

2019 Council Questionnaire – Challenger

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CANDIDATE CERTIFICATION

Candidate Name: Kendra Brooks Office Sought City Council at Large

I have read the attached questionnaire responses and certify that the information provided is accurate and the opinions stated accurately reflect my own positions.

Candidate Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please complete, sign and return this form via email in Word format to:

**gmgilman@igc.org and mail a copy with the signature page to
Gloria Gilman 121 S Broad St, Suite 1720 Philadelphia, PA 19107**

BACKGROUND

1. What, if any, elected or appointed government office(s) have you held? I ran for Committee person in 13/13.

2. Background and viability questions:

a. What community or policy issues have you worked on, and in what capacity? (Please provide the names of two or three individuals who can provide information about your previous work.)

My work with issue and policy work includes:

Disability rights and accessibility with Easter Seals of Southeastern PA

Education including special education Helen Gym Cecilia Thompson

Women's rights Dominique Howell

Environment Mitch Chanin

Economic Justice CPD, Ady Barkan and Shawn Sebastian

A Just Philadelphia Platform Bryan Mercer and Stan Shapiro

b. What about your background or experience do you think most qualifies you to be elected?

Please attach:

I did everything I could to do to acquire that American dream. Even as a teenage mother, I never gave up. I put myself through college, I provided for my family and even worked hard to purchase my family home for myself and my kids to have a safe place to live. In 2014, I was laid off after 17 years due to Corbett's cutbacks to education programs. I was in a rough place and in the process of trying to find new employment I lost my home to sheriff sale. This is a problem I know far too many people in this city also face. My home was purchased for approx \$5,000 and after lawyer fees and cancelled agreements with the city I lost again after pulling together 20k of the 25k requested by the developer, I was just short of purchasing it back and I, like many Philadelphians, now pay rent to live in the home I once owned.

Around the same time in 2014 I found out that my children's school was going to be turned into a charter school. We believed in the public school system and did not want the last neighborhood school to be turned over to another charter company. Furthermore, we knew we were being bulldozed, with lies, payoffs and misinformation by the district, the charter provider and the SRC. WE organized and fought back, they thought that in one of the lowest turnout districts they would call for a vote and no one would come out. However both the charter and the SDP underestimated our ability to organize families, to educate the community and to win the vote. Even through unemployment, I used the time to, educate, organize and turnout more than 200 parents to come out and vote against the charter school.

They were in shock that we won. This is the only instance in this country this has ever been done. Some may see this as the beginning of my activism but looking back I was always an advocate in my own right. In my prior career working with the communities with disabilities it was never enough just to do my job, I was committed to my families and to the success of the young people I served, I realized that it wasn't enough to provide services for the folks I worked with but we needed to make sure people had access to employment, housing, that women regardless of disabilities had right have families and that folks had equal opportunity to quality of life.

Upon leaving Easter Seals, I maintain good relationships with the folks that I worked with. I made sure that I continued to be a resource for folks left in the margins. I helped one young woman who was accepted to Lincoln university advocate for that campus to become accessible. The campus is now fully accessible to this day and she takes great pride in her ability to pave the way for those that came behind her. And just last year, I worked with her when she became homeless, by no fault of her own as multiple services failed her, to find housing. This was a long and tiring process which I couldn't not imagine having to navigate on my own. What do you tell someone who is homeless, uses a power wheelchair themselves caring for a 3 yo and an elderly visually impaired grandparent? WE will get through this!!! And we did. BUt what about the 1000s of women that dont have this support? This story is far too common and not just for those with different abilities but for average philadelphians living paycheck to paycheck or without someone to advocate on their behalf.

I am running because I believe in Philadelphia!!! In the Philadelphia I see there are good paying union jobs where Philadelphians can earn a living wage, families are safe to work and send their children to school without the threat of ICE, someone with disabilities or anyone shouldn't need an advocate to find housing and it still take 9 months for placement, In the Philadelphia I know We shouldn't be losing our houses and land to developers for profit but making sound investment in building strong neighborhoods. We are known as the city of neighborhoods but we have allowed corporations and developers to strip our city of its essence. A city of strong communities include low income housing and rent control. healthy schools free of lead asbestos and mold, green spaces like parks and gardens to increase the quality of life and library and recreation centers to get our young people off the streets and into quality OST programs

c. What other endorsements have you received?

None

d. How do you plan to win?

I AM AN ORGANIZER! I plan on winning by knocking on doors and activating my diverse base to do the same. NO campaign is won without money, I will also work hard to raise

money and activate people to raise money on my behalf to support the strong people

centered
platformed that I have worked to create. The People's Platform

e. How much money have you raised? How much do you expect to raise?

