



Mayoral Candidates Respond to The Kids Agenda

How will you, as Mayor, make sure no child in Philadelphia goes hungry or lives in poverty?

HELEN GYM

I'm running for Mayor because our kids aren't alright, and some of the biggest problems we are facing as a city stem from this disinvestment in whole generations of children and their neighborhoods. Philadelphia needs a proven fighter who has a real track record of improving people's lives with a vision for lifting up our residents. Going forward, we have to build a real anti-poverty mission where our government leans in.

It starts with the City budget. Our city and its residents need well-funded public schools, better sanitation services, and every resource at our disposal to keep communities healthy and safe. We need full-service libraries, parks, and recreation centers. We need to deliver city services that do more than just meet needs – the lighting up and cleaning up of our streets, sealing of vacant lots, and beautification of parks and green spaces is a proven antidote to violence.

The Biden agenda showed how the Child Tax Credit nearly cut child poverty in half. We should be exercising tax breaks to go to families in need. We can clear civil debt, provide care packages for new moms with guaranteed diaper banks and formula access, and better support food banks – because we have to end hunger.

It's also about ensuring those in low-wage work have access to things that have traditionally lifted people up, like unionization and stable schedules. We can build on my anti-poverty initiatives that we passed into law on City Council, such as my nationally recognized Eviction Diversion Program and Fair Workweek. As Mayor, I'll deliver a real anti-poverty agenda and a promise for economic opportunity and livability for all Philadelphians.

CHERELLE PARKER

We know that a hungry child is the main contributor for delayed development, risk of chronic illnesses like asthma and anemia; and behavioral problems like hyperactivity, anxiety and aggression. In Philadelphia, there are many homes with children that face true food insecurity every day.

That is why I want to expand on the School District's free breakfast and lunch program – with early drop-off and late-pickup, as well as year-round schooling, we have the opportunity to provide a snack and dinner to help make sure that no student has to go hungry and that they have every opportunity to succeed.

In addition to feeding our children we have to address the root cause of their hunger: poverty. Anti-poverty efforts must begin with our youngest citizens, which is why I was proud to support PHLpreK, which has now served more than 13,000 three and four year-olds. For older children, as a City Councilmember, I was proud to support investments of over \$1.2 billion to improve the School District of Philadelphia and upward of \$249 million in Community College of Philadelphia since 2016. Though these investments may take time to see a

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return, numerous research studies have shown the importance of investing in children and youth of all ages as an effective anti-poverty measure.

And as Mayor, we will be investing in adult-oriented job training because one of the key tenets of my administration will be to break the cycle of poverty and get as many adults as possible off of the poverty hamster wheel so they can be a part of our city's economy.

And as these workers enter the workforce, we must ensure that everyone is paid a living wage. The current minimum wage of \$7.25 is set far below a level that is a liveable, family-sustaining wage. This hits Black, Latino, and women-led households the hardest. I supported a \$15/hour minimum wage, but now that is not enough. According to the MIT living wage calculator, a living wage in Philadelphia is \$17.87/hour for someone with no children. Ultimately, any meaningful minimum wage change will need to come from Harrisburg, and I've got the experience to get it done – not just once, but to have it permanently tied to the rate of inflation so we don't have to have these fights again.

Curing the problems of hunger and poverty won't happen immediately, but the steps we take now can make lasting change for generations.

REBECCA RHYNHART

The root cause of poverty is a lack of opportunity. So, when I'm mayor, I'll be laser-focused on creating pathways to family-sustaining jobs and fixing our schools so that we're making that opportunity available and breaking cycles of poverty for this new generation.

That means job training to upskill our residents to help parents find and excel in family-sustaining jobs, making sure that every kid in Philadelphia has access to a high-quality neighborhood school and expanding hours and programming at library and rec centers throughout our city so those same kids have a safe place to be outside of the classroom that enriches their learning and wellbeing.

Our goal will be to build a level of opportunity where our residents and their children can go beyond surviving to thriving. I've also released a plan for affordable housing to lessen housing insecurity for families struggling to make ends meet because every one of us, especially our kids, deserves the dignity of a roof over our heads.

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.

RESPONSES AS OF MARCH 27, 2023