



## Mayoral Candidates Respond to The Kids Agenda

### How will you, as Mayor, make sure Philadelphia contributes to solving the climate crisis to ensure a thriving future for our kids?

#### HELEN GYM

I have long been an advocate for climate justice, particularly as it pertains to children and our schools. When I joined Council in 2016, I held town halls with students as young as middle school who spoke about the terrible quality of water in their schools – or limited access to it. I swiftly passed legislation to require annual testing of water in our public schools, and the School District invested \$1 million to install at least three modern filtered water hydration stations in every public school. This was not only one of the first citywide school modernization efforts in the District in years – it was one of the most popular as well. Before resigning from City Council to run for Mayor, I made sure that the legacy of my work alongside environmental and health justice advocates to ensure clean water for our young people lived on, passing legislation requiring the School District to replace all of its old drinking fountains with lead-filtering hydration stations by 2025, and mandating that each school have one of those lead-filtering fountains for every 100 students.

I want to continue this work as your next Mayor and one of my top priorities will be building a municipal Green New Deal for the City. Re-envisioning the future of our public gas utility, modernizing public transit, stabilizing and retrofitting aging homes, modernizing our public schools, and greening and cooling neighborhoods are central to my vision.

#### CHERELLE PARKER

As climate change progresses, we must address the human and economic threats of environmental degradation while creating an economy that works for all.

Climate Change represents an existential threat not just to our way of life, but to humanity. Between global population displacement and competition for resources, extreme flooding and drought here in the United States, and increasingly severe weather events that directly impact Philadelphia residents and businesses, it is important that we acknowledge that climate change is already taking place today, and that it is incumbent upon us all to play our part in addressing the challenge.

As Mayor, I would prioritize the conversion of our City's commercial and municipal bus fleet (School District & SEPTA) from fossil-fuel powered vehicles to electric and clean hydrogen fuel sources. I would also take advantage of BIL and IRA funding through the Department of Energy that would expand the electric charging infrastructure necessary for private, personal vehicle conversion to electric. And I support the proposed green hydrogen hub as a means of greatly reducing our carbon footprint, improving the air quality for the residents of Philadelphia, and working towards bringing the City into compliance with federal Clean Air Act attainment standards. Additionally, as the 'Cheerleader-in-Chief' I would be a vocal advocate for attracting green industries to locate to Philadelphia.

I also plan on working closely with SEPTA to ensure that it is safe, clean, and a desirable option for transportation in our city so more people are comfortable taking buses, trains, and subways and leaving their cars at home.

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# How will you, as Mayor, make sure Philadelphia contributes to solving the climate crisis to ensure a thriving future for our kids?

Philadelphia can have a true Blue-Green alliance, by creating green union jobs that are good for our environment, good for growing the middle class, and good for the future of our city.

## **REBECCA RHYNHART**

The mayor of Philadelphia plays a crucial role in preparing our residents for the impact of climate change and moving us toward a more sustainable future. The mayor should be the city's chief advocate for moving the city towards achieving our sustainability goals.

Firstly, the Rynhart Administration will take steps to aggressively reduce our carbon footprint to achieve our citywide goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. As mayor, I will direct city agencies to lead by example on this issue by coordinating our city departments and investing in sustainability strategies such as green infrastructure to address flooding problems in Southwest Philadelphia. In addition, my administration will leverage the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funds to complete the much-needed levee in the Eastwick neighborhood to mitigate future flooding.

We will also continue to fund basic systems repair programs to help families weatherize their homes and transition to more efficient appliances. The mayor can also encourage residents to pursue existing federal tax incentives that enable individuals to install clean energy systems in their homes.

My administration will work with SEPTA to improve our transit systems, transition our city's fleet of municipal vehicles to all-electric powered, expand our electric charging infrastructure, and enforce laws against illegal idling to reduce emissions.

In addition, I will coordinate a citywide initiative between departments such as Water, Parks and Recreation, and Streets to expand and preserve our tree canopy. I would also establish a public dashboard to transparently track progress toward achieving our tree canopy benchmarks.

We must also manage energy use in the city-owned buildings, including our prisons, by installing energy-efficient insulation, making necessary building repairs, fixing windows, investing in energy-efficient appliances and lighting, and overall making improvements to lower our carbon footprint.

Lastly, we should explore our capacity as a city to install solar panels and utilize green roofs on city-owned buildings to decrease our carbon footprint further.

These are only some examples of ways the mayor can use her authority to lead in preparing our residents for climate change, ensuring that our city is resilient in the face of these impacts and moving us closer to sustainability. In addition, the Rynhart Administration will have a renewed focus on energy efficiency in every city department.

**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.

