



2025 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

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Office Sought: Lawrence City Council, District A

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(A) Your Candidacy

1. What would be your top three priorities if elected to serve?

- Support for Small Businesses – Champion policies and resources that help local entrepreneurs thrive, creating jobs and building generational wealth in Lawrence.
- Safe and Clean Streets – Strengthen community safety by investing in violence prevention, youth opportunities, and public works infrastructure that keeps our neighborhoods safe and welcoming.
- Youth and Family Opportunities – Expand after-school programs, workforce pipelines, and mentorship opportunities so young people see a future for themselves here in Lawrence.

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

I am a civil engineer, a proud Merrimack College graduate, and a Massachusetts Certified Public Procurement Official (MCPPO) with over 14 years of experience in public service and infrastructure at both the state and municipal levels. I have worked closely with agencies, unions, and community organizations to deliver results for residents. As a father, husband, and immigrant from the Dominican Republic who made Lawrence home, I understand the struggles of working families and have the skills, commitment, and lived experience to advocate effectively for my community.

3. What is the one policy you've seen pioneered in another city that you'd most like to adopt locally?

I would bring **participatory budgeting**, as pioneered in Cambridge, to Lawrence. This empowers residents to directly decide how a portion of city funds are spent, increasing transparency and ensuring investments reflect the community's priorities.

(B) Open-Ended Policy Questions

1. Given state law, municipalities in Massachusetts are limited in their taxing power. What opportunities do you see for the city to raise revenue to support essential city services?

Lawrence can:

- Pursue home rule petitions for progressive revenue tools like a real estate transfer fee on high-end properties.
- Maximize state and federal infrastructure grants.
- Ensure transparent management of existing resources and fair enforcement of local fees so working families aren't overburdened.

2. What are your top priorities for ensuring that all students in your city can receive a high-quality public education?

The City Council does not oversee curriculum — that is the School Committee's responsibility— but the Council plays a critical role in funding and advocacy. I will prioritize:

- Ensuring the schools have the resources they need through responsible budget oversight.
- Supporting after-school programs and youth centers that complement school learning.
- Advocating at the state level for fairer funding for urban schools like Lawrence's
- Supporting better salaries for teachers to attract and retain the best educators.

3. What can your city do to help protect immigrant communities under attack from ICE and ensure genuine community safety?

- Uphold Lawrence's sanctuary protections and resist unnecessary cooperation with ICE.

- Allocate funding for legal aid, resource centers, and language access programs.
- Train city staff and first responders in cultural competency to ensure trust and respect for immigrant families.

4. What are your top three policy priorities for making your city climate-resilient, and how would you ensure that equity is at the center of any such efforts?

- **Green Infrastructure** – Invest in stormwater improvements and tree canopy expansion, prioritizing flood-prone, underserved neighborhoods.
- **Sustainable Housing** – Support energy-efficiency retrofits and weatherization for low-income families.
- **Clean Energy Access** – Promote community solar projects and affordable renewable energy options for renters and homeowners.

Equity means prioritizing communities most vulnerable to climate impacts when funding projects.

5. What steps would you take to reduce dependence on cars and better facilitate the ability of city residents to safely get around by walking, biking, or public transit?

- Expand **protected bike lanes and safer sidewalks** through Council appropriations and zoning.
- Partner with the **Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (MVRTA)** to support fare-free and more frequent bus service.
- Encourage **transit-oriented development** near rail stations and downtown.

6. What policies will you advocate for to ensure that your city can be a place that is affordable for residents to live at any stage of life?

- Support **home rule petitions** for rent stabilization and a transfer fee to fund affordable housing.
- Use zoning and budget decisions to expand **affordable housing supply**.
- Advocate for **first-time homebuyer assistance** and senior property tax relief.

7. [If relevant] How would you assess your city's MBTA Communities Act rezoning efforts so far?

Lawrence has begun rezoning, but more must be done to ensure compliance results in **genuinely affordable housing near transit** — not just luxury units. Community input must be central.

8. What strategies would you employ to resist federal overreach from the Trump Administration while protecting critical services and funding for residents?

- Pass **local ordinances and resolutions** protecting immigrant and working-class communities.
- Ensure **budget protections** so essential services are not cut.
- Work with state leaders and grassroots groups to defend Lawrence residents from harmful federal actions.

9. How would you model transparency and accountability if elected?

Hold **regular public forums and office hours**.

Publish **accessible budget summaries** for residents.

Use social media and city platforms to explain decisions openly.

