

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)

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Campaign Contact Information

Full Name of Campaign Committee: **Seth for the People**
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Campaign Manager Name: **Rah Noonan-Ngwane**
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Candidacy Information

What office are you seeking? **Philadelphia City Council**
If you are running for a district seat, in which district are you running? **8th District**
Are you the incumbent? **No**
With which party are you registered? **Democrat**

Please list union leaders you seek input from when developing your legislative agenda: **I would reach out to every union leader for whom there was a legislative issue that affected their members and involve them in my legislative decision making. Nothing about labor without labor.**

Who are your opponents?**Cindy Bass**

If there is not sufficient space to respond to the following questions, please attach additional sheets to the questionnaire.

CAMPAIGN

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

We are following two paths. The first is an electoral approach that has proven extremely successful, is modern and voter-data-driven and which I know well from my work coordinating Labor's efforts in support of Amiri Baraka and Phil Murphy in New Jersey. This approach consists of identifying a 'win' number; canvassing the wards and divisions using modern technology supports to identify, 'move' and consolidate our voters based on that number; and maintaining engagement, messaging and mobilization with that base through to election day.

Our goal, which we believe is achievable, is to knock 40-60K targeted doors to get us to a comfortable win number. We will engage in this activity throughout the District.

The second approach, which we will engage in in Germantown, Nicetown and Tioga, consists of adopting a Labor-organizing approach in these neighborhoods, which have been historically under-represented in City government. Here, we will work to identify and recruit existing leaders; establish local organizing groups; and support residents to come together to fight for their common needs. Our goal here is to increase voter participation by 50%-75% in the upcoming Democratic Primary Election.

One thing we very much look forward to is working with organizations that are already active in our communities, to develop a robust neighbor-to-neighbor volunteer effort that strengthens the community's own organizing capacity in the process. For example, with the confirmed support of groups like Neighborhood Networks, the 22nd Ward Open Caucus, Democratic Socialists of America, Rep Rabb's supporters and others, we will have the benefit of strong organized local groups with a history of field work in the 22nd and 9th wards.

Money is an important factor in all of this. We have a dedicated, professional, full-time fundraising coordinator who is in charge of this aspect of our work. Our primary channel for contributions is, of course, ActBlue. We already have a robust grassroots fundraising operation, which we are already bolstering with significant contributions from movement allies.

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, absolutely. \$20/hr should be the starting point in determining what the minimum wage should be under Philadelphia's Living Wage Ordinance. Nevertheless, there is more to it than that.

Anyone who does work under a City of Philadelphia contract should be paid the prevailing wage, which should be, and in most cases is, higher than the \$15-\$20/hr that is normally meant when we talk about the 'living' wage. The City of Philadelphia has strong prevailing

wage language for the skilled trades - Building Trades and mechanical operators, including a very low, \$2000 threshold above which the prevailing wage requirement kicks in. This language needs to be extended to the service sector, where the threshold right now is way too high: \$100,000 for building service contracts and \$200,000 for services such as janitorial and security work, HVAC repair and electrical maintenance and repair.

Prevailing wage legislation is supposed to be a concrete step towards raising, and defending, the standard of living of Philadelphia workers. The idea is to create a counterforce to the 'race to the bottom' that prevails in private industry. Given that it is the larger private entities that tend to get City contracts, making access to those contracts contingent on companies' paying a living wage creates a 'labor market' against which other employers have to compete. Putting the threshold at which this mechanism kicks in at \$100,000 or \$200,000 strikes me as an attempt to avoid the prevailing wage altogether.

Regarding non-government employers, we need to utilize a variety of mechanisms. We need to pass an 'impact tax' on medium and large businesses that do not pay a living wage, to encourage them to do so. We need to revisit the BIRT, which already has a tax credit for employers who create jobs, and make receipt of that credit contingent on the jobs being living wage jobs. We might add a living wage credit as well. The program, however, should focus aid where it is most needed: on micro employers - those with less than ten employees. There is no reason that a company making hundreds of millions of dollars a year needs to be rewarded for doing what it should do any way: doubling the wage of a worker making the current State minimum - \$7.35/hr - adds less than \$15,000 to a business's yearly costs. Where micro-employers are concerned, the City could also study a program now in place in Scranton, where the City splits the cost of a living wage with the employer over the first years of a joint living wage agreement. Again, these agreements should prioritize those employers having a bottom line that makes paying a living wage a challenge.

