



2025 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

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Office Sought: City Councilor at Large in Northampton, Ma

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(A) Your Candidacy

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

Three of my top priorities for Northampton include:

1. Investing in our Schools and Children: Ensuring our kids are ready to shape their future in the face of national polarization, the breakdown of international norms, and the onset of the age of Artificial Intelligence
2. Enhancing Public Safety & Community Well-being: Ensuring a dignified life for every member of our community, no matter who they are, where they are from, or how much money or power they have.
3. Harnessing AI for Efficient & Responsive City Services and preparing Northampton to lead and thrive in an AI-powered world

I will provide some details below to clarify my statements here:

1. Investing in Our Children: Fully Funded & Future-Ready Education (EDEN Program):

Stance: Our public schools are the bedrock of our community. We must ensure they are fully funded, our educators are supported, and our students receive a high-quality, forward-looking education.

Policy Idea:

- Establish the EDEN (EDucation Endowment for Northampton) Fund: This perpetual endowment, similar to university endowments, will provide a stable, long-term funding source for Northampton Public Schools, supplementing the annual budget. I will lead the charge to:
 - Secure initial seed funding from the city's surplus (e.g., a portion of the \$11.6M surplus).
 - Aggressively fundraise from Smith College, local businesses, wealthy philanthropists, and individuals who share a vision for educational excellence. Imagine a "Founders' Circle" for EDEN.
 - Develop a transparent governance structure and clear spending policies (e.g., only a percentage of investment income can be used annually) to ensure sustainability and accountability, prioritizing areas like teacher salaries, technology upgrades, and enrichment programs.
- Transparent Budgeting & Accountability: Advocate for clear, accessible reporting on school expenditures and an independent audit of past fund usage (including COVID funds) to ensure accountability and rebuild public trust.
- Competitive Educator Compensation: Work with the School Committee and Mayor to ensure competitive salaries and benefits for our teachers and staff, attracting and retaining the best talent.

2. Enhancing Public Safety & Community Well-being:

Stance: A safe community is one where everyone feels secure and has access to the support they need. This requires a holistic approach that includes traditional public safety alongside robust social services.

Policy Idea:

- Strengthen the Division of Community Care (DCC): Fully support and expand the DCC's capacity to respond to non-violent calls related to mental health, substance use, and homelessness, reducing reliance on police for these issues.
- Community Policing & Engagement: Foster stronger relationships between residents and the police department through community events and transparent communication.
- Address Substance Abuse & Homelessness: Increase access to treatment, supportive housing, and harm reduction services. Explore innovative models to support our unhoused neighbors with dignity and long-term solutions.

3. Harnessing AI for Efficient & Responsive City Services:

Stance: As an AI safety expert, I believe Artificial Intelligence, when implemented thoughtfully and ethically, can transform city government, making it more efficient, cost-effective, and responsive to resident needs.

Policy Idea:

- "Smart Northampton" AI Innovation Lab: Establish a small, cross-departmental team to identify areas where AI can improve city services, such as:
 - Optimizing public works: Predictive maintenance for infrastructure (roads, water pipes), optimized waste collection routes.
 - Enhanced citizen communication: AI-powered chatbots for routing inquiries, personalized notifications for city services.
 - Data-driven decision making: Analyzing traffic patterns, public safety data, and resource allocation to improve efficiency.
- Develop Ethical AI Guidelines & Training: Implement a robust framework for AI use in city government, prioritizing data privacy, algorithmic fairness, and transparency. Provide training for city staff on responsible AI adoption.
- Cost Savings & Reinvestment: Track cost savings from AI implementations and commit to reinvesting a significant portion of these savings back into critical areas like education, affordable housing, or public safety programs.]

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

My position as a City Councilor is that of thinking deeply and broadly about the needs of my constituents, both now and in the future, and working with all possible groups, people, and levers to implement policies, support initiatives, and drive changes that will ensure the best possible future for every resident of our city. I am uniquely qualified for this job both due to my personal lived experience and due to my broad and multi-faceted academic and professional experience. And more importantly, it's my approach to getting things done: No matter the situation or role, I work with people, I make them heard, I make them part of the process, and I make them feel good about working together toward a common goal. I find that there is common ground and common core principles to be found with everybody. And I am equally comfortable doing this with my friends in the homeless community busking by city hall or with the governor over a legislative breakfast. I intend to partner with

community members, with fellow civic leaders, with our state legislators and legislature, private business, and academic institutions, to drive policies that will make it easier for us as a city to meet our diverse needs.