Our goal is to raise 250,000. I am in the process of setting up my PAC and as soon as the paperwork is finalized I will be actively working towards meeting my fundraising goal.

3. What three things would you most want to accomplish if elected?

When I am elected, what I would most like to accomplish is stabilizing the city's finances by working towards creating a public bank. When we control our own wealth and wall street banks are not profiting off of our debt we are able to invest our revenue into needed public resources like schools, libraries, parks and low income housing. I would also work towards and fight to end the 10 year tax abatement to fund school and make developers and corporations to pay their fair share to invest in the future of Philadelphia.

ISSUES

Although many of the questions below call for a simple yes or no answer, please feel free to provide an explanation for any of your choices. If you have not yet come to a final decision, please state which way you are leaning and what additional information you would need before deciding, if any.

I. Economic Development

Would you:

1. Raise the City minimum wage to \$15 an hour, either directly or by imposing an impact fee on businesses paying less than \$15?

Yes, Anyone working 40 hrs a week should bring home a living wage. By providing all Philadelphians a living wage we will be working directly to impact poverty and homelessness in the city and in order to enforce the city minimum wage provision when establish, there will need to be structures in place to ensure enforcement.

2. Take \$200 million of City pension funds now invested in the stock market to invest in

neighborhood economic development projects?

Yes, With lack good paying jobs being a growing problem in Philly, neighborhood economic projects will stimulate the economy of neighborhoods and bring jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities to communities.

- 3.** Require City-funded or tax-abated projects to employ a high percentage of City resident workers, especially low and moderate income City residents?

Yes, If we want to increase the quality of life for the majority of Philadelphians, to do so, the city must create policies to ensure that employing our own is a priority. Like laws that require contracts to be given to minority owned business we must also mandate that low and moderate income Philadelphians are prioritized to ensure that we are decreasing the cities poverty and stimulating the Philadelphia economy.

- 4.** Create a program to provide technical assistance and start-up funding for cooperative, worker-owned businesses?

Yes, as a small business owner the need to for technical assistance is costly and assistance would help sustain and grow cooperative worker-owned businesses.

- 5.** Reform PIDC, the City's main economic development funding agency, so that its Board has a majority of public and community members, rather than Chamber of Commerce appointed members?

Yes, It is important that the voices most affected by the services be part of the decision making process.

- 6.** Require the City to withdraw subsidies from corporations that fail to provide jobs or other benefits to City residents?

Yes, Subsidies should available only to those corporations willing to provide jobs and other benefits to City residence.

- 7.** Bar or limit privatization of City property and work done by City employees? More specifically are there any circumstances under which you would sell PGW?

Yes, PGW should remain the property of the city. City services should be owned and operated

by the city. We have to stop the pillaging of City resources at the hands of corporations.

8. Sponsor and sign legislation to create a Philadelphia Public Bank?

Yes. I mention this above.

II. Taxation

Would you:

1. Increase taxes to support City and/or School District services, and if so, which ones?

Children are the most marginalized group in the city. I would support an increase in taxes to support schools, parks and libraries. I would also support tax increase to pay for street repairs and street cleaning. Although I support a tax increase, I would encourage finding money through PILOTS, PPA and ending the tax abatement to cover these services as well. We live in a city with huge disparities between the rich and the poor. Another regressive tax for city services would not be helpful for poor folks in Philadelphia. We must make the rich, corporations and developers pay their fair share.

2. Reduce taxes as an economic development strategy, and, if so, which ones?

We should reduce or eliminate wage tax for Philadelphians making less than 25k annually.

3. Support the Soda Tax? Please explain your answer. I support the soda tax. More children are in Pre K programs and community schools that give young people the needed skills to be successful in school long term. There have been major renovations in libraries, parks and recreation centers that offer young people safe places in the summer and after school as well as provide meeting location for seniors and the community member. Although this is a regressive tax, it should not be eliminated without adequate funds being in place to support those programs funded by the tax. I Also believe that portions put into the general fund should be reduced and applied to the expansion of the program listed.

4. Support the 10-year Tax Abatement Program for new development as it currently exists? If not, what specific changes would you make? I support ending the 10 year tax abatement to fund housing and school throughout Philadelphia.

5. Bring suit to challenge the nonprofit status of the University of PA and other huge non-profits if they don't agree to make payments in lieu of taxes to the City?

I will follow all steps needed to force major non profits in the city including Penn to make PILOTS to the city.