Finally, I feel that City Council needs to consider what it can do to support our fellow Philadelphians in the service industry - janitors, security guards and others - when they come together to form a union. Card check neutrality needs to be an element of every contract signed by the City of Philadelphia with private employers, and City contracts need to guarantee that there are effective consequences should a company violate those provisions. For example, in its prevailing wage policy, the City has a mechanism whereby it may withhold monies owed to City contractors, to make up the difference between what the business should have been paying under the prevailing wage ordinance and what the workforce actually saw in their paychecks. A similar intervention could be applied where Labor rights are concerned.

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?

Yes. Paid sick leave is a right, and there should be no exemptions from that right.

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?

The stacked hybrid system is for unionized employees that have entered the City's employ in recent years ('Plan 16'). Our read of it is that it is an attempt to limit the City's pension costs by limiting benefits to a certain maximum and shifting the risk for savings beyond that maximum onto the employee. Under the plan, the pensionable earnings an employee may have is capped (unlike other plans), and the City may not contribute more than 1.5% of an employee's yearly compensation. Finally, where all other plans pick the *higher* of two given 'final compensation' options, Plan 16 picks the *lower* of the two.

We understand that the issue of pension coverage has become an increasingly worrisome one for City and State governments in recent years. However, we oppose efforts to fix those issues on the backs of people who have worked all their lives, including creating two-tiered, 'stacked' systems like Plan 16 that force employees to expose themselves to market volatility in order to have a livable pension. As it is, a retiree receives only a portion of their base pay when they retire, and that is bad enough.

There is a fundamental difference in logic between Plan 16 and all the other plans. All the other plans protect an employee's pension benefits to whatever pay rate the employee achieves. True, forced employee contributions increase in a progressive fashion beyond a certain threshold: +0.5% when the salary exceeds \$45K, 1.5% when it exceeds \$55K, etc.; but under these plans, an employee could theoretically exceed \$100K/yr. and all those extra earnings would count when determining the dollar amount of the pension owed.

In the case of Plan 16, the mandatory contributions are still there, they are still progressive, but the benefit to the employee is capped. This seems unfair. Mandatory co-pays may have a justification within a system of ever-increasing returns, but not in a system where the return has a pre-set, hard limit. Employees under Plan 16 should not have to pay these additional increases.

I would support ending Plan 16 altogether. The challenge will be to find funding mechanisms that are stable and secure in an era in which Wall Street has destroyed the Savings and Loans system of the New Deal era, and the 'real' economy has become a feeder for the 'speculative' economy. Pressuring Washington to go back to Eisenhower-era levels of taxation on Corporate America would help.

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)?

I have worked as an organizer for the AFT, including organizing Charter School teachers here in Philadelphia and as Political Director of AFT New Jersey. I support Charter School teachers' right to a union and on-the-job dignity. But I will not support any further expansion of the charter school system in Philadelphia. In fact, just the opposite: it is time to get back to a system where quality, fully-public education is the name of the game.

I understand that there are a lot of parents who have been sold on the lie that charter schools are somehow better for our children. The data show that they are not. Further, we have seen that the lack of oversight where charters are concerned has led to a waste of *public* education money. *Twelve* charter CEO's make more than \$200,000/year, two make more than our Superintendent - who manages over 200 schools! Mastery Charter is currently sitting on a \$120 million surplus - all of it, again, public education dollars. And that's not counting the \$28 million they siphon off every year in the form of technology fees they pay to an in-house company. Think of that. Mastery, with a student population of 14,000, charges 50% what the School District is charged, and the School District has ten times the student population.

What do I want in School Board members? First, I want them to be elected, not appointed. Second, I want people with a track record of dedication to *public* education - parents, teachers and activists and yes, students. I want people who can crunch the numbers, but also people who live in and are rooted in the communities our schools serve, and who are willing to stand up against the continued Corporate assault on our schools. I want a School Board that represents all of our District - the Northeast and the Northwest, Chinatown and Manayunk, Tioga and North Philly.

