

RECLAIM PHILADELPHIA

Prepared By: Tonya Bah and Kairol Rosenthal

Phone/Email: [REDACTED]

Campaign Manager: Kairol Rosenthal

Phone/Email: [REDACTED]

Candidate Name: Tonya Bah

Campaign Address: People for Tonya Bah, PO Box 44156, Philadelphia PA 19144

Campaign Email: info@tonyabah.com

Campaign Website: tonyabah.com

I, _____ Tonya Bah _____, certify that the information provided on this questionnaire is accurate and the opinions stated here accurately reflect my own positions.

Please complete, sign and return this via email in both Word Doc and PDF format to Amanda@reclaimphiladelphia.org on or before February 1, 2019.

INTRODUCTION

This is a two-part questionnaire. The first seven questions are intended to be richer questions with longer answers. They are intended to help the members of Reclaim Philadelphia understand how you view the world and the political issues that face Philadelphia. As you might expect, these questions are big and broad. Please limit your answers to each question to no more than 250 words. The second set of questions are “yes” or “no” questions, which are NOT meant to be answered at length.

PART I - LONGFORM QUESTIONS - Please respond in 250 words or less.

1. Tell us a personal story about yourself that informs your worldview, your politics, and your decision to run for City Council.

I graduated from Simon Gratz High with a full athletic college scholarship that included tuition, room, board, meals and books. I chose Temple University, which meant I would never be more than a subway ride away from home. One Saturday morning I went home to find my mom's sole source of heat was from a single kerosene heater located in the middle of the living room floor. I returned to Temple knowing full well this would be my first and last year. I felt compelled to drop out and get a job to help my family. It was an easy decision for a tough situation. It was the reality of poverty.

People like me, with my experiences, should not only be the voice at City Hall testifying behind the mic but also the author of legislation that speaks to ending policies and positions that foster inequity for any resident in our city. My resume has experience with poverty, trauma, racism, colorism and an emphasis on management. Management of bills like utilities, rent, mortgage, food, and clothing. What makes this experience valuable? It's been done while living in poverty, being profiled, and widowed. I live with a constant angst and fear that truancy, DHS or family court will find a way to commodify my twins and remove them from my home. Tens of thousands of Philadelphians live with the same fears and trauma. I will be their voice in City Hall.

2. What is your opinion of capitalism as a political-economic system? How do your opinions and analysis influence your campaign and legislative priorities?

Capitalism forces people to rely on luck or what they are born into. It drives the criminal justice system to punitively approach a behavior without full understanding of the root cause. It is why policing in areas of color has been expanded and retrofitted to create a new market for surveillance. It shows its face in the form of maintenance instead of prevention when we speak about illness. It exploits victims of poverty with cheap, unhealthy foods and produce manufactured for a short shelf life. In my neighborhood, capitalism looks like charter schools and expensive school uniforms mandated by a district that spends millions of our tax dollars on vendors and privatizers. Capitalism means continuing deep poverty and the trauma and mental illness families like mine face with each new resolution that's presented, amended and cultivated for special interest groups.

As a candidate I will not take money from big corporations because they are privatizing schools and prisons, profiting on the backs of workers, contributing to environmental racism, and not prioritizing the needs of seniors, disabled people, and people in poverty.

My legislative priorities are focused on bringing fairness back into the system by strengthening public schools, establishing a \$15 per hour minimum wage, and ensuring affordable housing through rent control, low-income and physically accessible housing mandates, and real

protections for all renters against evictions without cause. I will fight for unions and to expand protections for hourly workers.

3. What do “white supremacy” and “patriarchy” mean to you? How do you see them operating in the City of Philadelphia and its government? What policies, if any, would you enact in order to end them?

White supremacy and patriarchy are reflected in the pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps thinking that too many whites and some elite people of color use to maintain their power and keep people in poverty. It is reflected in the following practices that rule everyday life of people of color in Philadelphia:

These systems operate in Philadelphia through truancy rules, the school-to-prison pipeline, school uniform policies, outdated curriculum in schools that ignore the contributions and achievements of African Americans. These systems are perpetuated through profiling, economically abusive policies that harm working poor like predatory lending, and fines for parking or litter, which often double before a next paycheck is due and cause overdraft bank fees and high interest debt. And, punishment for “crimes” such as marijuana possession. As City Councilperson, I will hold public hearings to expose the harmful truancy policies in our schools and investigate the links between the School District, DHS, and Family Court. I will work to pass legislation that reforms how we handle minor infractions using a restorative justice approach instead of monetized measures.

4. What do you think of the crisis facing Philadelphia schools? What do you see as its root causes? What steps would you take?

The majority of our district’s students are people of color, who face systemic racism, racial bias in school funding, and a disproportionately white teaching force. One of the root causes of this is we spend over \$1 billion dollars on privatization of public education through charter schools, over which we have little control or oversight. And, while many parents work hard to have their voices heard, the City does not give enough power to families and teachers to influence the system. I would take the following steps to intervene in our public school crisis:

Increase funding for the School District by requiring large corporations and wealthy residents to pay their fair share of taxes, ending the 10-year tax abatement program, and pressuring major tax exempt eds and meds institutions to pay into a PILOT program.

Prioritize the clean up of the mold, asbestos, lead paint, and other conditions that make too many of our schools unhealthy spaces for our children.

