampant problem. But to underscore again, the resources are there, it is a matter of political will, tenacity and persistence, all of which I possess.

**AFSCME DISTRICT COUNCIL 47**  
**Candidate Questionnaire 2023**  
**(City Council District and City Council-At-Large)**

24. Do you have any plans regarding programs that support and protect victims of crime and other affected members of the community?

I have already been advocating for victims of sexual assault on SEPTA trains, busses and platforms in my role as President of PA NOW. This has involved convening the stakeholders to establish better surveillance and safety precautions. The effort is still going on. But I would continue a similar approach

**PHILADELPHIA CORPORATE POWER**

25. Do you support publicly financed campaigns for all City elected offices? If no, please explain.

Yes, absolutely. There was legislation years ago, sponsored when Angel Ortiz was in Council but it did not pass although there were extensive hearings. In January 2022, former Councilmember Derek Green introduced an ethics and election reform package which included public financing of campaigns. This is extremely difficult to get passed without a very strong citizen support and movement, as sitting officeholders do not want to make it easier for challengers.

26. Do you support legislation that enables the City to recover subsidies from corporations or other businesses that fail to provide jobs or other benefits to city residents as a condition of the subsidies? Please explain.

Yes. The purpose of these subsidies is to incentivize growth within our City and therefore, if it is found that they have not provided the anticipated benefits, they should restore the subsidies they received. I would support Council investigations to facilitate this and/or call on the Controller to conduct a formal audit.

**RESIDENCY ISSUE**

27. What is your position on City and Court employees having the option to live outside the city? Please explain.

Giving City and Court employees the option of living outside the City really evades the real question which is why people feel the need to leave in the first place. The dual issues of poor education and high crime need to be ameliorated so that people will feel less of a need to flee in the first place. This is a serious and complex issue, and before supporting any legislation that changes the residency requirements, I would want to hear directly from City employees represented by the unions.

28. Are there any other issues you'd like to mention about which we have not asked you in this questionnaire?

**AFSCME DISTRICT COUNCIL 47**  
**Candidate Questionnaire 2023**  
**(City Council District and City Council-At-Large)**

Growing up during the very violent war of Independence that gave birth to Bangladesh, I will always remember that I am alive because of the ultimate sacrifice of over 3 million freedom fighters and the lifelong trauma of over 250,000 women and girls who were brutalized as a tool of war. I also came to learn the importance of solidarity from those who may not have been directly affected but nevertheless stood up for me and risked their own livelihood to fight against the genocide in a faraway place. The International Longshoremen's Association, local activists (who looked like me) together with the Quaker community in Philadelphia and Baltimore formed a successful coalition to stop U.S. arms shipments to Pakistan; the ILA launched a four-month work stoppage that shut down shipping lanes to the area under siege.

This lived experience has guided me in all my political activism. I know what it's like to feel unsafe, like so many of our children impacted by the rampant gun violence we face. I understand how educational opportunity can transform lives, as it did for me when I was able to come here earn a Ph.D. I know how critical from both a human rights perspective and economic standpoint it is to welcome immigrants. As a Councilmember this worldview will continue to inform my advocacy for all those who have been systematically marginalized and excluded as I stand in solidarity with those in this country who've been fighting for justice over 400 years.

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