I understand people from all walks of life. I came to the US as a refugee from the Soviet Union when I was a child, a member of a dissident family fighting for human rights against a tyrannical government. I grew up in a poor family, working through dozens of jobs to make ends meet, putting myself through college, and earning my PhD in Computational Linguistics. I have been houseless, I have dealt with addiction issues, I have dealt with the court system, and I have worked on dismantling the prison-industrial complex. I have worked on many campaigns and advised many politicians. I have started a community center and I have developed affordable housing in Philadelphia, Pa and Chester, Pa. I have been a public school teacher in Southbridge, Ma, have run a tutoring company in Providence, RI. I have published academic articles, retrospectives on school outreach programs, an academic assessment of the digital divide in Worcester, Ma, and a book of poetry.

Professionally, aside from being an educator and a community organizer, I have spent many years running teams in the tech sector. At Amazon I helped build up Amazon AI, focusing on problems in the Natural Language Processing space. This means balancing budgets of millions of dollars, hiring and developing a diverse workforce, and working with many different stakeholders to build up new projects and then seeing them through completion and launch. I worked on many key features on the Amazon Alexa product line, and for the last 6 years I have been an AI and NLP leader at Spotify. In this role I not only built up and ran multiple teams, developed cutting edge AI projects, and oversaw millions of dollars in both salaries and expenditures, but I worked as the AI safety lead within our mission, ensuring that we build safe, equitable, non-discriminatory, and de-biased AI applications. I uniquely understand what world we are entering into and how to empower my fellow community members to shape this world instead of being shaped by it.

Finally, I am already an involved and dedicated community member and deeply understand the needs of many of my neighbors. Whether they are artists in need of housing and funding, students in need of more support and resources, refugees in need of a sense of secure living, business leaders who are trying to make their living in our community, or just people trying to make ends meet in a 2nd or 3rd generation home that is overtaxed and under-served. I work hard, I take time to understand where people are coming

from, and I don't give up until we reach the best possible solution for all involved!

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

I actually want to mention two policies here: a) novel ways of funding the local school system, and b) novel ways of addressing community policing around situations related to mental health.

School funding: We owe it to our children to be willing to think outside the box in order to ensure they have a holistic education experience that prepares them for the future. I have seen many communities and cities around the country implement novel strategies to achieve this. Examples include Philadelphia, which levies a separate income tax specifically to fund their public schools. Other communities levy a real estate transfer tax which is added into the school budget. Other communities have a dedicated portion of sales taxes for education, like some counties in Georgia which levy a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) for education. Many reach into the private sector, setting up business partnerships or education endowments, like the Pasadena Educational Foundation in California, which raises millions a year to support the local school district. My proposal for the EDEN fund (Educational Endowment for Northampton) leans into this tradition of looking outside standard state and local tax revenue only to ensure a fully funded education.

Mental Health crises: In order to have a sustainable, safe, dignified, and supportive community, we must make sure we treat our neighbors with the utmost respect and ensure their safety. This means that we need to focus on their mental health and survival needs before leaning into a punitive approach to handling civil and even criminal violations. This means not having armed police show up for situations that actually require counseling, understanding, and de-escalation. This means focusing on underlying conditions and unmet needs rather than focus on punishment and retribution. This means a serious investment in restorative justice practices, making our communities whole again, rather than separation and the othering of those that don't act, look, or live like we do. Many communities around the US have implemented

Many communities across the U.S. are developing innovative, community-led approaches to address mental health crises and de-escalate situations that have historically been handled by law enforcement. These novel strategies are rooted in

the understanding that a person experiencing a mental health crisis often needs a health-focused response. These can include approaches like Mobile Crisis Teams (MCTs), unarmed teams, often made up of crisis workers, medics, and/or peers, who can be dispatched to a person in crisis, or Co-Responder Models like the CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets), Originating in Eugene, Oregon. But these also include Peer-Led Support, which connect individuals in crisis with people who have lived experience with mental illness, Warm Lines, non-emergency phone numbers staffed by trained peers, or Peer Respite Centers, non-medical, voluntary, short-term respites that serve as an alternative to psychiatric hospitalization. All these approaches are Community-Led, focus on Non-Carceral Approaches, and ensure Integrated Care.