We have a city full of talent, of all races and economic backgrounds. If we haven't found qualified advocates for our schools in the past, it's only because we haven't really gone looking.

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?

I worked as the Political Director of AFT New Jersey for seven years: I think I know a thing or two about making public education a priority for the political class.

Fair funding is not just an isolated issue of Philadelphia. It is a statewide issue that impacts all the State's urban and rural districts, all of which are underfunded. That is the basis for a very broad, very powerful coalition for change. One of the reasons Ed Rendell got as far as he did in his effort to increase school funding during his first term as Governor (2002-2006) was because he encouraged rural, predominantly GOP voters to raise hell with their legislators, which they did.

At present, the City of Philadelphia has brought suit against the State Legislature for its unfair school funding practices, an initiative I support.

Closer to home, there are other ways we can leverage State monies in support of our schools. Philadelphia's Parking Authority is mandated to turn over a portion of on-street parking fines collected to the Schools, yet advocates have been arguing for years that excess overhead and lack of transparency has led to millions of dollars of mis-spent funds. The 10-year tax abatement, so harmful to our neighbors' ability to find housing at reasonable rents, also deprives our schools of tens of millions in needed resources. The lack of oversight on the City's charter schools, and a system that allows charter schools, unlike public schools, to keep surpluses, result is still more squandering. Then there is PILOTs, something we have been talking about for a decade, now. It is time that we mounted a vigorous campaign to force Philadelphia's huge non-profits to pay in or lose their status.

Finally, it is a cornerstone of my campaign that individuals cannot change things. We need our people - masses of people - to become engaged, and we need this sea of humanity to turn its attention to Harrisburg where, for the first time in decades, we have a legislative majority. Yes, the fact that Governor-elect Josh Shapiro is a charter school supporter is a problem, but it's a problem we can work on.

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?

My priorities lie in the direction of putting together a civilian intervention approach to the violence, including the gun violence, that is devastating our communities. This means strengthening City departments whose job it is to get into our neighborhoods and interact with our people in a positive, public-health oriented approach. For example, I want to see our libraries and rec centers fully staffed and open seven days a week. I want to see mental health professionals and programs in all these facilities. I want to strengthen the landmark legislation that makes legal representation available to all renters, and fully fund programs to prevent evictions and foreclosures. The City needs a robust oversight arm, including in the fields of collective bargaining and living wage enforcement.

Guaranteeing equitable distribution of such services requires oversight from multiple bodies: from the City's Commission on Human Relations, the City Controller's Office, and stakeholders in the community. I would appoint staff to follow this issue for my office, and of course seek input from my constituents, including the community-based organizations I work with, to keep me informed on this issue.

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.

Fully staffing our libraries, parks and rec centers is a critical goal the City needs to reach as soon as possible. It is a major component of any violence intervention strategy aimed at ending the epidemic of gun violence in the City (see Question 23, below).

To reach this goal, we will have to look at both increasing the City's revenue streams and reducing spending in other areas. On revenue, I would support an impact fee on mid and large size businesses that do not pay a living wage, which is an important source of the poverty, and structural violence, in our neighborhoods, and use this revenue stream to support our libraries and rec centers. On rationalization of spending, most reform groups believe that the Police budget in Philadelphia is bloated, and the recent City Controller's audit of the Police Department confirms this. We know that any cuts to the Police will meet with strenuous opposition from the FOP, but we have to ask ourselves: is the current model, and the current lack of structure and oversight, working for the people of Philadelphia? The answer, obviously, is no. I am a union backer, 100%. I have been a Labor organizer, and Labor leader, for 23 years. I have gone to jail for my belief in our right to organize. But the FOP and PPD are dysfunctional organizations built on a law-and-order model of policing which simply does not fit this City's needs. It seems to me that we have a choice: continue with the current model, with its FOP pork belly and waste of resources, or move to a new model where violence intervention is the strategic directive; and for that to happen, we have to move resources from where they are doing no good to where they are needed: our libraries, our rec centers, our parks.

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[1] workers?

As chief negotiation lead for SEIU Healthcare PA, I participated in the negotiations that led to an historic agreement between our Union and the State of Pennsylvania, an agreement that is designed to overcome the chronic understaffing that has characterized our state hospitals and health centers for decades.