III. Education

Would you:

1. Enact a plan that would help regulate charter schools by making their budgetary practices transparent, riding them of conflicts of interest, and stopping them from cherry-picking their student bodies? If so, what would that plan look like? I would align with my partners across the state to create a moratorium on new charters until systems are put in place to change current charter laws that do not support transparency, eliminating and enforcing laws that allow conflict of interest, and create a fair process for admission and retention in charter schools.
2. Provide universal pre-k to all 3 and 4 year olds in the City? Yes
3. Compute the cost/benefit ratio for the School District of all proposed KOZ zones before they're approved by Council? Yes
4. Develop a plan to deal with the bankruptcy facing the School District due to the growth in the number of charter schools in the City, all of whose expenses must by law be paid by the District? Please explain.

I support a moratorium on charters until the district is fiscally stable and the conditions of our existing public school are resolved. This would include earmarking all new funds for schools to be used to support improving conditions of the aging buildings. This work should be done by district employees and not contracted out to vendor. With using district labor we reduce cost for the district, ensure the quality of the work and increase the workforces that was hard hit with Corbett budget cuts. Many families are opting for charters for safety, an investment in restorative justice and social and emotional learning services to support the mental health crisis related to bullying would reduce climate issues and create safe nurturing environments for all students. We are also dealing with the staffing shortage across the district. I would support funding pathways out of poverty for support staff within the district to gain the education needed to transition into educators therefore increasing their income and filling the void for needed classroom teachers across the district.

IV. Criminal Justice

Would you:

1. Grant the civilian police review board subpoena power with the ability to suspend or fire police officers found to engage in misconduct?

YES

2. Use savings from closing the House of Corrections to invest in job training programs and opportunities for formerly incarcerated people, in an effort to combat mass incarceration?

Yes, The savings for closing the house of corrections should be allocated to invest in the communities most affected by mass incarceration during the crack epidemic.

3. Bar employers from denying jobs to ex-offenders without a specific job-related basis?

YES, I am a firm believer in restorative justice and believe that people deserve a second chance. By not providing returning citizens the right to work upon re entry we eliminate them the opportunity to fully be apart of our society.

4. End the stop and frisk program?

YES

V. Housing

1. Do you think Philadelphia is facing a housing crisis? If so, why? If not, why not? What changes would you make to bring housing policy more in line with your vision? With us being labeled the poorest biggest city, a housing crisis is inevitable. As a city, we have given away millions of dollars to developers at the expense of low and moderate working class families. In order to reverse the widespread and growing homelessness issue, we must create programs to keep Philadelphians in their homes whether they are renting or owning. These program could include rent control, tax amnesty or reduction for long time homeowners in gentrified areas, increasing low interest loans for low and moderate income homeowners, ending sheriff sale creating more low income accessible housing city wide. .

2. Would you:

a. Enact a rent stabilization program?

YES

- b. Enact inclusionary zoning requirements to compel inclusion of affordable units in all market rate developments? Yes, I would expand this to include low income housing. Current regulation that include affordable housing excludes the most marginalized because affordable housing is afforded to those making 45k-50k. With the population of people living below poverty level , policies must allot for those living below the current affordable housing rate.
- c. Support a dedicated fund to provide technical assistance and start up funding for land trusts and housing co-ops? Yes
- d. End, limit or curtail Councilmanic prerogative over land disposition? YES
- e. Require the land bank to prioritize the disposition of properties for low-income and cooperatively owned developments? YES

VI. Climate Justice

- 1. What, if anything, can the city do to address the fundamental factors driving climate change? The city can hold polluters accountable and create a system for accountability when they violate current emission or air safety laws.
- 2. Do you support a Green New Deal for Philadelphia and, if so, what does that mean to you and what will you do if elected to City Council to implement it?
Yes, As a grandparent it is important that I work to ensure that my children, grandchildren and all children have a healthy air, water and environment to enjoy for generations. I will work with environmental groups to push for policies and laws to support the Green New Deal in Philadelphia.
- 3. What is your position on the proposal to build a new Liquefied Natural Gas Plant in Southwest Philadelphia? NO new power plants or refineries in Philadelphia.

VII. Money In Politics

In light of the recent indictments involving elected officials, what is your position on:

- a. Accepting gifts or services
- b. Accepting donations from corporate PACs that do work for the city
- c. Public financing of city elections

TAKE BIG MONEY INTEREST OUT OF CAMPAIGNS.

VIII. General Statement

Use this space to provide any further information that you would like us to consider about your candidacy, not covered by the questions above.