Support **independent audits and oversight mechanisms**.

(C) Yes/No Policy Questions

1. Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools? **NO**
2. Do you support the creation of an unarmed, community-based emergency response program, separate from the Police Department, to respond to mental and behavioral health crises? **NO**
3. If your community has not already, do you support adopting the new specialized stretch code, which would require new construction and major renovations to be built to a very high-efficiency standard with all-electric (as opposed to fossil fuel) heating and cooling systems? **YES**

4. Do you support fare-free public transit? **YES**
5. Do you support the expansion of the network of permanent, protected bike lanes in your city? **YES**
6. Would you support a home rule petition to establish a small transfer fee on high-end real estate transactions to create dedicated funding for affordable housing production and preservation? **YES**
7. Would you support a home rule petition to enable the city to stabilize rents? **YES**
8. According to the American Library Association, in 2022 there were at least 45 attempts to restrict access to books in MA schools, disproportionately books that speak to the experiences of LGBTQ students and students of color. Would you oppose such book-banning efforts if they occurred in your city? **YES**

(D) Additional Comments

(Use this space to make any final comments you deem important for progressive voters assessing your candidacy.)

On education, I recognize that **charter schools in Lawrence have produced results that many families value**. That is why I answered **NO** to opposing charter school expansion — because in our community, charters have provided opportunities that have helped our students succeed.

At the same time, I firmly believe that our **public school system must remain the backbone of education in Lawrence**. I will continue to advocate for:

- **Robust investment in our public schools**, so every child has access to a modern, high-quality learning environment.
- **Better salaries and professional support for teachers**, to ensure Lawrence can attract and retain the best educators.
- **Upgraded facilities and technology**, so our students learn in safe, innovative, and inspiring spaces.
- **Partnerships between district schools and charter schools**, so best practices are shared and all students benefit.

My commitment is to a Lawrence where every student has the opportunity to succeed, and where **public investment guarantees that our city schools are strong, equitable, and built for the future**.

I do not support fully diverting mental or behavioral health-related 911 calls away from law enforcement. Instead, I support a balanced, collaborative approach that enhances—not replaces—our emergency response system.

Over the past 15 years, the City of Lawrence has worked hard to rebuild trust between the police department and the community. I've seen that transformation firsthand—from inside City Hall and through my continued public service. Today, our police officers and emergency response teams are not the same as they were a generation ago. They've invested in community relationships, training, and accountability. And most importantly, residents feel safer and more connected because of that progress.

To suddenly divert these calls away from our trained professionals would ignore the progress we've made and disrupt a model that is currently working. It would also undermine years of partnership-building between our police department and local organizations.

Instead, I support:

Expanding and integrating mental health professionals and social workers into our public safety system—as co-responders, not replacements.

Investing in centers that already serve our community, like the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center (GLFHC), which provides behavioral health services in multiple locations across the city.

Advocating for state and federal funding to strengthen these collaborations while supporting our unionized emergency personnel.

Mental health and substance use crises are real and must be treated with urgency and compassion. But we cannot abandon the systems we've built and the professionals who've earned our community's trust. Lawrence should continue to lead with innovation, but also with respect for the successful community safety model we've built together.

Lawrence is a city of immigrants, working families, and resilient people who deserve a government that is transparent, accountable, and progressive. I am running for City Council because I believe in a Lawrence where every resident has access to opportunity, safety, and a voice in shaping our future.

Why Franklin Miguel?

- I bring **over 14 years of experience** in public service and infrastructure at both the state and municipal levels, with a proven record of managing budgets, contracts, and community investments responsibly.
- I am a **civil engineer and Merrimack College graduate**, as well as a Massachusetts Certified Public Procurement Official (MCPPO), giving me the technical and financial expertise to ensure Lawrence resources are spent wisely and transparently.
- As a **father, husband, and immigrant from the Dominican Republic**, I carry the lived experience of the challenges facing our families — and the determination to fight for equity and opportunity.

My vision for Lawrence is built on:

- **Safe and clean streets**, where families feel secure and proud of their neighborhoods.
- **Support for small businesses**, so local entrepreneurs can create jobs and wealth within our community.
- **Opportunities for youth and families**, ensuring the next generation can see a future here in Lawrence.
- **Climate resilience and equity**, so no neighborhood is left behind in preparing for the future.

I am committed to serving with **experience, integrity, and accountability**, and to working every day so that Lawrence can be a city that is safe, affordable, equitable, and full of opportunity for every family.