We did not arrive at this result by cutting wages but by improving them, particularly at the entry level; and while we had the ear of the Governor on this issue, we had his ear because we fought to make it an issue that could not be ignored.

We should look at whether we need to reduce executive salaries in order to free up funds to fully staff departments, including the Courts. In this I would, again, prioritize those agencies whose job it is to interact at the community level, as part of a directed effort to move to a public-health approach to policing and to violence intervention as the preferred track to reduce the trauma we are witnessing today.

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

I am absolutely opposed to the privatization of City services, including any talk of privatizing 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?

The City of Philadelphia has no business investing in fossil fuels, particularly because there are viable investment portfolios out there, today, that emphasize green investment.

The City, under the Kenney Administration, has been entirely too cozy with the fossil fuel industry, from its expansion of fracked natural gas processing facilities to the needless and environmentally harmful gas-fired generators at SEPTA's Roberts Yard, which the City pushed as an alternative to the facility's oil-fired heating boilers which, three years later, remain in operation. While it is probably safer for PGW to produce LNG at its new Passyunk Energy facility than to truck it across town from Frankford, what the City needs to do is move away from fossil fuels, period.

The City has taken some important steps, such as the 80K MWhr Straban solar farm, or SEPTA's 25K MWhr Elk Hill solar farm, which according to the agency is generating revenue as well as electricity. But we need to do much more. Most SEPTA facilities, and most large-roof structures in Philadelphia, do not have solar arrays. They need to. Roberts Yard is itself an extensive facility, with large tracts of unused and under-used land. This, too, can and should be converted to a solar farm.

Another City program, Solarize Philly, has just announced an addition to their program which will allow homeowners to install solar at no cost to them. The proposal, however, has two important flaws. The first is that homeowners will see little benefit on their electric bills, with all generated energy going to the installer; the second is that it is up to the individual installer, who will own the solar array, to decide where to build. According to its own website, Solarize Philly has done an abysmal job. In the past five years, it has signed contracts with only 1300 of the over 10,000 households that have signed up under the program - an average of 260 per year.

My proposal is that, rather than relying on individual installers to pick and choose where they want to install arrays, the City turn this program over to PGW, with the mandate that the agency build 1000 residential units a year. This would make PGW the de facto clean energy producer for Philadelphia, and help spur its transition away from fossil fuel generation and distribution to clean energy generation and distribution.

One initiative I absolutely support is SEPTA's announced conversion to a zero-emission fleet by 2034, with annual spending of \$105-140 million.

Finally, the City needs to do something about PECO, whose interactions with Philadelphia's workingclass, predominantly African-American, neighborhoods is fundamentally adversarial. Every year, as LIHEAP money becomes available in the fall, our neighborhoods experience an explosion of electric service cutoffs. Non-profits that work in our area, in the Northwest, are aware that many of these cutoffs are of customers who are under payment agreements, and are thus illegal. The explanation is simple: PECO, a company that made over \$200 million in profits in the first quarter of 2022 alone, would rather not wait to get their payments.

As if this were not enough, PECO waited eight years to update its CAP program criteria, which was already the stingiest of all the Customer Agreement programs in the City. Ultimately, the only reason PECO made the move was because it was being sued by Philadelphia Community Legal Services for breach of a 2015 agreement.

This aggressive, miserly attitude makes a lot of Northwest residents less than enthusiastic about PECO's pitch to 'go green' and 'reduce usage'.

TAXES

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

The issue of PILOTs is a vital one for our City.

Only one thing will make these entities pay their fair share: massive public pressure. Fortunately, as a member of City Council, I will have the ideal bully pulpit to make that happen.

Further, it is a fundamental aspect of my campaign to 'organize the unorganized' - to bring our communities into the city-wide political process in a new way. As a member of Council, I will not be alone. I will have my community at my back, and my community needs that revenue stream. I will not be hesitant about calling our residents into the streets to put on the heat. It will take a massive movement to take on UPenn, Temple, and the others, but it's a movement whose time has come.

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

Yes. I would push for the abolishment of the 10-year tax abatement, which is wrecking our communities and depriving our public schools of a vital resource. Eliminating the abatement will be a key priority of mine when elected to City Council.

