



Mayoral Candidates Respond to The Kids Agenda

How will you, as Mayor, make sure youth who make mistakes have restorative options?

HELEN GYM

As a City Councilmember, I wrote a youth anti-violence strategy, and as Mayor I intend to finish that work. With more than 4,000 young people moving through the Juvenile Justice Services Center each and every year, I am focused on targeted interventions for youth and their families who are in the path of violence. This means new discharge programs that involve parents and guardians as well as different agencies from the city and School District to have a restorative home-school-employment plan that meets young people's needs when they are returning from juvenile facilities. Additionally, my goal on day one is to increase the number of youth in high-crime neighborhoods who have jobs and opportunities that keep them off the streets and help them build leadership skills and a resume. I am prioritizing a city-led effort with community partnerships to ensure visible safe routes to and from schools twice a day so no parent has to fear that their child could be harmed while getting an education.

CHERELLE PARKER

I recognize that we must have a comprehensive approach to criminal justice. I have long championed restorative justice programs – including juvenile justice programs – that use innovative and unconventional tactics to help rehabilitate those already caught up in the justice system, and help all parties – both victims and perpetrators – find healing.

We also need to look at broader reforms to the entire criminal justice system. That is why, on Council, I supported a special committee tasked with overhauling Philadelphia's criminal justice system. This committee examined:

- Unsustainable and rapid growth of the adult corrections population
- Unique issues presented when dealing with juveniles involved in the criminal justice system
- Policy changes across the nation that have proven effective in reducing costs, recidivism, and corrections populations
- The impact that current laws have on Philadelphia communities and the justice-involved population

Another area I support reforming is the cash bail system. We know that cash bail for low-level and non-violent offenses leads to unnecessary incarceration and is overly onerous on poorer communities, and that is not fair. And finally, I have supported and will continue to support, a host of violence diversionary programs that focus on at-risk youth, helping them avoid getting in trouble and find options if they do.

REBECCA RHYNHART

We need to provide a safe environment for our students, faculty, and staff while simultaneously offering a compassionate response to students who are struggling. Therefore, I support efforts to reduce suspensions and the Philadelphia Police School Diversion Program. This program diverts students who commit low-level offenses on school property into programs that provide wraparound services offering these students genuine support with the goal of behavior change. The mayor appoints the school board and the police commissioner. Thus, I would select appointees who share my priority to have a robust diversion program that keeps our youth in school and out of prison. Our goal as a city should be to help young people and their families get back on track so they can grow up to be productive members of society. Teenagers belong in school and need a high school diploma to have the options that will lead them to successful livelihoods. The Community College of Philadelphia has programs for students close to graduation but haven't yet crossed the finish line. The Rhynhart Administration will work with CCP to enhance its efforts to help these young adults get on track.

A Note from The Kids Campaign: Responses are as of March 27, 2023. Warren Bloom Sr., Amen Brown, Jeff Brown, Allan Domb, and David Oh did not respond to the candidate questionnaire. James DeLeon responded late and did not directly respond to each and every question.