And of course, a focus on Prevention and Well-being Promotion, strategies that focus on "upstream" factors to prevent mental health conditions before they develop. This includes promoting positive social connections, addressing the social determinants of health (like housing and food security), and implementing policies that reduce the incidence of traumatic events.

We owe it to our underserved and often ignored community members to Do Better!

(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?**

I will separately address revenue for the public school system below, so here I will focus on other city services. I believe we have to take a broad approach and not leave anything on the table. This includes grants for public outreach and mental health work. This includes advocating for funding formula changes at the state level. This includes more efficient spending of our budget to focus on higher priority and higher-impact projects. But it also must include better leveraging of our city's high bond rating, and taking on some debt to fund the bigger capital improvement projects in order to leave more money in the budget for immediate priorities to serve essential city services that are often under-funded. Additionally, I would like us to look into novel ways of

collecting funds, even if it does lean into novel taxation approaches. These include a transfer tax on real estate transactions or advocating for the ability to levy a local income tax.

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

I believe we need a diverse education for our kids. This includes community engagement, including learning on the job, in the real world, and from our neighbors. This also means getting local academic institutions more involved, and leveraging the amazing power of so many college students studying in a diverse array of fields, to benefit public school students, including having them learn about research, take college classes, and receive mentorship. And of course, it also means an education that has the proper funding. Below is the outline of my proposal around the EDEN program, a thinking outside the box approach to supplement the NPS budget beyond the current city budget.

Program: Investing in Our Children: Fully Funded & Future-Ready Education (EDEN Program):

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- **Transparent Budgeting & Accountability:** Advocate for clear, accessible reporting on school expenditures and an independent audit of past fund usage (including COVID funds) to ensure accountability and rebuild public trust.
- **Competitive Educator Compensation:** Work with the School Committee and Mayor to ensure competitive salaries and benefits for our teachers and staff, attracting and retaining the best talent.

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

I believe we have to do everything in our power to protect our fellow residents from being kidnapped, detained, harassed, and deported. This responsibility must be with the city, with each city department, and with every community member. Personally, I am a member of our area ICE watch, a group of individuals committed to tracking and reporting ICE activity and making sure they cannot operate outside the public purview. As a city, we can limit our cooperation with federal immigration agencies and create a more welcoming environment for all. In general this includes a four-pronged approach: a) Restricting Police Interaction with ICE, b) Refusing ICE Detainers, and c) prohibiting 287(g) Agreements, which deputize local officers to enforce federal immigration law, and d) establishing Confidentiality Policies, preventing city employees from sharing information about a person's immigration status with federal authorities.

Going beyond non-cooperation, we must also foster a truly welcoming city environment and invest in advocacy and community building.

Fostering a truly welcoming city environment: Beyond limiting cooperation with federal agencies, we can proactively create a welcoming and supportive environment for all residents, regardless of immigration status. We need to go beyond being a “sanctuary city” and truly be a “welcoming city”, with a focus on integration and inclusion. Some examples include:

- a) **Municipal Identification Programs:** providing IDs at the local level to allow immigrants to utilize IDs without worrying about exposing them to federal authorities
- b) **Providing Accessible Services:** making resources and public services accessible to all residents by offering multilingual materials and

providing cultural sensitivity training to city officials and employees. This aligns with my stated goal to positively utilize AI technologies for the benefit of Northampton residents. We can easily do things like automatically make all websites, materials, applications, etc... available in ANY language by leveraging these technologies, greatly reducing the burden of accessibility.

- c) Promoting Economic Opportunity: offering entrepreneurship programs, vocational training, and other economic development initiatives targeted at newcomers
- d) Legal Support: partnering with immigrant rights organizations to provide legal aid and "know your rights" resources to immigrant residents. Also having local lawyers on stand-by to intervene when necessary

Advocacy and Community Building:

Beyond non-cooperation and building a more welcoming city, we can also take a leadership role in actively advocating for immigrant rights and building a strong, inclusive community. This can involve:

- a) Clear Public Leadership:: City leaders can (and should) publicly commit to and advocate for the inclusion and safety of all residents, standing against anti-immigrant rhetoric and hate. Even if some policies cannot be controlled at the local level, it is critical that city leaders make their stance known and stand by it
- b) Community-Led Initiatives: Supporting and collaborating with community-based organizations and non-profits that serve immigrant and refugee communities can amplify their impact. This can include providing funding, in-kind support, or platforms for community leaders to share their stories
- c) Network Building: Northampton can work with other municipalities to coordinate opposition to federal policies that harm immigrant communities and strengthen the base of support for welcoming policies. The people, united, will never be defeated!

