



## Homeless Voices for Justice Candidate Questionnaire 2022

Maine Legislators  
Answers from **Deqa Dhalac**

### Introduction

If you were to distinguish yourself from your opponent, what are three key differences you would highlight for voters?

Affordable and accessible Housing  
Fully funded public education  
Affordable health care for all Mainers

### Housing

There are currently an estimated 1500 people seeking shelter in Maine compared to 750 seeking shelter before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Do you support the right to shelter for people experiencing homelessness?

Yes  No  \*Please check Yes or No under each question

Comment:

I believe everyone has the right to adequate housing, recently in my district my neighbors have been feeling the housing crisis and as Mayor of South Portland I led the effort to pass a cap on rent increases and a temporary eviction moratorium. We need to continue supporting efforts to build more affordable housing and support policies that give people the right to have housing.

Do you support government funding for shelters for Maine's increasing homeless population?

Yes  No

Comment:

Housing is a human right and as a Social Worker I will support any legislation to fund for shelters to house the unhoused humans in our state.

During the Covid-19 Pandemic, there were increased government restrictions on the use of public space, this has resulted in criminal enforcement against people experiencing homelessness. Do you support the decriminalization of people experiencing homelessness?

Yes  No

Comment:

I think to end homelessness, we must have a coordinate approach in a community wide with a strategic planning by helping people to access the services and the support they need not to criminalize them.

Do you support allocating government funds to build more affordable homes and subsidize housing for the low-income community?

Yes  No

Comment:

It's very important to build more affordable housing and matching those who are homeless by housing them is a key, also to support them with long term services for housing stability.

Do you support providing legal protections for people experiencing homelessness who are subject of discrimination in housing, unemployment, and benefits?

Yes  No

Comment:

These are members of our community, its our job to protect them at their most vulnerable times. I will support any legislation protecting these community members for discrimination in any form and shape.

### **Food Security**

Do you support enacting work requirements for federal assistance programs, such as Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)?

Yes  No

Comment:

For those who are eligible for the federal and state benefits.

What is your top priority regarding food security in the State of Maine, and how do you intend to address this issue in our community?

Comment:

I know that Maine ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in New England in terms of childhood food insecurity 20% of Maine kids are food insecure, we need to come up with policies to make sure these doesn't happen to our kids. I have seen my neighbors choosing weather they put food on the table or pay the rent. That shouldn't happen in the USA, the riches country in the world.

Do you support using government funding for food security resources?

Yes  No

Comment:

Absolutely

### **Opioid Crisis**

The Homeless Opioid User Service Engagement (H.O.U.S.E.), an established service engagement program to provide 50 opioid users in the State rapid access to low-barrier treatment for substance use disorder and stable housing to support their recovery, was funded by the State of Maine and appropriations are scheduled to cease this coming December. Do you support renewing these appropriations for the fiscal year 2022-2023?

Yes  No

Comment:

I will support renewing the fiscal year 2022-2023 if I am elected

In 2021, there were 621 overdoses in the state of Maine, an increase of 26.7% from the previous year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Part of that is due to the lack of access to detox beds in hospitals and EMS. Do you support increasing the number of detox beds in these facilities?

Yes  No

Comment:

I will support any legislation to increase detox beds in facilities

Do you support the decriminalization of the personal possession of drugs?

Yes  No

Comment:

Criminalizing people for possessing drugs has not worked for helping people into recovery. We need to meet people with compassion and love and prioritize treatment over incarceration.