

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: * Cindy Bass
Registration Address:
E-Mail:
Home Phone:
Work Phone:
Cell Phone:
HQ Phone:
Fax:
Work Address:

Campaign Contact Information

Full Name of Campaign Committee: *Friends of Cindy Bass
HQ Address: *6836 Anderson Street, Phila., PA 19119
Campaign Manager Name: *TBD
Campaign Manager Phone: *
Campaign Manager E-Mail: *

Candidacy Information

What office are you seeking? *Re-election to Philadelphia City Council,

If you are running for a district seat, in which district are you running? *8th

Are you the incumbent? * Yes X No If yes, year first elected:2011

With which party are you registered? Democratic

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

Who are your opponents? Unknown at this time.

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

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?

_____My campaign’s path to victory is in continuing to work on behalf of the residents of the 8th Council District as I have for the last 10+ years, listening to their concerns and following through with the appropriate actions to address these needs, whether they are legislative or actions through City Departments and Agencies. The issues prioritized will come directly from constituents as always; as a District Member, listening to the public and acting on their behalf is my number 1 responsibility and commitment. The issues identified thus far include unfair property assessments which will likely lead to increased gentrification, crime and safety issues which have been increasing significantly in recent years, dumping and blight which are not just unsightly but could be dangerous environmentally in neighborhoods that already likely have health disparities, and ensuring the City’s Rebuild Program is equitable throughout the City.

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?

___I would support raising the Living Wage requirement for businesses that have contracts with the city or are otherwise directly connected to The City of Philadelphia as a vendor.

As a legislator, the most effective and direct approach to promoting and ensuring this requirement becomes law is through the introduction of bills/resolutions after consultation with Council’s Technical Staff of attorneys to ensure it stands strong.

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

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- 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 would be in support of updated legislation to support paid sick leave with no exemptions. _____

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?
Our pension system needs to be greatly reformed to support increased benefits to our hard-working retirees. Automatic increases tied to increases in the cost of living are an absolute necessity.

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 qualities and experiences of school board members should be diverse along many lines; racially, educationally, neighborhood/community representation, etc. School Board members should evaluate and make decisions based on a providers ability to provide the services stated in their application to the district. Far too often, charter operators make commitments in the application and then drop standards in the quality of education provided.

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

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 would use my platform as a member of Philadelphia City Council to support my state legislators and Mayor, fighting for desperately needed dollars for Philadelphia public schools. This is what I have done over the years and with many administrations and with my colleagues. I have significant relationships in Harrisburg with both state representatives and senators, as well as former board members, SRC members, and district leaders, all of which would be utilized for this purpose.

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?

As the Chair of the Committee on Health and Human Services, it is important to me that we address quality of life issues quickly and efficiently. These indicators of the City's ability to function on the most basic level are on display and highly visible in every neighborhood. When they fail it is a disaster for communities. Thus, dumping and blight are two key issues that need to have additional funding prioritized. Also, through this committee I recognize that the levels of stress and trauma are significant in underserved neighborhoods and therefore we need additional dollar to address gun violence, which has an incredibly destructive traumatic impact on our communities. Furthermore, additional dollars for other quality of life items such as clean streets, functioning and attractive updated facilities such as playgrounds, libraries, and other similar public spaces needs to be a priority so that people can see tangibly where their tax dollars are going.

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

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.

_____ The city of Philadelphia should provide all supports and services necessary to maintain a quality system for libraries parks recreation systems and other community amenities, and ensure that these amenities are equally distributed. Often we find many neighborhoods under-resourced and some with an abundance of resources and opportunities. Anything less than equitable treatment cannot be tolerated. Thus, I believe that any remaining surplus dollars at the end of a budget season should be dedicated towards these public amenities which addressed the quality of life and neighborhoods and how people feel about their communities. _____

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?

_____ Staffing shortages are incredibly disruptive to the operation of the City of Philadelphia. Therefore, I will look for ways to expand the hiring pool of City residents, offer additional training and development of skill sets needed to fill these positions, and working closer with all city human resource professionals. One of the problems with the city is at each department has its own human resources department, each department works in its own silo, and therefore while one department may have someone who is a good prospect to be an employee but doesn't necessarily fit the criteria of that department, they may be eligible and a good fit for other department as well. Also, to retain current employees, the city must pay a much more competitive rate. We are absolutely outpaced by the private sector when it comes to salaries, and if we are to have any serious expectation of hiring the qualified professionals that we want and retaining those who have been on the job often for many years, we must provide adequate and competitive compensation. Right sizing salaries is the right thing to do. _____

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

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

_____ The city of Philadelphia is a massive operation that does not need to privatize any services. Within our city government, we have the capability to do almost anything that we need to do. Therefore privatization is unnecessary. _____

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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?