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?

For Northampton, Massachusetts, my top three policy priorities for making the city climate-resilient, with an emphasis on equity, are: strengthening green infrastructure and natural systems, developing a robust and equitable

transportation system, and implementing a community-wide building decarbonization and energy efficiency program.

Strengthening green infrastructure and natural systems: Northampton is vulnerable to increased flooding and extreme heat events due to climate change. Strengthening the city's green infrastructure is a critical, nature-based solution to address these risks. This includes expanding the urban tree canopy, restoring wetlands, and implementing green stormwater management projects. These efforts help absorb floodwaters, reduce the urban heat island effect, and improve air quality.

To ensure equity is at the center of these efforts, the city must prioritize projects in historically underserved neighborhoods, low-lying areas prone to flooding, and areas with limited tree cover. We would create a Tree Equity program to expand the urban forest in these communities, ensuring they receive the health and cooling benefits of trees. This program would involve residents in the planting and maintenance process, providing job training opportunities. Additionally, community engagement would be central to identifying and designing green infrastructure projects, ensuring they meet the specific needs of the people most affected.

Developing a Robust and Equitable Transportation System: Transportation is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. A resilient city needs a transportation system that is not only low-carbon but also accessible and affordable for everyone. This involves shifting away from car dependency by expanding public transit, building a safe and connected network of bike lanes and sidewalks, and promoting electric vehicle adoption.

To ensure equity, the city would focus on improving transit accessibility and affordability. This would mean enhancing bus routes and service frequency in areas where residents rely on public transit the most, and exploring options like free or reduced-fare programs for low-income individuals. We'd also ensure that new bike lanes and pedestrian pathways are built in all neighborhoods, especially those that lack safe, non-vehicular options. The city would also provide incentives and assistance programs for low-income residents to purchase electric vehicles or e-bikes, and ensure charging infrastructure is distributed equitably across the city.

Implementing a Community-wide Building Decarbonization and Energy Efficiency Program: Buildings are another significant source of greenhouse gas emissions. Decarbonizing Northampton's building stock by improving energy efficiency and transitioning to clean energy sources is essential for climate resilience. This includes supporting deep energy retrofits, promoting heat pump installations, and adopting fossil fuel-free building codes for new construction.

To center equity, the city's programs would specifically target and provide funding for low- and moderate-income households, renters, and owners of

multi-family buildings. A "Just Transition" fund would be established to provide financial assistance, subsidies, and no-cost energy audits to ensure that the economic benefits of energy savings are accessible to those who need them most, rather than being a financial burden. We would also partner with local workforce development organizations to create training and job opportunities in the green building and energy efficiency sectors, ensuring that the new "green economy" benefits Northampton's diverse residents.

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?

While we can't control all climate policies at the local level, we can do our share by both investing in green energy and policies and by making it easier for residents to avoid dependence on cars to get around, focusing on efficient methods of walking, biking, and access to public transportation. This includes, among other things, developing a robust and equitable transportation system. A resilient city needs a transportation system that is not only low-carbon but also accessible and affordable for everyone. This involves shifting away from car dependency by expanding public transit, building a safe and connected network of bike lanes and sidewalks, and promoting electric vehicle adoption.

To ensure equity, the city would focus on improving transit accessibility and affordability. This would mean enhancing bus routes and service frequency in areas where residents rely on public transit the most, and exploring options like free or reduced-fare programs for low-income individuals. We'd also ensure that new bike lanes and pedestrian pathways are built in all neighborhoods, especially those that lack safe, non-vehicular options. The city would also provide incentives and assistance programs for low-income residents to purchase electric vehicles or e-bikes, and ensure charging infrastructure is distributed equitably across the city.

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?

In terms of housing affordability, we need to explore a range of policies in order to address affordability in our city. At one end, we need to consider rent control or freezes on certain types of housing. We also need to invest in building more affordable housing, being open to real estate transfer fees to help fund a broad investment in such housing options. We need to consider

grants or city run housing for artists and makers who make our city so desirable but many of whom are being chased out of the city due to lack of affordability. We need to be more careful with property tax increases via overrides for lower-income residents and those who have been in their family homes for multiple generations. Also, we need to consider more permissive zoning, allowing residents to have in-law apartments or housing on their lot without going through very difficult zoning application and review processes. This would help make it easier for families to support relatives especially in the later stages of their life.