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 idea of a Wealth Tax in Philadelphia, though I would be happier to see the revenue stream directed to specific agencies and programs, such as the libraries and rec centers. I support the creation of an impact fee on businesses that refuse to pay a living wage. The revenue from this program should also be directed into the area of violence intervention in our neighborhoods, for example, to keep our libraries and rec centers open seven days a week.

I would apply the Net Profits tax to corporations and lower it on individuals, and I would eliminate the tax on low-income families altogether, in line with what is essentially a low-income exemption that already exists in the BIRT. I understand that very few municipalities in the US apply a net profits tax to corporations, but it's the corporations that have the resources, while it's small businesses that provide the bulk of the jobs and innovation. Corporations wishing to take advantage of our City's highly educated and highly skilled workforce can give something back in terms of making our City a good place to live, and taking the financial burden off the shoulders of our small business sector just makes sense.

The BIRT has two components: a Gross Receipts Tax of \$1.415/\$1000, and a profits tax, which right now stands at 5.99%. Here, again, I would extend the logic of the \$100K exemption and restructure both ends of this tax as a progressive tax, such that those at the higher end of the spectrum - which are overwhelmingly large-scale employers - pay more and those at the lower end pay less. In exchange for a lowered tax rate, I expect buy-in from small employers on issues such as paying their employees a living wage.

I would abolish the Wage Tax altogether for those making less than 250% of poverty level, and restructure it for the rest of the workforce on a progressive basis.

In addition to the ones mentioned above, I would look at the creation of a City Reparations Tax targeted at the banks, institutions and corporations that profited, not only from slavery, but also from centuries of racist and discriminatory practices in employment and housing that have robbed Black Philadelphians of untold billions in generational wealth. I would work with leaders in the Black community to decide how to invest that revenue to repair the incredible damage done.

PHILADELPHIA HOUSING

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

Yes. This is a central tenet of our campaign.

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 are several things:

1. I support expanding access to quality legal counsel to every low- and moderate-income Philadelphian who needs it. I have seen friends unjustly thrown out of their apartments because they tried to 'go it alone' in court.
2. I support good cause legislation. Arbitration, not eviction, needs to be the path of choice for Philadelphia landlords, and eviction must be limited to the most dire circumstances. An apartment is not just a means of extracting rent: it is somebody's home, and eviction is traumatizing.
3. I support rent control legislation. Obviously, rent control legislation is a long way from passing given the current configuration of City Council and will then likely face a protracted legal battle. But I would never ask the tens of thousands of struggling renters in this City to take a back seat to landlords.
4. I support programs designed to keep homeowners in their homes.
5. I support significantly increasing the funding that is made available for quality public housing in the City, such as the housing at Penn and Pulaski in Germantown. I also support the strengthening of the governing role of Tenants' Groups within Public Housing, so that these complexes truly become the purview of those who live there. I do not support privatization schemes to sell off public housing, though I would be willing to take a look at programs such as the North Camden Land Trust, whose buildings are sold to members with the proviso that they can only be sold back to the Land Trust itself.
6. I support legislation mandating that a significant portion of all new residential construction or renovation in the City be dedicated, affordable housing, with 'affordable' being defined as no more than 40% of the poverty line for a family of four. The percentage of the housing set-aside under this proposal has to be enough to actually guarantee that our long-term neighbors can stay in the neighborhood. 40% would be a good starting point for the discussion.
7. I support expanding Community Land Trust capacity and support CLT led projects. The idea

is to change the culture of development from one where greedy developers (with no concern for our neighborhoods) decide to one where the community works with good developers on a plan for sustainable and equitable development.

8. I support changing the City's zoning practice to give more power to RCOs and other territorial groups over what projects get built and what projects do not.

9. We need to expand support for city, state and federal programs that provide assistance to homeowners who can't afford expensive repairs. We could look at creating some targeted grants and programs for property owners who live in zip codes experiencing the highest increases to housing costs. We could also support the creation of neighborhood based options like worker owned co-ops that train members of the community, including returning citizens, to do the needed home repairs in our neighborhoods at below market rate - while still paying very healthy wages.

