

NEW ERA COLORADO

2023 Denver Municipal Runoff Candidate Questionnaire Responses *City Council, District 9: Darrell Watson*

Reproductive Rights

Q: Will you support funding practical support for abortion, such as lodging and traveling expenses? If yes, why and how would you fund it? If no, why not?

A: Yes. I will work in coordination with the state to use federal and state funds to pay for all practical support for abortion. It is critical we have strong relationships with those at the state and federal levels to ensure cohesive and effective policies to help those receiving abortion services in Denver.

Housing

Q: There is a housing crisis in Denver. Do you support the expansion of publicly funded affordable housing in the city? If yes, why? And if no, why not and how would you address housing affordability and accessibility?

A: Yes. The only path out of the current housing crisis is to build more housing. This includes incentivizing developers to build affordable housing as well as instituting mandates for affordable housing. Public money can be used both as an incentive and a means to build affordable housing.

Q: Will you repeal the camping ban? If yes, why? And if no, why not?

A: No. Denver overwhelmingly voted to retain the camping ban in 2019 and reaffirmed that choice in 2023. What we must do is provide short, medium and long term housing solutions for those currently experiencing homelessness. This includes temporary housing, wrap around services, and increased income restricted affordable housing stock.

Environmental Justice

Q: Will you hold corporate polluters, like Suncor, accountable to reducing harmful pollutants in our air, land, and water that disproportionately harm Black, Indigenous, Latine/x, immigrant, and low income communities? If yes, how? And if no, why not?

A: Yes. We will increase the requirement of Suncor to fund increased community air monitors. We will coordinate with Congressman Caraveo, and commerce city municipal leaders to develop more substantial penalties and fines for any leaks or illegal emissions.

We will also Increase SEP Supplemental Environmental Programs funded by Suncor with additional 'voluntary funds' outside of the 2020 \$9 million settlement; increasing access to more D9 communities for SEP.

Economic Justice

Q: Would you tax cigarettes, alcohol or gas to help fund government programs in Denver?

A: No.

Q: Many advocates have argued that these sin taxes put the financial burden onto people who are in the lowest economic levels. How does this influence your previous response? If you answered no, how do you propose paying for public goods and services?

A: Taxing cigarettes and alcohol puts more unfair tax burdens on those in the lowest economic levels. We can fund our public goods and services through the standard budgetary process without nickel and diming the poorest residents of the city.