

NEW ERA COLORADO

2023 Denver Municipal Runoff Candidate Questionnaire Responses

City Council, District 10: Shannon Hoffman

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. Denver has become a safe haven for abortion care in the post-Roe era, and the City must support people seeking reproduction care regardless of the state they live in. City funding for lodging, travel, and other indirect costs of abortion care is especially important given that many Black and Brown communities have been displaced from Denver due to gentrification and rising housing costs. The cost of practical support, such as for lodging and travel, can be prohibitively expensive and obstruct people – particularly people of color and people made poor– from accessing abortion care.

As a City Council member, I will actively support funding for these practical support needs. The City budget should reflect the values of our residents, and as such we can reallocate City funding to reproductive health care. A relatively small investment of City funds can have resounding implications not just for people’s reproductive health, but for gender equality and equity by affirming birthing people’s bodily autonomy and greater freedom in their life choices.

Additionally, City employees currently do not have abortion care coverage. I would support the City providing abortion care coverage – including travel and lodging costs – that would be especially important for the large number of City employees who live outside of Denver with limited access to abortion care providers.

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. Denver is in a housing crisis and needs publicly funded social housing – a model where the City serves as the developer, tenants’ rent payments are determined by their income, and all “profits” get directed back into more City-led development. We need truly affordable housing that prioritizes expanding the availability of housing where people do not pay more than 30% of their income on their housing costs. Denver does need some new construction, but also the repurposing of existing, unused or underused spaces such as schools and offices. We can

also implement master leasing to leverage empty apartment units. In the master leasing model, the city becomes the master lessor providing the credit or financial backing for a worthy tenant who may be prohibited from entering the unit because of an eviction on their record or high security deposit fees. By adopting social housing, the City can keep this affordable housing off the market and ensure long-term affordability, regardless of the profit-driven housing market in Denver.

We need to expand publicly funded affordable housing at the local level because this priority may not come from other spaces – we do not see funding coming in at the federal level for public housing and much of our state level funding goes toward low income housing tax credits that often do not provide deeply affordable units. The answer to our housing crisis is housing that is truly affordable and that is defined as not paying more than 30% of your income on your housing costs.

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

A: Yes. We must immediately repeal the camping ban – a change that I have fought for alongside advocates for many years. Criminalizing and “sweeping” unhoused neighbors only exacerbates the rate of homelessness in our city and causes harm to the most vulnerable people. Instead, we need housing-first solutions to homelessness linked to wraparound services that recognize the diversity of needs of unhoused neighbors.

Additionally, we should focus public dollars on evidence-based programs that address the underlying causes of homelessness: lack of affordable housing or tenant protections, insufficient mental health services, and poverty. As a Council member, I will advocate for solutions that address these root causes of homelessness in addition to offering long-term housing and wraparound services.

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. Climate justice is at the heart of my campaign, particularly given the growing inequity of how the climate crisis impacts marginalized communities throughout Denver. All of our climate policy solutions must center the people who are the most impacted and harmed by the climate crisis.

As a Council member, I will prioritize addressing the harm caused to communities of color by the climate crisis. This includes holding corporate polluters, like Suncor, accountable for their ongoing harm-doing and legal violations. We must also ensure equitable development that provides Black and Brown neighborhoods with more green spaces and trees that can serve as carbon sinks and protect neighborhoods from extreme heat.

Specifically on Suncor, I will advocate for stricter enforcements of air quality violations. Suncor is known to regularly and severely violate federal mandates on air quality. Given their location, these violations disproportionately impact the neighboring Black and Brown communities.

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: I oppose "sin taxes" because they not only burden the consumer, but they disproportionately affect low-income communities and communities of color. Instead of increasing taxes on everyday goods, we should realign the budget to reflect the values of the City. As a Council member, I will advocate for allocating our public dollars toward programs for housing and social services. Furthermore, instead of relying on "sin tax" revenue, I will advocate for extensive audits of the City budget to find efficiencies that we are not currently leveraging.