Beyond this, we need to ensure that we have a broad range of community spaces, access to arts and culture that doesn't require high prices, and affordable transportation, to help make it feasible for young people to make their living in our city.

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

I am not deeply steeped in our city's compliance with this act, but I intend to study it deeply and make sure I understand the nuances of how our city is handling the implementation. Below I provide a short glance based on the information I can find. I am committed to looking into this more deeply as it will impact my policies around affordable housing more broadly.

Based on my current understanding, our efforts to comply with the MBTA Communities Act appear to be in a state of flux and have faced some challenges. Lots of citizens have expressed concerns including a) Concerns about Neighborhood Character, some residents express worry that the new zoning will drastically change the look and feel of their neighborhoods, b) Infrastructure Strain, residents may be concerned about whether existing city services, such as schools, water, and sewage, can handle the increase in population, and c) Location of the District, across municipalities there is debate over where the new multi-family districts should be located, with no single area being a clear favorite.

I applaud our city's efforts to have people be heard and to understand both the requirements of the Act as well as our current policies and traditions. We have certainly taken good steps forward, including infrastructure investments like Picture Main Street, which will help support the potential additional strain downtown. But, as I said up top, I will have to study this deeper and meet with city agencies in charge of compliance to understand our current steps and plans to fully comply with the requirements.

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

While we can't control all impacts from overreach from the Trump Administration, we can take steps to reduce the negative impact on our community and neighbors, take steps to future-proof our budgets for education and critical services, and work collaboratively with other municipalities as well as state agencies to mitigate outcomes

I have already spoken above about dealing with ICE overreach, and I will briefly reiterate here that that is an important step toward protecting our neighbors and ensuring they can both live safely and continue to have access to critical services. We must double down on our status as a sanctuary city, limit cooperation with federal authorities, and take steps to support immigrants in our community.

I have said multiple times that I believe in a collaborative model of leadership and inclusive governance. A key strategy here is to form alliances with other cities and municipalities in the state, as well as state and national organizations, to mount a more effective and unified resistance. We can use these coalitions to share information, resources, and legal strategies for resisting federal overreach. Such collective action will grow our strength, increase both our self-reliance and bargaining power, and allow us to pool resources.

Finally, we must collaborate closely with the state Attorney General. Northampton can work closely with the Massachusetts Attorney General's office, which has a track record of challenging federal policies it deems unconstitutional or harmful to the state's residents. This legal partnership would allow Northampton to join multi-state lawsuits and receive guidance on navigating federal mandates.

Finally, we must take proactive steps to protect funding and services through budgetary and administrative action. This means being more judicious with how we allocate funds and prioritize spending, ensuring that we have the funds necessary to handle unforeseen emergencies and can accommodate big shifts in state and federal funding streams. At the same time, we cannot accept a cut to services like school budgeting, which means that its not just about cutting costs and saving money. We must leverage our strong bond

rating and be willing to take on debt for capital improvement projects that can be paid off over time in order to have funds to allocate to critical services that we cannot accept big cuts to. This would allow us to protect current services and buy us a runway through the next couple presidential administrations, which would actually smooth out our risk profile and ideally bring us into better times.

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

This gets at the heart of my approach to leadership. I believe that government must be responsive to its citizens, transparent in its approach and decision making process, and be held accountable to outcomes, not just intents and pretty words.

Transparency:

My model of transparency focuses on two aspects: Access and Outreach.

Access is all about making sure people have clear means of getting the right information, avenues toward engaging with city leaders and departments, and ways of engaging in any city process that affects their life. Besides a clear commitment to ensuring people are included in their city government, this means actively taking steps to facilitate this access. As a councilor, this includes regular office hours, regular town halls, active engagement in local events, and tracking follow-ups to any citizen concerns. As a city, this means making sure there is no gate-keeping to information and documents, and that there is simple web-based access to any information residents may need, both including documents and city services. This can be facilitated by implementing modern AI-based technologies, which I get into a bit more at the end of this answer.