_____ I support the city of Philadelphia investing in companies that do not have a portfolio which include fossil fuel. Furthermore, more aggressive ways to find to address climate change and being thoughtful of communities is very important. We should be looking at our investment portfolio, as well as looking at the environment in every community. _____

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

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 believe this is that the city could do more to ensure that wealthy nonprofits pay their fair share of taxes. I'm a big supporter of pilots also known as payments in lieu of taxes. These payments are desperately need it and I think that the city needs to take a much harder stance on these wealthy nonprofits to ensure they are participation in pilot programs. The city needs to re-examine the benefits, services, and additional supports that are provided to these wealthy nonprofits and must withdraw them completely if no arrangements can be made. Some of the most valuable real estate in the city of Philadelphia is held by these institutions, and it is past time that they pay their fair share. _____

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 significant changes to the cities property tax abatement program. Primarily I would like to see the eventual elimination of the program, as it has served its purpose. The idea behind the tax abatement was to spur development, and I think that we can all agree that the goal has been achieved outside of communities that are low income and often blighted. If an abatement is to exist, thoughtfulness around where and why is absolutely necessary. The continuation of abatement as-is, even with the changes made in recent years, is not enough.** _____

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

- 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 am open to all efforts to increase revenues. From my perspective as a legislator and taxpayer, I know how incredibly difficult it can be to pay your taxes and address the outrageous amounts of interest and the penalties that are attached. I believe in incentivizing tax collection by reducing penalties and interest significantly, which can often dwarf the initial principal balance. I also believe in revenue Department efficiencies which I have been working with Commissioner Breslin to address for many years.

PHILADELPHIA HOUSING

- 15. Do you support increasing revenue for the Housing Trust Fund to help residents avoid displacement in communities currently facing development pressure?
The housing trust fund is extremely important and has not been funded adequate in my opinion. Thus I would strongly support increasing revenue for the housing trust fund.

- 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?

I believe that the city of Philadelphia is absolutely responsible for providing affordable and workforce housing in Philadelphia in the city. Thus, I believe that the city should issue bonds for the construction of this very important housing that's absolutely necessary, rather than slowly leaving it up to the private market.

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

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

___ with eviction rated an all-time high, I support extending the good clause election protection for residential leases. Regarding rent control, I believe that further analysis should be considered before making such a decision._____

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?

___ I support any and all efforts to close the school to prison pipeline. It is important that our young people have every opportunity to excel and have a productive life regardless of the communities in which they reside. I believe this could be accomplish by supporting a fair funding formula, which would provide additional resources to Philadelphia schools and help level the playing field for our students._____

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.

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

__ I do support funding for programs that are alternative options to deal with addiction mental health treatment and related issues. As someone who is here people close to them struggle with those issues, I believe it is incumbent upon City of Philadelphia to do more to help those in need but he's serious issues. I believe in measuring the effectiveness of these programs is through the outcomes; that would include the rate of recidivism, the number of people that have been through treatment that need to return for various reasons, etc.

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

__ I support any and all policing issues that put police directly into the communities most affected by violence and specifically gun violence. My office does have an initiative that we would like to see be a part of that initiative called what do you do when the shooter lives with you. This initiative really calls on parenting and caregivers to be more involved with the young person in their family who may be carrying a gun and storing it in their home.

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

_____ I think the most important answer to this question, is to rely listen to and rely on the professional opinion of probation and parole employees. I do not believe that their opinions have been adequately included in the server and solving our problems, and therefore we need to take a second look at how to address this matter. There are significant number of Philadelphians in the probation and parole system who really need help to stay out of the system. I believe that relying on the recommendations of the parole probation and parole employees is the best way to solve this situation.

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

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?

Our obligation to this very vulnerable population has not been met and they have not received the attention they desperately require. If we want to seriously address gun violence or crime on any level, we must look at the recidivism rate and how do we adequately ensure building a village up around folks who have not had resources invested in them, often since birth. The City of Philadelphia lacks a comprehensive plan to reduce recidivism and ensure success. There are some programs that have an incredibly positive impact, such as the Mural Arts Program’s Restorative Justice program. I would continue to search for additional programs like this and invest heavily from our city budget as a way to address crime in our city.

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

I think the first thing the City of Philadelphia can do to reduce gun usage is to invest rmore resources in our education system. We know that the more educated the population is, the less likely that they will pick up a gun to settle disputes or be otherwise involved in criminal activity. Furthermore, I have been working on a program called “what do you do when the shooter lives with you”. This program speaks directly to parents and other caregivers, informing them of the possibility of guns being stored in the homes of young men and women in our city, and if you find a gun in your home, what is the next step for you?

**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?

As a legislator, supporting and protecting victims of crime and effective community members is a priority. This advocacy in my position should be in the form of increased resources provided from the city budget, going directly to entities which we know are providing high-quality services to those most effective. I will continue to provide support and advocacy from my position in Philadelphia city Council to making sure that these resources reach those in need.

PHILADELPHIA CORPORATE POWER

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

Yes, I do support publicly financed campaigns.

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.

I support legislation that enables the city to recover subsidies from entities that failed to provide jobs or benefits to city residents, which was a condition of the subsidy received. These subsidies come from tax dollars which are in high demand and short supply. We must use these resources prudently and when we make an investment in an entity we should expect and demand the return promised. Otherwise the city must take the appropriate action to make it self whole.

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

RESIDENCY ISSUE

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

I think it's very important that city employees live in the city of Philadelphia. I recognize that there are some exemptions which may be necessary in very highly technical positions, as there might be a limited numbers of individuals available anywhere to do certain specific things, but beyond that city employees should live within the city limits.

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

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