10. I support the idea of a City-owned, public bank. For many decades in this country, non-profit banking institutions - Savings and Loans - were the backbone of a real economy which saw working people putting their savings in non-speculative institutions which were then only allowed to 'invest' their funds in housing construction. A public bank could be the basis on which to build a similar, real-economy housing market here in the City.

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

Yes. See answers to Question 16 (above).

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. This agreement is itself a fundamental component of a violent learning environment. Since the 1990s especially, public schools across the country have been 'integrated' into a law-and-order policing system in which Black and Brown communities are seen as hostile territory to be occupied and controlled. The school-to-prison pipeline, according to a 2017 report by the ACLU, has its origins in white opposition to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s-1960s:

"Politicians and academics diagnosed entrenched socioeconomic inequality, rising poverty rates, and the ensuing uprising of urban residents as a lack of "law and order" caused by Black and Latino

residents themselves rather than the discriminatory systems they confronted."

The impact on students of attending schools where they feel policed has been profound. Students report feeling unsafe and threatened, and de-motivated to learn. Harsh suspensions for minor infractions, arrests and violent attacks by 'School Resource Officers' are traumatic experiences that cut students off from learning and growing.

Philadelphia's public school system has made important gains on this issue since 2014, when school arrests hit an all-time high of nearly 1600 students, most of whom were arrested for minor infractions of the District's 'zero tolerance' policy - being outside classrooms during instruction, bringing scissors (considered 'weapons' under the policy) to school, etc. However, most of the gains of this period came at the behest of the students themselves. For example, it was the Philadelphia Students Union that in 2003 led a campaign to double the number of school counselors in the District. In 2009, PSU initiated the Campaign for Non-Violent Schools.

But ending the Memo of Understanding is not enough. For example, Mastery Charter Schools, which tout a 'no SRO' policy, resort to mandatory transfers to 'disciplinary' schools and forced transfers out of the Mastery system to 'maintain order'. As with our neighborhoods, what we need in our schools is violence intervention and restorative justice. We need to invest in de-escalation, dialogue and increasing the presence of counselling services. We need a participatory system where youth learn to be in control of their own spaces - through peer-level justice and peer mentoring, for example. For that matter, we need student representation on the District's School Board, and student participation in student movement activities, including school strikes, must be protected.

As a member of City Council, I will take advantage of every opportunity to push to get the police out of our schools and to put in place restorative justice and violence intervention programs in our schools. Our kids need teachers, counselors and nurses, not prison guards.

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.

Yes, I support increased funding, within the context of a broad fight against structural violence.

There are three basic parameters. The first is participation rate: how many people are we diverting from the prison system?

The second is recidivism: what portion of those who participate in diversion programs wind up re-offending?

The third is program content. When we see recidivism rates that are only marginally better than those connected to prison, we need to assume that there is a problem with how the program is being run.

The reality is that diversion programs have to do more than 'educate' the offender as to the nature of their offense, or offer psychological services. We know that crime and community violence - poverty, homelessness, racism - go hand in hand. It may seem counter-intuitive, but successfully combatting recidivism - successful diversion - includes increasing the resources the individual and their family have available. It includes working with a community, not just an individual.

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

I believe the root cause of violence in Philadelphia, including gun violence, is the structural violence that so many Philadelphians face every day. Poverty is structural violence. Racism is structural violence. Patriarchy is structural violence. Lack of secure, truly affordable housing is structural violence. Lack of healthcare, including mental healthcare, is structural violence. A punitive police state aimed at criminalizing Black bodies is structural violence. We know that rates of violence are higher when communities don't have the vital resources they need to thrive. And we know that too many neighborhoods across the city have either never had the resources they needed, or have seen massive disinvestment over the last 40 years starting with capitalist globalization that resulted in more than 400,000 good paying industrial jobs leaving the city.

Philadelphia police are unquestionably a part of the problem. City data show that in 2021 alone, the City settled 115 Federal Civil Rights cases against Philadelphia law enforcement, with payouts worth a cumulative \$23 Million. The suits include assault and battery, wrongful arrest and imprisonment, and death. The City's database of complaints against the police shows that nearly 2000 residents filed complaints between 2020 and 2022, including over 400 allegations of physical abuse, criminal activity, falsification of records, civil rights violations and sexual assault.

