



Homeless Voices for Justice Candidate Questionnaire 2022

City Council – At Large
Answers from Richard Levi Ward

Introduction

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

What sets me aside from my opponents is my commitment to wanting to make the world a better place and really get things changed now.

As the only American born, low income candidate and having grown up with family members struggling from substance abuse, I realize everyone is someone's mother, father, brother or sister and deserve humane treatment.

I also feel that I'm the only candidate who really wants to do more for the unhoused, substance addicted, low income, and disabled community. I believe we have the money to take care of our community without raising taxes and if we can stop virtue signaling we may be able to make a change.

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 Comment:

I believe one death from being unhoused is one to many.

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

Yes: No Comment:

I believe in both government and private community projects to fund these shelters.

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. Would you support ordinances that decriminalize people experiencing homelessness?

Yes: No Comment:

I believe these restrictions do more harm than good



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

Yes: No: Comment:

I would welcome and if able offer incentives to build more housing of all types including micro apartments to address the needs of all.

The City of Portland's campsite policy has adversely affected people experiencing homelessness. Do you support the City of Portland's campsite policy?

Yes: No: Comment:

I believe we need order but the city should offer safe zones for camping. Dispersing people isn't helping anyone and only causing hardships for people already struggling. I've talked to some that are living in these encampments and by moving them it just causes heartaches.

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

Yes: No: Comment:

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:

I'm against these requirements because it'll affect people who are desperately needing assistance. Unhoused, mentally ill, and drug addicted would be terribly affected by imposing these rules.

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

Comment:

I support more regulations on food disposal in restaurants and stores to prevent waste. I believe in the city leading community volunteer projects to get more involved. Good people live here who would help and chip in if they knew how and what they could do. Small acts from many will make a big difference.



Referendum Questions

The following questions regard the upcoming referendum questions, outlined by citizens of Portland, that have a direct impact on people experiencing homelessness and poverty. The language is direct as the information was presented to the Portland City Council.

Do you support “An Act to Regulate Short-Term Rentals and Prohibit Corporate and Absentee Operation of Short-Term Rental Properties?”

- Prohibits corporate owners and non-local operators from registering short-term rentals in the city.
- Prohibits eviction of tenants for the purpose of immediate conversion to short-term rentals.
- Prohibits affordable and workforce housing from being used as short-term rentals.
- Increase penalties for disorderly properties and violations of the city’s existing short-term rental regulations.

Yes: No Comment:

I am not anti landlord but I do not support corporations buying property with the intent to air b n b.

Do you support “An Act to Reduce the Number of Short-Term Rentals (STRs) in Portland?”

- Restricts all Portland STRs to those that are owner-occupied, tenant-occupied, or located in a two-unit building occupied by the owner.
- Increases annual fee for owner-occupied STRs to \$250 and non-owner-occupied STRs to \$750 and simplifies fee structure.
- Requires notification to all residents within 500 feet of a registered STR.
- Increases penalties for violations and strengthens enforcement of violations.
- Requires logging of complaints against all STRs.
- Allows the city to revoke STR registrations.

Yes: No Comment:

Do you support “An Act to Protect Tenants in Portland?”

- Ensures that tenants receive 90-day notice for lease termination and/or rent increases.
- Discourages no-cause evictions by limiting the 5% rent increase to voluntary turnovers.
- Restricts deposits to one-month rents, prohibits application fees, limits the amount of standard annual rent increases to 70% of CPI.
- Strengthens protections for tenants who exercise their rights under the existing ordinance.
- Provides greater clarity and authority to the rent board to ensure landlords receive a fair return on investment and tenant complaints receive a fair hearing.
- Sets a \$250,000 fee for condominium conversions.
- Technical changes to the original ordinance.

Yes: No Comment:



Do you support “An Act to Eliminate the Sub-Minimum Wage, Increase the Minimum Wage and Strengthen Protections for Workers?”

- Increase the minimum wage in Portland to \$18 an hour over three years and will eliminate the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers over the same three years.
- Tipped workers will receive \$18/hr. plus tips.
- Provides an \$18 an hour minimum wage for workers not currently receiving the minimum wage (taxi drivers and other ride services, personal shoppers, delivery workers, and those doing work for a unit of government).
- Creates a Department of Fair Labor Practices.

Yes: No Comment:

Do you Support “An Act to Reduce Cruise Ships in Order to Reduce Congestion and Pollution”

- Limits the number of passengers who may disembark from cruise ships to no more than 1,000 people on a given day (in total).
- This ordinance will go into effect in 2025.

Yes: No Comment:

Many businesses rely on tourism to sustain themselves including restaurants. I support welcoming tourist

Opioid Crisis

The Homeless Opioid User Service Engagement (H.O.U.S.E.) is an established service 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. Do you support the H.O.U.S.E. program's continuance?

Yes: No Comment:

I would like to see more funding and access to drug treatment programs, preferably non government run to prevent red tape barriers.

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 think overdose prevention and drug treatment is one of the most pressing issues society should focus on.



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

Yes: No: Comment:

Comment:

I believe in body autonomy. While I know drugs are harmful I do not think we should focus on using the criminal justice system to tackle the problem. I believe addicts are victims and shouldn't be punished for possession. I do however believe those that push hard drugs on children, traffic fentanyl and profit from others addictions should be harshly punished.