Outreach is all about proactive action to engage with residents, take steps to inform them of both the planning and decision making processes of the city, and ensure that they hear back regarding any concerns or points of interest. This is something that is a shared responsibility between city employees and every civic leader. This goes beyond office hours, and includes planned events in the community, regular email/newsletter updates, ongoing conversations with residents through forums and public events, and clear and targeted communication about any important decisions, events, votes, etc... We cannot

just say “well, nobody asked about it”, it is our duty to share our knowledge and understanding and provide invitations for engagement and input. And going further, we must take steps to reach our constituents with not just information, but support, services, and anything else we believe can help maintain a well-informed, engaged, and supported community.

Accountability:

Being accountable means being able to stand by your results! By focusing on measuring the right things, we greatly increase our abilities to address the underlying issues. Here I take a great learning from my time working at Amazon and Spotify as an engineering leader. In the tech industry, we employ a simple model called **OKRs**: Objectives and Key Results. This means that we both set clear objectives, the things we want to achieve, as well as clear key results, the results by which we’ll measure the degree to which we’ve met our objectives. This is usually paired with local and north-star metrics that we can track in a quantitative way to measure progress. Take for example trying to address potholes in city roads. The objective here may be “not having any people or cars being damaged by potholes”, which is notably different from not having any pot holes in the city at all. The Key Results may include a) “a 50% reduction in pot hole damage claims”, b) “a 50% reduction in calls about potholes from residents to DPW”, and c) “Reducing response times for pothole filling requests by 1 day”. Now we define our metrics: a) # known pot holes, b) turn-around time for pot hole filling, c) # reported potholes not filled a month after reporting, d) # repeat pothole reports, e) estimated damages to vehicles from potholes month-over-month, and f) estimated medical costs for people from injuries related to pot-holes. Then, we would provide clear and transparent measurement on the metrics month-over-month, while reviewing and reporting on the OKRs quarter-over-quarter.

Below, I provide a snapshot of my proposal around the positive utilization of AI technologies in Northampton. Besides supporting the city, its residents, and students in NPS, it is a big part of making sure we build transparency and access throughout our city as well as stay accountable with measured outcomes.

Harnessing AI for Efficient & Responsive City Services

Stance: As an AI safety expert, I believe Artificial Intelligence, when implemented thoughtfully and ethically, can transform city government, making it more efficient, cost-effective, and responsive to resident needs.

Policy Idea:

- **"Smart Northampton" AI Innovation Lab:** Establish a small, cross-departmental team to identify areas where AI can improve city services, such as:
 - **Optimizing public works:** Predictive maintenance for infrastructure (roads, water pipes), optimized waste collection routes.
 - **Enhanced citizen communication:** AI-powered chatbots for routine inquiries, personalized notifications for city services.
 - **Data-driven decision making:** Analyzing traffic patterns, public safety data, and resource allocation to improve efficiency.
- **Develop Ethical AI Guidelines & Training:** Implement a robust framework for AI use in city government, prioritizing data privacy, algorithmic fairness, and transparency. Provide training for city staff on responsible AI adoption.
- **Cost Savings & Reinvestment:** Track cost savings from AI implementations and commit to reinvesting a significant portion of these savings back into critical areas like education, affordable housing, or public safety programs.

(C) Yes/No Policy Questions

1. Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools? **YES/ NO**

Answer: **YES, but only temporarily. We can invest in new and novel education approaches and experiment with novel school setups once we have stabilized and ensured sustainable funding for the Northampton Public Schools**

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? **YES/ NO**

YES, strongly and unequivocally and so

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/ NO**

YES

4. Do you support fare-free public transit? **YES / NO**

Answer: **YES**

5. Do you support the expansion of the network of permanent, protected bike lanes in your city? **YES / NO**

Answer: **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 / NO**

Answer: **YES**

7. Would you support a home rule petition to enable the city to stabilize rents? **YES / NO**

Answer: **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 / NO**

Answer: **YES (as a refugee from the Soviet Union, I understand all too well what happens when the government starts to restrict access to information in all forms)**

(D) Additional Comments

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

I do not claim to have all the answers. But the three things I can definitely promise are as follows:

1. I will listen to my constituents. I will listen to experts. I will seek counsel when I need to understand a problem better. I will not let my ego get in the way of moving forward.
2. I will always seek to make life better for every resident of the city, whether they voted for me or not and whether we are aligned politically or not.
3. I will never let my beliefs or ideas about how one should live life get in the way of fighting for every single person's ability to be their true self, show up as their full self, live the life they want for themselves, and shine their brightest. I believe we all have the right of self-determination, as long as we don't hurt others. And I will fight with every ounce of my being against any policy, person, or agency that tries to take that away from anybody.