This situation grows out of a law-and-order approach to public safety, that treats our communities as hostile territory to be occupied and controlled, and treats every community emergency as a violent crime. This model needs to go onto the trash heap of history where it belongs. Instead, we need a holistic and multi-layered approach to public safety that narrows the scope of what police are tasked to do; brings resources into our communities; targets efforts at poverty reduction; and treats violence as the community healthcare crisis it is.

This approach entails the creation of:

- Crisis De-escalator Corps, trained and equipped with the tools to intervene in domestic disturbance calls.

- Healthcare Responder Corps - teams of social workers and mental health workers who are trained to help people having a mental health crisis.
- Integrated Service Facilities that provide housing support services, safe respite homelessness mitigation programs, substance use treatment programs, overdose prevention and Safe Consumption services and legal support clinics
- Community Safety Centers that house family supports, violence prevention services, and community mediation centers.

An essential component of such an approach is recognizing the rights of our neighbors as workers, including supporting their right to organize and to fight for a living wage.

The policing model we have today is rooted in a system that sees our communities as hostile territory to be occupied and dominated. While historically this model has focused on the oppression of the Black community especially and other communities of color, it has always seen any movement for social or economic equality as a threat, and reacted accordingly: against workers - Black, brown or white - organizing to protect their rights on the job; against youth, women, LGBTQ+ folks and others fighting for a future under an inherently oppressive system.

We have a choice: to continue to support the current, oppressive model, which every year consumes more and more resources in an attempt to repress our communities staggering under the weight of joblessness, poverty wages and racism; or invest in our communities, including organizing our people to fight for their right, as human beings, to see their needs fulfilled. We can do one or the other, but not both.

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

The available data tell the story of a Philadelphia probation system that, prior to the election of current D.A. Larry Krasner, was profoundly dysfunctional. Pennsylvania, and Philadelphia, had some of the highest rates of probation and recidivism in the country. In 2017, Philadelphia had tens of thousands of people on probation; the DA's office estimated that, at the time, one of every 23 Philadelphians were in the system. Probation officers, whose job in theory is to follow the individual's transition to a fully re-integrated status, became bookkeepers, with caseloads that averaged 143 clients per officer.

Under Krasner's guidance, those numbers have come down, though there is still room for improvement.

What is clear is that shorter terms for probation are effective at decreasing recidivism and speeding re-integration. It is clear that the more the system functions on a community-based model, the more successful it is. Probation needs to be a facet of a community-based, violence-reduction approach to policing.

The literature suggests that a 'typical' caseload for a worker in this field would be 100 - two thirds the caseloads typical of Philadelphia probation officers just a few years ago. Estimates of what would be ideal, however, are much lower, in the 25-50 cases per officer range, an objective Philadelphia is still far from achieving.

Going by the numbers provided by the DA's office, case load numbers in Philadelphia are now in the 'typical' range, around 95 cases per. To reach even the higher end of the 25-50 case target, this means either halving the number of people on probation or doubling the number of officers employed, or some combination of the two.

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?

First, a non-funding, non-staffing proposal: reduce the pre-trial population in Philadelphia's prisons, which by some estimates constitutes 90% of all detainees. This would be, without question, the fastest path to reducing Philadelphia's dangerously high prisoner-to-staff ratios.

Second, the City needs to fire Commissioner of Prisons Carney. An official who refuses to recognize the existence of a crisis - and Philadelphia's prisons are a crisis - is inviting disaster.

Third, the City needs to incentivize hiring to fill Prisons system vacancies. The underlying problem, however, is that people do not want to go into situations where they feel their health, if not their life, are at risk because the people they are interacting with are subjected to viciously dehumanizing circumstances. And the people one would be able to recruit under such brutalizing circumstances are probably not the people you want in charge of a population that has been deprived of key components of their civil liberties. The City could offer double pay, contract-signing incentives and bonuses, but the likelihood is that the problem will continue to exist.

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

I want to start out by saying that I support every possible initiative that will lift State pre-emption on Philadelphia passing its own commonsense gun laws. These laws are the only way that we are going to reduce the flood of firearms we have in our communities.