Lead the fight on City Council to halt the expansion of charter schools and hold accountable those currently in operation.

Pressure the School District to end the outsourcing of educational services in our public schools to private vendors, such as programing for our special needs populations and GED classes.

Vote parent activists and teachers on to the School Board.

5. Under what circumstances should a person be detained or incarcerated, if any? Does the current system meet this criterion? What does safety mean to you and what policies or programs would you pursue to achieve your vision?

In order to determine if a person should be detained or incarcerated we need a new lens that looks at the seriousness of the crime and its root cause. The current system doesn't use a restorative justice lens. Instead, our current criminal justice system creates a school-to-prison pipeline, criminalizes poverty, and is built on racial bias. To end this system as we know it, we need to increase access to restorative justice practices as an alternative to current punitive approaches to handling truancy, mental illness, crime, and violations.

I will build pressure within City Council to expose the excessive supervision of non-violent offenders on probation and parole, a racially discriminatory practice that increases mass incarceration and impacts tens of thousands of Philadelphians. I will fight tenaciously to end stop and frisk and other forms of profiling. And, I will sponsor legislation to direct monetary savings achieved through reducing mass incarceration to benefit our public schools.

6. What is the fundamental factor causing climate change? How should we address this? Do you support a Green New Deal for Philadelphia and, if so, what does that mean to you and what will you do if elected to City Council?

Climate change is caused by greenhouse gas emissions and fueled by corporate greed and consumerism. We need to rapidly transition to clean energy. I will support a Green New Deal and make sure it includes measures to prevent environmental racism. If elected to City Council I will oppose the development of any new fossil fuel infrastructure in the city including pipelines or power plants. And I will advocate for policies to ensure that 100% of the electricity used in Philadelphia comes from renewable sources by no later than 2030.

7. Do you think Philadelphia is facing a housing crisis? If so, why? If not, why not? What changes would you make to bring housing policy more in line with your vision?

Philadelphia faces a housing crisis because the decision makers are removed from the challenge of not being able to afford housing for themselves. As a low-income woman who is the daughter of a Veteran, mom of twins with special needs, and a former hotel worker, I deeply understand what it means to live with housing instability. I am a fierce activist and advocate who will not back down until we implement these policy changes:

Protecting tenants by implementing rent control in Philadelphia and bolstering tenant rights by strengthening the City's good cause eviction ordinance and applying it to all renters.

Enacting and enforce inclusionary zoning that requires new market rate developments to either allocate 20% of the units on-site to low-income people, or fund the off-site construction of an

equivalent number of units affordable to families with incomes no greater than 30% of the area median income.

Ensuring that low-income housing units are fully accessible to those with physical or intellectual disabilities, are located near public transit and schools, and have access to supermarkets and other amenities that are affordable for low-income residents.

PART II - YES OR NO QUESTIONS

1. Do you commit to opposing the privatization of all utilities in Philadelphia? **YES [x] NO []**
2. Do you commit to support and vote for the creation of a Philadelphia Public Bank? **YES [x] NO []**
3. Will you support using savings from closing the House of Corrections to invest in job training programs and opportunities for formerly incarcerated people, in an effort to combat mass incarceration? **YES [x] NO []**
4. Will you support a participatory study funded by the City to formulate a local Green New Deal energy plan to transition Philadelphia to a democratically controlled 100% renewable energy system by 2030, create unionized jobs, and center the decisions and needs of Philadelphia's working class and communities of color? **YES [x] NO []**
5. Do you support a democratically elected school board? **YES [x] NO []**
6. Will you commit to publicly funding and administering fully staffed libraries and recreation centers seven days a week? **YES [x] NO []**
7. Do you support rent control? **YES [x] NO []**
8. Will you commit that at least 50% of all City funds allocated to create or preserve housing, including but not limited to the Housing Trust Fund and subfunds, must go toward helping the poorest Philadelphians (30% or less of area median income)? **YES [x] NO []**
9. Will you commit to introducing or sponsoring legislation that would establish a system of public financing for city campaigns that would create a fund that would provide matching public funds for money individual donors contribute to candidates? **YES [x] NO []**
10. Do you support the creation of an overdose prevention site / supervised consumption site to help efforts to combat the opioid epidemic in our community? **YES [x] NO []**
11. Do you support completely ending the ten year tax abatement? **YES [x] NO []**
12. Do you commit to opposing all new fossil fuel projects in Philadelphia by using all zoning and regulatory means at your disposal? **YES [x] NO []**

13. Will you support increasing funding of the Police Advisory Commission from \$500K to \$1.5M and giving it the power to subpoena, investigate and censure cases of police brutality and over-policing?

YES [x] NO []

14. Will you publicly support a moratorium on all charter school expansion? **YES [x] NO []**

15. Do you support the right to strike for public employees including teachers? **YES [x] NO []**

16. Will you enact a statutory right to counsel for any Philadelphian facing the loss of their home, be it foreclosure or eviction? **YES [x] NO []**

17. Will you use all means at your disposal to support workers' right to unionize?

YES [x] NO []

PART III - ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATION

If there's anything else our membership should know about you or if you feel the need to provide additional information about any of your above responses, do so here. Please keep your response to a total of 100 words or less.