Regarding gun violence - which is the most urgent aspect of the crisis: According to the Public Interest Law Center, firearm homicides are the leading cause of death among Philadelphians

aged 15-34, and 85% of our shooting victims are African-American. Gun violence is not a 'law-and-order' issue, it is a public health issue and must be addressed as such. Nevertheless, according to City Controller Rebecca Rhynhart, the City spent only 21% of its 2021, and 17% of its 2022, Violence Reduction funding in violence intervention initiatives - that is, in initiatives rooted in a public-health approach to reducing gun violence. That percentage has to be sharply increased. While long-term solutions, such as ending State pre-emption, are also necessary, our communities need relief now.

Having said this, I also believe the root cause of violence in Philadelphia, including gun violence, is the structural violence that so many Philadelphians face every day. Poverty is structural violence. Racism is structural violence. Patriarchy is structural violence. Lack of secure, truly affordable housing is structural violence. Lack of healthcare, including mental healthcare, is structural violence. A punitive police state aimed at criminalizing Black and Brown bodies is structural violence. We know that rates of violence are higher when communities don't have the vital resources they need to thrive. And we know that too many neighborhoods across the city have either never had the resources they needed, or have seen massive disinvestment over the last 40 years starting with capitalist globalization that resulted in more than 400,000 good paying industrial jobs leaving the city.

Philadelphia police are unquestionably a part of the problem. City data show that in 2021 alone, the City settled 115 Federal Civil Rights cases against Philadelphia law enforcement, with payouts worth a cumulative \$23 Million. The suits include assault and battery, wrongful arrest and imprisonment, and death. The City's database of complaints against the police shows that nearly 2000 residents filed complaints between 2020 and 2022, including over 400 allegations of physical abuse, criminal activity, falsification of records, civil rights violations and sexual assault. In October, 2022, the City Controller's office, on the request of City Council, authored a withering analysis of Philadelphia Police which showed, among other things, that:

- Philadelphia PD has the highest personnel costs of any major US police force.
- Philadelphia PD conducts no regular assessment of its actual needs to do its job.
- Only 2500 of roughly 6000 officers are actually assigned to patrol.
- Philadelphia PD's budget "is not developed with... input from the communities."

This situation grows out of a law-and-order approach to public safety, that treats our communities as hostile territory to be occupied and controlled, and treats every community emergency as a violent crime. This model needs to go onto the trash heap of history where it belongs. Instead, we need a holistic and multi-layered approach to public safety that narrows the scope of what police are tasked to do; brings resources into our communities; targets efforts at poverty reduction; and treats violence as the community healthcare crisis it is.

This approach entails the creation of:

- a Crisis De-escalator Corps, trained and equipped with the tools to intervene in domestic disturbance calls.

- a Healthcare Responder Corps - teams of social workers and mental health workers who are trained to help people in a mental health crisis.
- Integrated Service Facilities that provide housing support services, safe respite homelessness mitigation programs, substance use treatment programs, overdose prevention and Safe Consumption services and legal support clinics.
- Community Safety Centers that house family supports, violence prevention services, and community mediation centers.

An essential component of such an approach is recognizing the rights of our neighbors as workers, including supporting their right to organize and to fight for a living wage.

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

This question comes under the heading of restorative justice and violence intervention. Victims of violence are part of the torn tapestry of our communities, and there are a lot of folks in this category. They need supports: psychological supports, networking supports, physical supports, and on a long-term basis. They need to feel that they are not alone, but live in a sustaining community. Only an approach to violence based on combatting systemic oppression and on promoting restorative justice and real community can fulfill that need.

PHILADELPHIA CORPORATE POWER

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

Yes, I do.

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. These programs are contracts between the City and these entities. If the entity fails to live up to the agreement, there should be penalties.

The City already engages in such practices where the Prevailing Wage Ordinance is concerned, withholding payouts normally due the contracted entity to cover the difference between what they or their subcontractors should have paid and what was actually paid. Where feasible, the

City should emulate this practice in other fields - stipulating that subsidies be turned over in installments, with a final installment held back until the completion of a project or until the end of a given fiscal year. Alternatively, the City could insert language in a contract that stipulates that the City has a right to payment, on the part of the contracted agency, of monies based on a specified fee schedule.

RESIDENCY ISSUE

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

If you work in the City, you need to live in the City. That is my position.

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